

Holy Wisdom

Peace: Showing that Others Matter!

VOLUME XXVII

FALL 2017

Publication of the Syrian Orthodox Church in America on United Nations Affairs. In fulfilling the UN Mission of SOCA, both Orthodoxy and Ecumenism are involved. SOCA is an NGO associated with the United Nations Department of Public Information. This publication is disseminated to the entire membership of the Church throughout the world on a quarterly basis. Please bring this information to the attention of your parishioners and all those under your care. The Earth is holy and a manifestation of God. Pray for peace and the UN.

Anne Riccitelli, Litt, D.

United Nations Representative

Jin Chacko

Alternative UN Representative

Joseph Cannizzo

Alternative UN Representative

Christopher Casais

UN Youth Representative

Dominic Zmarlicki

UN Youth Representative

Jonathan Dong, *Holy Wisdom*, Editor

Antoinette A. DeLuca, Psy.D.,L.H.D., *President*

H.E. Rev. Ambassador Anthony J. DeLuca, Ph.D., Psy.D. *Advisor*

2295 Victory Boulevard, Staten Island, New York 10314
(718) 698-0700 IgnatiusU@aol.com <http://IgnatiusU.org>

EDITOR'S NOTE: It is necessary through the collaboration of NGOs to raise awareness among communities as we promote peace. If you will, the need for community consciousness is a way we can connect parties and others. It is important at this time that all parties begin to realize that they are a part of a larger picture, that they are in it together and they have common concerns. If there is a conflict all parties have contributed to the conflict and they have the power to come together to develop a non-violent intervention to result into a resolution. It is time for us as people to acknowledge that there is something more that exceed our own individual positions and needs. The United Nations, religious institutions and NGO can be an avenue to promote community consciousness to encourage global consciousness, clear and realistic decisions as they promote non-violent solutions to conflicts!

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Our Work at the United Nations

UN Oriental Orthodox Prayer Service

Ambassador Anthony DeLuca, Adviser to Syrian Orthodox Church in America, assisted by Jin Chacko, Alternate Rep and Christopher Casais, Youth Rep, was in charge of welcoming and escorting the Diplomats of the United Nations, including His Excellency Miroslav Lajcak, President of the General Assembly, his wife and the Prince and Princess of Serbia.

By Jin Chacko

Alternative Representative of Syrian Orthodox Church in America and accredited UNDPPI



On November 08, I attended the Standing Conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches at the Holy Trinity Archdiocesan Council for the United Nations Community. The hierarchs in attendance were as follows, Archbishop Demetrius (Ecumenical Patriarchate), Metropolitan Joseph (Patriarchate of Antioch), Bishop John (Patriarchate of Moscow), Archbishop Daniel (Ecumenical Patriarchate), Bishop Irinej (Patriarchate of Serbia), Metropolitan Tikhon and Archbishop Michael (Orthodox Church in America), Archbishop Khajag Barsamian (Armenian Apostolic Church), Archbishop Mor Dinysius John Kawak (Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch), Archbishop Mor Titus Yeldo (Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church), Bishop David (Coptic Orthodox Church), Very Rev. Melake Hayel Made Tsion-Durden (Ethiopian Orthodox Church) and Very Rev. Fr. Ghebremichael Yohannes (Eritrean Orthodox Church).

Dr. Anne Riccitelli, Representative of the Syrian Orthodox Church in America was in attendance. The service began with a procession of the bishops and followed by a small prayer service. Rev. John Vlahos, Dean of the Holy Trinity Archdiocesan Cathedral gave his welcome speech. Two refugee testimonies were recited one was called “Arsh” read by Ms. Demetra Mantikas and “Adnan” read by Ms. Spyridoula Fotinis. Mrs. Lila Prounis was conferred the medal of Saint Paul by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrius for her 38 years of service to the United Nations.

