I am writing to express the sincere condolences of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to the Government and people of Iraq, following the tragic loss of life in the Ibn Al-Khatib hospital in Baghdad.

The fact that this fire broke out at a hospital at a time when health professionals are confronted with intense caseloads of COVID-19 patients heightens our grief and heartache. We will keep you, the victims, the bereaved and the good people of Iraq in our thoughts and prayers at this difficult time.

It is hard to find the appropriate words to express our sadness given that the majority of the victims of this fire were either COVID-19 patients or their relatives. We pray for the speedy recovery for all of those injured by this fire.

In this moment of tragedy, we have also seen the bravery, courage and compassion of the heroic people of Iraq. The doctors, nurses and medical professionals on the frontline in the battle against the pandemic are heroes who deserve our respect and gratitude. The firefighters who courageously fought the fire demonstrated selfless devotion to duty. The hundreds of neighbourhood volunteers who also fought the flames embodied the best principles of neighbourliness and community which Iraq is renowned for throughout the world.
In this hour of mourning, OPEC stands shoulder-to-shoulder with the Government and great people of Iraq. Your magnificent nation, the birthplace of our Organization and one of our Founder Members, is regarded with tremendous esteem, respect and affection by everyone in the OPEC Family.

We pray that Almighty Allah gives you the strength to bear this terrible loss and we will work closely with you, as the fraternity of nations rallies together to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please accept, Excellency, assurances of my highest consideration and respect.

Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo
Secretary General