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MEDIA RELEASE

AIS condemns the violence in Iraq and Syria and photo of the 7-yr old boy

The Australian Intercultural Society strongly condemns the incident in which a young boy is made to hold a severed head and pose for a photograph. No child should ever be put in this position. This image and the actions behind this are contrary to everything that Islam stands for.

The AIS is deeply concerned by the violent actions of IS militants in Syria and Iraq who are brutally killing all who stand against them, demolishing homes and destroying historic sacred sites.

They display blatant disregard for free will and human rights in the way that they either kill or force their ideological position on others.

This brutality is contrary to the teachings of Islam and an affront to humanity.

Islam demands that places of worship be protected and that the human rights of all to be safe-guarded, regardless of their backgrounds, beliefs or ethnicity.

Ahmet Polat, Executive Director of the Australian Intercultural Society said the situation that's unfolding in Iraq and Syria is deeply concerning and absolutely contrary to the true principles of Islam and Muslims.

"Those who conduct or support this violence might claim to act in the name of religion but the reality is that, in the words of contemporary Muslim scholar Fethullah Gulen who said '*A terrorist can NOT be a Muslim, nor can a Muslim be a terrorist*'.

"Islam values life immensely and the Quran clearly states that killing one person is just like killing the whole of humanity," Mr Polat said.

We trust the Australian community will understand that the despicable actions of these terrorists represent the inexcusable actions of a minority and that they do not find support with ordinary Muslims in Australia or anywhere.

We deeply regret that these murders claim to speak in the name of Islam and we reject completely everything they do.

We express our most profound condolences to all people who have lost loved ones in the region as a result of the violence.

We also hope that all Australians, whatever their faith, identity or heritage, can work together with the global community in helping those in need, protecting the persecuted and finding sustainable solutions to achieving long-lasting peace in the region.

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About the Australian Intercultural Society (AIS)

The Australian Intercultural Society (AIS) is a Melbourne based not for profit working to bring people together from different cultural, religious or other diverse backgrounds through various projects, such as the Annual State Parliament Iftar Dinner, study tours to Turkey and the Luncheon Series. For more information, please visit www.intercultural.org.au.

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