His Eminence Archbishop Khajag Barsamian gave the first remarks he mentioned the terrorist attacks that happened in NYC recently, it was a dark moment for the people of the city as well the tragedy that happened in Texas. This service is for the refugees we pray for a world of peace where children can live

with respect and dignity. The second remarks were given by His Eminence Miroslav Lajcak, President of the 72nd Session of the UN General Assembly, he stated the reason we meet at the UN is to help those in need particularly true of refugees and migrants. The religious community has helped with shelter and food since the medieval times. Places of worship would provide shelter for people who were being persecuted. UN workers are trying to help people in need. The religious community has preached messages of tolerance and dignity. They have worked with people through peace. The UN is really here for the people the focus on the people cannot be lost.

Her Eminence Maria Theofili, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations, mentioned the world experiences many different climate changes even in her home country of Greece has experienced problems of armed conflicts in the Middle East. The islands of Greece have welcomed migrants and refugees in this attempt to a safe shelter. The stories of those that it welcomed is no coincidence 800,000 people came to the islands of Greece. Here in New York our mandate is to bring unity for our global community. We in the UN are working among other things which we hopefully can help others.

The final remarks were given by His Eminence Archbishop Demetrius, Chair of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America. His Eminence stated that it is a profound joy of the 9th annual UN committee work of the UN to bring peace justice and reconciliation as an ongoing effort between Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches. We need to encourage the transformed work of the UN. Our prayer services deals with the migrants and refugees. It is a privilege and an honor to be the chair of Orthodox Bishops. We lift up our prayer to God and therefore come together in this service to grow in love for our fellow brethren refugees who are further away from their homeland. There are currently 65 million displaced refugees in the world today. The UN is constantly at a crossroads especially on the ongoing process for the global compact to millions of refugees. We beseech you to take full advantage of this importance, please consider the following the first one is to address the root cause of migration in a living environment. Migrants never had a say in the matter. Secondly each country according to each capacity has the ability to show mercy to our fellow men. Thirdly we must do our best to help refugees and migrants and they should be treated with dignity and respect.

Joint Orthodox Prayer Service for the United Nations



Diplomats from the United Nations gathered alongside Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Christians for the annual Joint Orthodox Prayer Service for the UN Community, at New York’s Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral on Wednesday, November 8.

Archbishop Demetrios, Primate and *geron* of the Greek Orthodox Church in America, led the prayer service and delivered a closing address.

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Diocesan Primate, welcomed guests and reflected on the history of the UN Prayer Service, initiated 16 years ago in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

The evening’s guest speakers were Miroslav Lajčák, president of the 72nd Session of the UN General Assembly, and Ambassador Maria Theofili, Greece’s representative to the UN. Greek Orthodox community leader Lila Prounis was conferred with a special honor from her church. The service—which went forward under the theme “Interceding for Migrants and Refugees”—also incorporated testimonies from people recently displaced by war or persecution.

Organized under the auspices of the Joint Commission of the Standing Conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in North and Central Americas, the annual prayer service gives Orthodox Christians an opportunity to join in worship, to learn more about each other’s heritage, and to engage with United Nations dignitaries.

To view a photo gallery, [click here](#).

[Reflections on the Annual Orthodox Prayer Service for the United Nations Community](#)
Christopher Casais

SOCA NGO Youth Representative



On Wednesday, November 8, 2017, at 6:45 P.M., a prayer service was held at the Greek Orthodox Archdiocesan Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, at 337 East 74th Street, New York. The service was coordinated by the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America and the Standing Conference of Oriental Churches, and was entitled, 'Annual Orthodox Prayer Service for the United Nations Community'. In attendance at the prayer service were a number of church hierarchs such as: His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, His Eminence, Archbishop Demetrios of the Greek Archdiocese of America; His Eminence, Archbishop Daniel, President of the Consistory of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church; His Grace, Bishop Irinej of the Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Eastern America; His Grace, Bishop Sevastianos of Zela, Greek Archdiocese; His Grace, Bishop John of Naro-Fominsk, Administrator of the Patriarchal Parishes in the U.S.; and His Eminenc, Archbishop Mor Titus Yeldho, of the Malankara Archdiocese of the Syrian Orthodox Church in North America. In addition to the hierarchs in attendance, a statement by His Excellency Mr. Miroslav Lajcak, President of the 72nd Session of the UN General Assembly was given, and in attendance, was their Royal Highnesses Prince Mihailo and Princess Ljubica of Serbia and Ambassador and Plenipotentiary Theofili of the Permanent Mission of the Hellenic Republic to the UN, among other various dignitaries from the United Nations Community.

