



United Nations Alliance of Civilizations



**STATEMENT BY THE UN HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE ALLIANCE OF
CIVILIZATIONS ON THE CLASHES IN EGYPT**

The United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations expresses his deep concern over the violent clashes that took place in Cairo and would like to convey to the families of the victims his solidarity and sympathy. These clashes not only hurt and affect people's lives but they harm the hopes of a whole nation and undermine its courageous struggle for a life in dignity, freedom and democracy.

As Egypt's historical transition follows its course, it is more necessary than ever to preserve stability and enhance the rule of law so that those responsible for this unacceptable violence are brought to justice. In democracy all citizens are equal regardless of their religion and beliefs or their ethnic origin. Building an inclusive society is integral to democracy and this was precisely what Tahrir Square has stood for since February. The Arab Spring was made by all Egyptians hand in hand - Muslims, Copts and all other Christians – united in speaking out for respect for their rights, freedoms, dignity, social justice and development.

At this critical time when the coming elections will be a turning point in the transition for democracy in Egypt, no one can accept that religion is misused by some extremist voices and appears as a source of conflict and violence that undermines security, stability and the transition to democracy.

I would like to call upon religious leaders to address the roots of tensions across diverse communities and explore further how the constructive role of religious communities in democracy building, human development and promoting social cohesion can be strengthened and built on. Furthermore, I would like to offer the strong support of the UN Alliance of Civilizations to the interim authorities and indeed to the Egyptian people in the process of building dialogue, pluralism and democracy.

Lisbon, 11 October 2011