

## **Azhar to intensify implementation of fraternity document with Vatican: Grand imam**

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Egypt's Al-Azhar will build on earlier efforts with the Vatican and intensify measures to implement the provisions of the *Document on Human Fraternity*, Grand Imam Ahmed El-Tayyeb said.



*Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Ahmed El-Tayyeb receives Cardinal Miguel Ángel Ayuso, President of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, in Cairo, 4 December 2021. Al-Azhar*

El-Tayyeb, the leader of the Sunni Muslim world's top religious institution, made the remarks on Saturday as he received Cardinal Miguel Ángel Ayuso, President of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, in Cairo.

The *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together* was signed in February 2019 by Pope Francis and El-Tayyeb in Abu Dhabi with the aim of reinforcing the principle of coexistence among religions.

The document is the foundation for the planned construction of the Interfaith Abrahamic Family House that is scheduled to open next year in Abu Dhabi, comprising a church, a mosque and a synagogue.



During Saturday's meeting, El-Tayyeb said the fraternity document has proposed solutions to the problems facing the world today from a religious standpoint, according to a statement by Al-Azhar.

Al-Azhar's relations with the Vatican remain an effective model for spreading tolerance and peace and fighting extremism, hate, wars and disputes, El-Tayyeb said.

El-Tayyeb added that scholars and religious leaders have a duty to confront negative ideologies that harm the moral health of society.

The path of peace and dialogue is strenuous and hard, El-Tayyeb said, affirming that everyone has to make an effort to take this path.

The world is in an urgent need of the values of brotherhood, peaceful coexistence and respect for one another, El-Tayyeb said.

Reliance on weapons to ignite strife and claim lives will not stabilise the world, he added.

Cardinal Ayuso hailed joint efforts led by El-Tayyeb and Pope Francis to consolidate peace and stability, affirming that the two leaders' meetings have sent messages of love and peace to religious followers worldwide.

The Higher Committee of Human Fraternity, to which Ayuso belongs as member and chair of current round of sessions, will work on raising awareness regarding the *Document on Human Fraternity*, Ayuso said.

The committee will also work on activating the document's provisions and opening new horizons of cooperation between institutions and officials to adopt the document and convey it to the youth.

Cardinal Ayuso also gave a lecture at Al-Azhar University, where he affirmed that extremists should recognise that dialogue between religions is possible without compromising each religion's identity and core beliefs.



Signing the *Document on Human Fraternity* was not easy, Ayuso said. However, the determination and sincerity of El-Tayyeb and Pope Francis have contributed to breaking

barriers between Muslims and Christians and resuming dialogue between Al-Azhar and the Vatican after a hiatus of around six years.

The grand imam visited the Vatican and met with Pope Francis last October. They discussed work on the initiatives agreed upon in the *Document on Human Fraternity*, including the construction of the Interfaith Abrahamic Family House.

Last month, El-Tayyeb and Pope Tawadros II, the patriarch of the See of St Mark and leader of Egypt's Coptic Orthodox Church, attended a celebration marking the 10th anniversary of the Egyptian Family House in Cairo's Nasr City.

The house was established in 2011 to promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Christians, which together constitute the Egyptian nation's fabric.

The house seeks to restore Islamic and Christian values, nurture Egyptian civilisation and promote a culture of compassion, empathy and tolerance.