The purpose of this service, as stated by its organizers, was to bring together members of UN agencies, Member States, the church and civil society, to allow them to reflect, in a sacred environment, the work which they have been achieving throughout the world with a special emphasis this year on the millions of refugees and migrants throughout the world. The prayer service was initiated 16 years ago in the wake of the September 11th terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York. To illustrate the major theme of the service, as mentioned above, of the plight of millions of refugees and migrants, short but powerful testimony was given by two survivors of the refugee and migrant crisis, Arsh and Adman. Arsh and Adman provided short testimony on how they overcame various tragedies on their journey as refugees from the Middle East, describing the poor conditions and life-threatening conditions and circumstances which they faced daily. The testimony depicted the tragic and life-threatening circumstances which both these refugees lived through, such as family members dying and being injured from bomb blasts and gun shots in the Middle East caused by Isis and the raging wars in the Middle East.

The powerful testimony of these survivors spurred the church hierarchs and dignitaries present to discuss, in more detail, the purpose of the prayer service, of the church and of the United Nations community at large. For instance, the central theme of the service was given by H.E. Mr. Miroslav Lajcak, which was to remind people that the reasons for meeting at the prayer service are not very different for the reasons for meeting at the United Nations; both communities have provided food and shelter during these troubling circumstances throughout the world. Sometimes, even, these efforts have happened side-by-side. The church has helped influence policy making by promoting peace throughout humanity and therefore, has and will continue to aid the United Nations in reaching peace deals around the world. The church continues to promote the idea that humans are created by God and are called to put humanity first and help one another in creating shared objectives that bring peace, reconciliation, justice and healing. The gathering of various dignitaries and church leaders from distinct churches, facilitates the promotion of peace and of freedom, by working in tandem with one another and setting differences aside that hinder positive development and growth. The call to peace by the churches have transcended religion, therefore, by offering shelter and support no matter who the person in need is. As Mr. Lajcak mentioned, the churches have not only helped people on the move but have also helped to address the root causes of the refugee and migrant problem.



HIGH LEVEL EVENT

Theme	Base lining and laying foundations for Sustainable Development in Africa: Moving forward	
Wednesday October 18th 2017	1:15PM - 2:45PM	<p style="text-align: center;">Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union to the UN 5th Floor 305 East 47th Street 3 Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza</p>
Key Issues Some of the issues that will be discussed during the side event include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for strengthening national and regional level implementation and follow-up mechanisms on Africa Agenda 2063 and global Agenda 2030 for sustainable development • The role of development partners in promoting a coordinated, coherent and integrated approach to the implementation of both Agendas in Africa • Mobilizing support for the strengthening of the data ecosystem in Africa • Mobilizing resources and support for the implementation of the integrated agenda Furthermore, the event will launch the 2017 Africa Sustainable Development Report The report provides comprehensive and comparable data and analysis on country performance on selected goals.		<p style="text-align: center;"> Key speakers</p> <p>H.E Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat Chairperson, African Union Commission</p> <p>Ms. Vera Songwe Executive Secretary, UNECA</p> <p>Mr. Akinwumi A. Adesina Chairperson President, African Development bank</p> <p>Mr. Abdoulaye Mar Dieye Regional Director for Africa, United Nations Development Programme</p> <p>Mr. Eddy Maloka CEO Africa Peer Review Mechanism</p>
To register contact: emmanuel.akinbobola@undp.org · ElrashdiAZ@africa-union.org		

The Sacred and UN Origins

By Jin Chacko

Alternative Representative of Syrian Orthodox Church in America and accredited UNDPI



