

**THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL AND SUPREME
COURTS/COUNCILS AND EQUIVALENT INSTITUTIONS OF THE MEMBER
STATES OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION
(J-OIC)**

ISTANBUL DECLARATION

On 14-15 December 2018, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Turkey hosted in Istanbul the First Conference of the Constitutional and Supreme Courts/Councils and Equivalent Institutions of the Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) under the theme of “The Role of Higher Judiciary in Protecting the Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights”.

The Heads and Representatives of 42 Constitutional and Supreme Courts/Councils and Equivalent Institutions of the OIC Member/Observer States as well as Guest Courts and Regional Constitutional Justice Institutions have participated in the Conference.

The Turkish Constitutional Court is honored to undertake such an initiative and grateful to the participants for their utmost interest in the event.

We, the Heads and Representatives of the Constitutional and Supreme Courts/Councils and Equivalent Institutions of the Member States of OIC declare our commitment to the supremacy of the rule of law, human rights, and universal legal principles. We recognize the dire need for respect of the fundamental human rights and freedoms and call world nations to take necessary steps to ensure full enjoyment of rights and freedoms by all individuals. We express deep concern over widespread xenophobic and Islamophobic discourses and practices as well as terrorist activities undermining the promotion of a dignified life for all humanity and peaceful coexistence of all religions and beliefs.

In light of the valuable remarks and fruitful discussions throughout the Conference, we conclude that the principle of the rule of law and human rights constitute the key pillars of a just legal order. The constitutional and supreme jurisdictions play a central role in upholding the rule of law and human rights against undue intrusions. These jurisdictions should further assume a leading role in the development and reinforcement of the rule of law and human rights at national, regional, and international level.

In this endeavor of safeguarding and strengthening the rule of law and human rights, it is of utmost importance to establish an ongoing dialogue among the Constitutional and Supreme Courts/Councils and Equivalent Institutions of the Member States of OIC for exchanging information and best practices, sharing experiences, and discussing issues of common interest in constitutional jurisprudence and practice.

The Heads/Representatives of the Courts/Councils and Equivalent Institutions of the Member States of OIC present at the Conference recognize the need for greater cooperation and agree in principle to engage in activities with a view to institutionalize a forum among the respective Courts/Councils/Equivalent Institutions and hereby resolve to:

1. Convene regular conferences in order to discuss constitutional and human rights matters of shared concern and to exchange information, views, and experiences to promote the rule of law and human rights;
2. Form a Working Committee at expert-level consisting of Turkey, Indonesia, Algeria, Pakistan, Gambia on a voluntary basis to discover the possibilities for building a close partnership and prepare a report to be submitted to the respective Courts/Councils/Equivalent Institutions; and
3. Hold the next Conference in 2020 in Indonesia under patronage of Indonesian Constitutional Court.