

“We’ll turn the Sahara from a desert of blood into a garden of peace”

Rome, 22 May 2017. Full support of Sahara tribes to the security agreement for cross-border cooperation between Chad, Libya and Niger

Representatives of Tuareg, Toubou and Awlad Suleyman tribes give their full support to the agreement signed in Rome Sunday 21 May by the Interior and Security Ministers of Chad, Italy, Libya and Niger.

Rome – May 22, 2017. In the framework of the dialogue “The Sahara Triangle: New Perspectives”, fifteen government and tribal leaders from three bordering countries, Chad, Libya and Niger, at the presence of the Italian Minister of Interior Marco Minniti, signed a joint statement of concrete cooperation to “support peace, development and security on their borders and beyond, because **“there is no peace without security, there is no security without development, and there is no development without peace.”**”

The event was promoted by Ara Pacis Initiative and sponsored by the European Commission.

A further step was thus taken to consolidate the [peace and reconciliation agreement between the Libyan Awlad Suleyman and Tebu tribes](#), facilitated by the Ara Pacis Initiative with funding from the European Commission in December 2016 and signed in the presence of the Tuareg leaders on March 28 under the auspices of the Italian Minister of Interior, Marco Minniti and Vice President of the Libyan Presidential Council, Abdulsalam Kajman.

Chadian, Libyan and Niger ministers and tribal leaders call for the immediate implementation of this reconciliation agreement on the part of the Libyan Presidential Council, Italy and the European Union, also in light of the Joint Declaration by the Interior Ministers of Chad, Italy, Libya and Niger, signed on May 21, 2017. The Awlad Suleyman-Toubou Reconciliation agreement is considered fundamental in view of maintaining the trust of key parties involved and as a necessary condition for lasting peace and security throughout the region.

Tribal leaders and ministers underlined the fundamental and binding importance of the link between peace, security and development, recalling the urgency of addressing the root causes of violence, terrorism, illegal immigration, illegal trafficking of drugs, weapons and human beings, which are to be attributed to extreme poverty, injustice and failure to honor the dignity of peoples.

“We know perfectly well that security and border control go hand in hand with a full-fledged project and full collaboration with the tribes who are historically the guardians of the Sahara,” said Mr. Minniti. “There is a relationship of mutual trust between us and we rely heavily on this relationship of mutual trust.”

“By extending the scope of the cooperation with Libyan partners to the other two Saharan countries most affected by the phenomenon of illegal immigration, smuggling and terrorism, we have activated transnational tribal networks of solidarity to bolster the official agreements between states in an inclusive way, respectful of the dignity of peoples, key factors for achieving stability and peace,” commented Maria Nicoletta Gaida, president of the Ara Pacis Initiative.

Among the signatories to the statement: Mohamed Bazoum, Minister for the Interior, Public Security, Immigration and Decentralization (Niger); Youssouf Barkay Minister of Institutional Relations (Niger); Ahmat Mahamat Bachir, Minister for the Interior, Public Security and Immigration (Chad); Youssouf Abassalah, Minister of Sports and Youth (Chad), Moulay Iqdeedi Amaa Quineedi President of the Libyan Supreme Tuareg, Alzalawi Mina Sale Qalama Alzalawi, Sultan of the Tebu of Libya, Alsunousi Masoud Zayd President of the High Council of Awlad Suleiman (Libya).