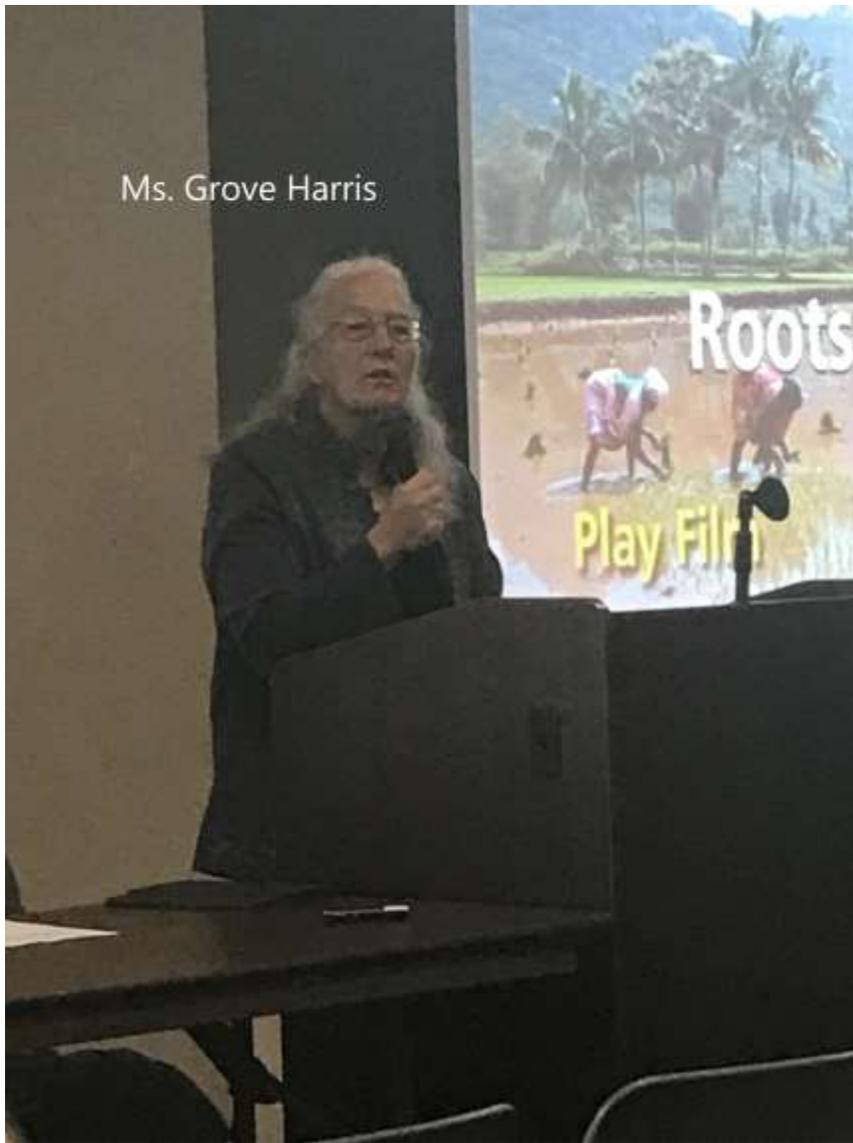
On October 23rd, I attended a meeting at the United Nations Plaza on the origins of spirituality at the start of the UN spirituality week. The first speaker was Rabbi Roger Ross, UN representative for United Religions. He mentioned that former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan said that the millennial peace summit of the religious spiritual leaders mentioned many times the importance of non spiritual and the spiritual. The question we have to ask ourselves is what do we have to do? In part of what we are working on are women's efforts to the United Nations. When the word man comes up in a conversation we wonder if it's kosher to change it to man and women. It makes it easier for everyone to accept. One of the things I tell people about Kofi Annan is that he mentioned Dr. Martin Luther King had stated that geographically our world is one now we have to make it spiritually one we must make it a brotherhood. Science became so advanced they claim they don't need God anymore. It is our job as spiritual beings to get the word out there. It's all about spiritual support and befriending everyone.

