In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Compassionate.

We, the participants at the Interfaith Refugee Day 2018 in conjunction with the World Interfaith Harmony Week 2018 under the auspices of the United Nations, and organised by the International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies (IAIS) Malaysia, hereby express our deepest concerns about the global refugee crisis and our solemn commitment towards its resolution.

**Principles**

In approaching the refugee problem, we affirm that the dignity of the human being is central to all religious, spiritual and ethical traditions of the world.

This dignity entails the acknowledgement and recognition of basic rights for all irrespective of gender, religious, ethnic, cultural or national backgrounds.

These rights and dignity entail collective responsibility for all in the spirit of human fraternity and fellowship intrinsic to all faiths.

These principles are embodied in religious, ethical and spiritual traditions, as well as international and human rights charters, treaties and declarations, which we emphatically endorse.

**Problems**

Recognising the above, we acknowledge the multifaceted nature of the crisis and the problems faced by the refugees.

Refugees are often deprived of access to basic needs such as food, water, sanitation, shelter and access to health care.

Women and children in particular merit special attention because of their vulnerability to exploitation such as human trafficking and sexual abuse.

Refugees are also denied the right to decent life beyond mere survival given the lack of sustainable support which would grant them identity, education, employment and financial inclusion.

Due to their vulnerability, refugees also risk being recruited for terrorist, extremist and militant movements or causes.

The refugee crisis may also, when linked to ethno-religious and identity politics, spiral into ethno-religious conflicts or invite serious geopolitical repercussions.

**Causes**

We acknowledge the various causes for the refugee crisis, and that some are due to natural disasters, yet many are due to man-made causes such as war, territorial annexation, persecution and oppression, and therefore remediable.

**Recommendations**

We propose that a three-fold strategy should be adopted attending to the immediate, intermediate and long-term needs of the refugees.

1. The immediate solutions are needed to address the basic needs for food, clothes, shelter, sanitation and health care, as well as to end violence and persecution.
2. The intermediate solutions are needed to ensure sustainability in the support for the refugees to be independent and able to contribute to society.
3. The long-term solutions tackle the root causes of the refugee crisis.

Towards this end, we advance the following recommendations:

PROMOTE the universal spiritual and moral values of religions such as human dignity, mercy, compassion and justice as the moral core that informs policies towards refugees

ADDRESS the immediate and basic needs of refugees through collaborative and joint efforts across religious communities and other groups

SPEAK UP against the abuse of religion as justification for persecution and violence against others, the deprivation of rights and the demonization of the ‘other’

PRESENT counter-narratives drawn from within the very same religious traditions as riposte against abuse of the same in justifying persecution

ENCOURAGE the engagement, involvement and participation of religious communities and religious institutions in fostering a culture of inclusion and accommodation

PERSUADE governments through advice, diplomacy and negotiations to formulate policies that help alleviate the plight of refugees

***Dated: 3rd March 2018 at International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies (IAIS) Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.***

**Signatories to the declaration**

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2. Assoc. Prof. Dr Mohamed Azam Mohamed Adil, Deputy CEO, International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies (IAIS) Malaysia
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4. Most Ven. Datuk K. Sri Dhuammaratana Nayake Maha Thera, Buddhist Chief Priest of Malaysia, Buddhist Maha Vihara (BMV)
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6. Sis. Loh Pai Ling, President, Buddhist Missionary Society Malaysia
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11. Dr. Muhammad Fakhrurrazi Ahmad, Director, Interfaith Refugee Day
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13. Dr Muhammad Hakimi Bin Mohd Shafiai, Secretary, Pertubuhan Legasi Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi
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16. Muhammad Noor, Co-Founder, Rohingya Project
17. Mr. Richard Towle, Head, UNHCR Malaysia
18. Ms. Lilianne Fan, International Director, Geutanyoe Malaysia
19. Siti Zurianah Ismail, Social Activist, Yayasan Sukarelawan Siswa
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