

Statement from the AMAN 20th Anniversary Assembly, Pattani

We the AMAN* Anniversary Assembly of 2011, firmly believe that the diversity of the cultures on Earth today is our strength, which should be nurtured and protected. Diversity gives us identity and the means to know, respect and celebrate each other, living together in peace.

We are convinced that peace amidst diversity is achievable. But, in a rapidly globalising world, we are also convinced that to make Peace achievable we must:

1. recognise and respect human dignity
2. acknowledge and celebrate diversity
3. respect the opinions of all without prejudice
4. respect protect and fulfil the human rights of all minorities
5. address the plight of refugees, migrants, and stateless persons, especially children
6. understand, accept and appreciate our diversity of identities and richness of histories
7. live with one another in harmony and tolerance.

We are alarmed by the pandemic of xenophobia and Islamophobia on the one hand and the uncontrolled growth, on the other hand, of repressive state laws dealing ostensibly with terrorism or blasphemy, which are enforced with discrimination and oppression.

We are pleased however, that even as we meet, people in diverse countries of the Muslim world from Tunisia to Algeria, from Egypt to Yemen are raising protests against oppressive laws and unequivocally rejecting dictatorial governments. In full solidarity, we applaud their efforts to bring about positive change towards just and participatory governance.

We reaffirm that the overriding principle of peace is justice, with mercy and compassion. It is imperative that our concept of Justice encompasses the basic human right to a life free from fear, hunger and want.

The Assembly has been deeply moved by the testimonies of people, especially women and youth, living in conflict zones. We therefore call upon all governments, all power- holders and all stakeholders, throughout the world, in places where violent conflicts are occurring to:

1. Support genuine demilitarisation, thus making available additional resources to meet human needs.

2. Rehabilitate and rebuild in the areas of conflict, the infrastructures necessary to sustain life with dignity and humanity.
3. Empower disadvantaged vulnerable and excluded communities, especially women, youth, indigenous, displaced and disabled peoples
4. Promote and monitor effective ceasefire and peace-building agreements and programs
5. Restore participatory governance at all levels: international, national and local
6. Establish Commissions of Justice and Reconciliation to ensure that a sustainable and lasting peace is built upon the recovery of truth and the full provision of justice
7. Build human capacity to realise the above

We meet here in Pattani, in the midst of the people of Southern Thailand. We have heard their cries of anguish and their pleas for help. We have also had opportunity to observe, and learn from representatives of the government of Thailand, about the development initiatives being undertaken in response. But conflict continues unabated, with unacceptable loss of human life and untold human suffering, despite such response. More is clearly needed. Therefore, we call upon the government of Thailand:

- to secure the protection of all peoples of Southern Thailand,
- to bring an immediate end to continuing abuses, discriminations and denials and
- to fully support the entitlement of all peoples of Southern Thailand to respect for their identity, cultural diversity, resources and way of life. Putting an immediate end to a culture of impunity, is an absolute imperative in this regard.

AMAN strongly recommends and fully supports a speedy and just negotiated settlement of the conflict and an immediate cessation of all forms of violence. To that end, AMAN urges:

- the peoples of Southern Thailand to agree upon and designate their representatives to the peace negotiations, and
- the government of Thailand to ensure the full participation of such designated representatives in such peace negotiations.

Pattani, Thailand

January 28, 2011.

*AMAN is an acronym which stands for the Asian Muslim Action Network. The word also mean peace in Arabic.