The second speaker was Mrs. Alison Van Dyk, who serves as the Executive Director and Chair of the Board for the Temple of Understanding at the United Nations. She stated that the temple of understanding started in 1960 by Juliet Hollister after a realization that the world was in grave danger unless the gifts, wisdom, and insights of religious traditions could be recognized and cultivated to promote positive social change. She is the first woman to have founded an interfaith organization. Eleanor Roosevelt was among the first to endorse the concept. The fifth Spiritual Summit was held in 1975 and was the first interfaith conference to be held at the United Nations, and it laid the groundwork for the Temple of Understanding's continuing involvement.

The final speaker for the event was Mrs. Grove Harris, the main UN representative for the Temple of Understanding. She stated that when we think of sustainable development goals she had the privilege of making a statement that there should be no more dumping of toxic waste into water bodies. When we think about the fate of the world, stopping polluted drinking water is very important. We are fighting for

the human right to clean drinking water and can't afford to have it privatized. The essential service that everyone needs is food, water and education. The United States wanted to fight for the universal right to water but we felt like it had to be a human right instead. We also need to help women get education so that they are able to provide for their families. We are not going to improve SDG's if women are not part of it we are the voice to the United Nations.

Ms. Grove Harris







Ms. Alison Van Dyk

[The UN Spirit of the United Nations Award Ceremony](#)

By Jin Chacko

Alternative Representative of Syrian Orthodox Church in America and accredited UNDPI



On October 23rd, I attended the 2017 Spirit of the United Nations Award Ceremony held at the Church Center at the United Nations. The award ceremony was presented by the NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns. Ms. Genie Kagawa is the Chairperson of that NGO she gave her opening remarks describing her committee as a bland statement horrified by scenes of violence this is the role of spirituality we must create an environment for peace. People will be looking for the light the UN is a holy place and a holy ground it's there to uplift human beings who are God's divine creation. Congratulatory remarks were given by Mr. Daniel Perell, Global Organizing Partner of the NGO Group. He mentioned there is a strong emphasis on material well being of humanity different perspectives on the subject have a higher purpose according to the Baha'i' writing it states we can't segregate the heart the one acts upon another.

A distinguished guest special remark was given by Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury, former Under-Secretary-General and High Representative to the UN. The ambassador recognizes the role of the youth at the UN. He mentioned don't be afraid to fail and don't be de-energized try to learn and get strength. Whatever we do we all are here to serve humanity. The first award of the event was given to H.E. Ms. Katalin Annamaria Bogyay, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations. Ambassador Bogyay mentioned that we can be inspired by each other when she was thinking about the spirit of the UN she was looking at the musicians performing having a music background she was able to understand and feel the music it doesn't matter their skin color or religion this is the spirit of listening change the way of thinking I say something you say something that is what dialogue means be open to the source of others.

The second award was given to Ms. Simona Cruciani, Political Affairs Officer for the Office of the Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide. The third award went to Mr. Richard Jordan, NGO Representative at the UN Royal Academy of Science International Trust he mentioned that we must include spirituality, peace and prevail. The fourth award was given to Mr. Danilo Parmegiani, Representative of the Legion of Goodwill, he mentioned we are facing threat of nuclear war we have to overcome tough situation sacred words of Jesus love one another as I have loved you. The last award of the ceremony was given to Ambassador Isaiah Zimba Chaahala, Former Ambassador to Zambia to the UN and European Union. He stated he believed in walking these steps as a pioneer and was involved in helping HIV victims in Zambia the youth are the future. He mentioned that October 24th marks Zambia independence and UN day. The spirit of the UN works like the spirit of God through the UN this is not by coincidence but by design. The closing remarks were given by Rabbi Roger Rossand there was a cake cutting celebration marking the 72nd Anniversary of the UN.

