



**Statement by Ambassador Usman Jadoon
Deputy Permanent Representative of Pakistan
At a Virtual event on International Day of Human Fraternity
(5 February 2024)**

High Representative

Of the United Nations Alliance of Civilization,

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I extend gratitude to the Permanent Missions of Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, along with the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), for organizing this event to commemorate the International Day of Human Fraternity.

The 2019 Document of Human Fraternity for World Peace and Harmony, a testament to collaboration between His Holiness Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb, exemplifies interreligious dialogue and harmony, aligning with the objectives of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations.

In our contemporary world, marred by growing intolerance and violence based on religion or belief, the International Day of Human Fraternity takes on even greater significance. The ongoing brutal, criminal onslaught by the Israeli occupation army in Gaza, is causing untold suffering to millions of Palestinians; The escalating wave of Islamophobia, the deliberate incidents of desecration of the Holy Quran that occurred last year under the guise of freedom of expression underscore the urgent need for global attention and concerted efforts to protect religious symbols and texts, promoting a culture of respect and understanding.

Another disturbing trend is unfolding in a country where the government is endorsing the continuous demolition of centuries old mosques and Islamic heritage sites, aligning with a broader agenda to eliminate Islamic heritage and, ultimately, the Muslim presence in the nation. The destruction of historic mosques, coupled with the pervasive issue of Islamophobia, emphasizes the critical necessity for the swift implementation of the Secretary-General's Action Plan on the Protection of Religious Sites.

It is in our enlightened interest to respect each other's religions, avoid denigration of religious symbols and personalities, eliminate religious discrimination, and combat incitement to violence, including its contemporary manifestation of Islamophobia.