Ambassador Isaiah Zimba Chabala

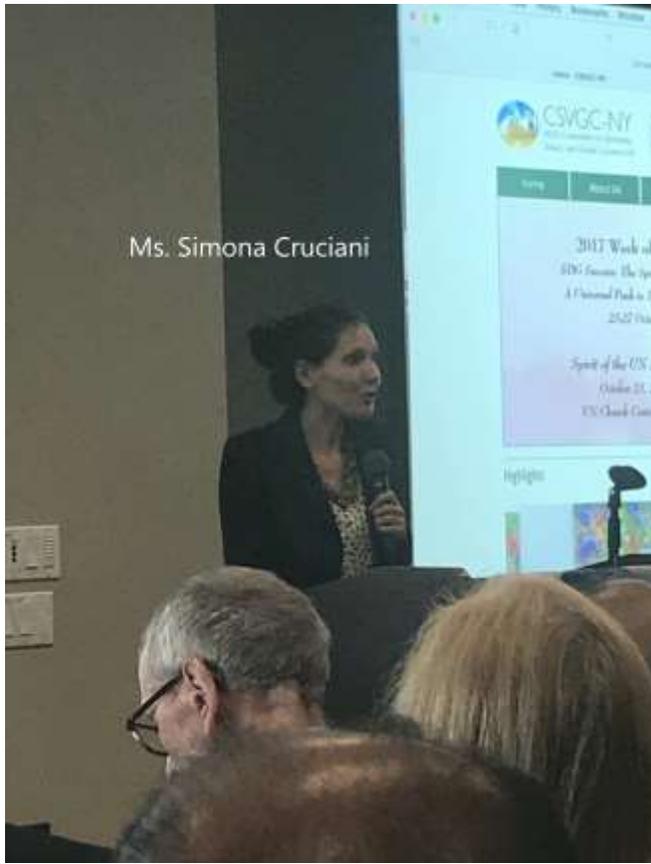


H.E. Ms. Katalin Annamaria Bogyay



Mr. Richard Jordan





Ms. Simona Cruciani



Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury



United Nations 72nd Anniversary Celebration
Cake Cutting Ceremony



Mr. Danilo Parmigiani

SICC 2017 Fall Dinner Report

Ambassador Anthony DeLuca, Advisor to Syrian Orthodox Church in America, elected to the Board of Managers of the Staten Island Council of Churches, assisted by Jin Chacko, Alternate Rep.

By Jin Chacko

Alternative Representative of Syrian Orthodox Church in America and accredited UNDPI



On November 2nd, 2017, I attended the fall assembly dinner of the Staten Island Council of Churches at the All Saints Episcopal Church on 2329 Victory Blvd. The dinner was opened with a welcoming remark from Deacon Paul Kosinski, President of the Staten Island Council of Churches. The program was led by an invocation from the Rev. Matt Schaeffer.

The first honorees award of the night was given to Rev. N.J. L'Heureux, Jr. who is the Executive Director of the Queens Federation of Churches. He provides oversight for the Federation's varied programs which include information services, consultations, training seminars and workshops for church leaders. He stated that the word ecumenical comes from the Greek meaning the place of habitations, so how did we get to the word ecumenical outreach this earth is the place of our habitations. God gave us this planet we are all children of God and are living in His household. Ecumenical is to be a family relationship of God's household we are in fact related in God's one family. If the whole world took that seriously the whole war apparatus would not exist. We are living in a world where immigration is a suspect we seem to demonize people in the family of God and that is blasphemy. We are one and need to be bilingual in the family of God.

The second honorees award was given to Rev. Karen Jackson, who serves as Project Hospitality Director of Recovery and Community Initiatives and is an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament in the Reformed Church in America. Rev. Jackson mentioned the two project hospitality help centers located in Staten Island help people with their public health benefits eligibility also they help with legal and immigrations services and also provide free tax services. At the friendship dinners held every month the subject of racism was discussed. The third and final honorees award was given to Mrs. Yvonne A. Taylor,

a lifelong member of the Rossville AME Zion Church. She mentioned to the attendees to step up and do whatever you can whenever you are able to help your community.

The meeting ended with the new committee officers for 2018, 2019 and 2020 of the SI Council of Churches installed in a special ceremony performed by Rev. N.J. L'Heureux Jr. The newly elected board of managers, Class of 2018 members is as follows, Rev. Ambassador Anthony DeLuca of the Syrian Orthodox Church in America, Rev. Art Petterssen, Mr. Laney Dahl, Rev E.J. Emerson and Mrs. Yvonne Taylor. The Class of 2019 members is Mr. Tome DeLiso, Rev. Victoria Kittoe, Mr. Paul Molina and Mr. Pasquale Valenti and the Class of 2020 is as follows Mrs. Lillian Leary, Rev. Rafael Garcia, Mrs. Claire Smith, Rev. Carmen M. Ortiz, Mr. Ron Pfaff and Mr. Robert Prather.



The Newly Elected Board of Directors Members of the Staten Island Council of Churches



Deacon Paul Kosinski, President of the Staten Island Council of Churches



Jin Chacko, Alternative Rep. of the Syrian Orthodox Church in America



Mrs. Yvonne A. Taylor, member of Rossville AME Zion Church



Rev. Karen Jackson, Director of Project Hospitality's Recovery and Community Initiatives



The Rev. N.J. L'Heureux Jr., Executive Director of the Queens
Federation of Churches

Responsibility of Religions and Governments for Peace

20 November 2017

Dear Esteemed Colleague:

It is my pleasure to cordially invite you to a high-level discussion on *Religions and Governments for Peace - Between Autonomy and Complementarity*, taking place on 5 December 2017 at German House.

You will find additional information below.

In Partnership for Peace,

Dr. William Vendley

Secretary General

Religions for Peace

The German Federal Foreign Office is pleased to invite you to an event on

**RESPONSIBILITY OF RELIGIONS AND GOVERNMENTS FOR PEACE –
BETWEEN AUTONOMY AND COMPLEMENTARITY**

Tuesday, 5 December 2017, 12:00 – 5:00 pm

German House

871 UN Plaza, New York

Religion is an important source of understanding, peace and stability for many people. National governments and the international community should therefore consider measures to strengthen the potential of religious actors to support peace and build bridges. In this spirit, the German Federal Foreign Office launched the “Responsibility of Religions for Peace” initiative earlier this year.

This conference will bring together religious leaders, civil society representatives, policymakers and representatives of multilateral organizations. It seeks to identify the main challenges to cooperation across different religions and the conditions for effective cooperation in the future.

Please RSVP by 29 November 2017 to accommodate you accordingly as space is limited.

Your title, full name and name of organization is needed to ensure smooth access procedures.

It is important to bring your passport or picture-ID.

rrp-event@giz.de

Co-sponsored by:

United Nations Population Fund

United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect

United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

Religions for Peace



Seventy-second session
Agenda item 11

**Resolution adopted by the General Assembly
on 13 November 2017**

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/72/L.5 and A/72/L.5/Add.1)]

**72/6. Building a peaceful and better world through sport
and the Olympic ideal**

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 70/4 of 26 October 2015, in which it decided to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-second session the sub-item entitled “Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal”, and recalling also its prior decision to consider the sub-item every two years, in advance of the Summer and Winter Olympic Games,

Recalling also its resolution 48/11 of 25 October 1993, which, inter alia, revived the ancient Greek tradition of *ekecheiria* (“Olympic Truce”) calling for a truce during the Olympic Games to encourage a peaceful environment and ensure safe passage, access and participation for athletes and relevant persons at the Games, thereby mobilizing the youth of the world to the cause of peace,

Recalling further that the core concept of *ekecheiria*, historically, has been the cessation of hostilities from seven days before until seven days after the Olympic Games, which, according to the legendary oracle of Delphi, was to replace the cycle of conflict with a friendly athletic competition every four years,

Recognizing the valuable contribution of sport in promoting education, sustainable development, peace, cooperation, solidarity, fairness, social inclusion and health at the local, regional and international levels, and noting that, as declared in the 2005 World Summit Outcome,¹ sports can contribute to an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding among peoples and nations,

Welcoming the designation of 6 April as the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace,

¹ Resolution 60/1.



Recalling that, in its resolution 71/160, it supported the independence and autonomy of sport as well as the mission of the International Olympic Committee in leading the Olympic movement and of the International Paralympic Committee in leading the Paralympic movement, and recognized the unifying and conciliative nature of major international sport events and that such events should be organized in the spirit of peace, mutual understanding, friendship, tolerance and inadmissibility of discrimination of any kind,

Acknowledging the fundamental principles of the Olympic Charter, including principle 6, which states that the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in the Olympic Charter shall be secured for all, without discrimination of any kind,

Noting with satisfaction that the United Nations flag will be flown at the Olympic stadium and in the Olympic villages of the XXIII Olympic Winter Games and the XII Paralympic Winter Games,

1. *Urges* Member States to observe the Olympic Truce individually and collectively, within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations, throughout the period from the seventh day before the start of the XXIII Olympic Winter Games until the seventh day following the end of the XII Paralympic Winter Games, to be held in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, in 2018, in particular, to ensure the safe passage, access and participation of athletes, officials and all other accredited persons taking part in the Olympic Winter Games and Paralympic Winter Games, and to contribute through other appropriate measures to the safe organization of the Games;

2. *Underlines* the importance of cooperation among Member States to collectively implement the values of the Olympic Truce around the world, and emphasizes the important role of the International Olympic Committee, the International Paralympic Committee and the United Nations in this regard;

3. *Welcomes* the work of the International Olympic Committee and the International Paralympic Committee, as well as the International Olympic Truce Foundation and the International Olympic Truce Centre, in mobilizing national and international sports federations and organizations, National Olympic and Paralympic Committees and associations of National Olympic Committees to take concrete actions at the local, national, regional and international levels to promote and strengthen a culture of peace based on the spirit of the Olympic Truce, and invites those organizations and national committees to cooperate and share information and best practices, as appropriate;

4. *Also welcomes* the leadership of Olympic and Paralympic athletes in promoting peace and human understanding through sport and the Olympic ideal;

5. *Calls upon* all Member States to cooperate with the International Olympic Committee and the International Paralympic Committee in their efforts to use sport as a tool to promote peace, dialogue and reconciliation in areas of conflict during and beyond the period of the Olympic and Paralympic Games;

6. *Recognizes* that sport and the Olympic and Paralympic Games can be used to promote human rights and strengthen universal respect for such rights, thus contributing to their full realization;

7. *Welcomes* the cooperation among Member States, the United Nations and the specialized agencies, funds and programmes, and the International Olympic Committee and the International Paralympic Committee, to maximize the potential of sport to make a meaningful and sustainable contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development,⁵ and encourages the Olympic and Paralympic movements to work closely with national and international sports organizations on the use of sport to this end;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly to promote the observance of the Olympic Truce among Member States and support for human development initiatives through sport and to continue to cooperate effectively with the International Olympic Committee, the International Paralympic Committee and the sporting community in general in the realization of those objectives;

9. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-fourth session the sub-item entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal" of the item entitled "Sport for development and peace" and to consider the sub-item before the XXXII Olympic Summer Games and the XVI Paralympic Summer Games, to be held in Tokyo in 2020.

*48th plenary meeting
13 November 2017*

[UN Syrian Orthodox Church In America Mission To Guatemala](#)



APOSTOLADO DEL ESPÍRITU SANTO

La iniciativa del Movimiento "Apostolado del Espíritu Santo" es una respuesta a la búsqueda de crear lineamientos y perspectivas que nos conduzcan a un verdadero espíritu cristiano. La dimensión falsa del cristianismo provocó enfrentamientos y desacuerdos entre los mismos cristianos en nuestras comunidades.

La búsqueda de la unidad y de la paz debe ser resultado de la integridad de la fe que conlleva el creyente. Sin ello, la vida de armonía es solo una expresión lingüística.

El Dios que hace caer la lluvia y hace salir el sol para buenos y malos nos ayude y nos conforte en esta iniciativa.

Apoyar toda iniciativa en vías de alcanzar la unidad y la paz entre los cristianos y con los demás. Es



una obra de fe y de caridad. Refleja la existencia de Cristo en la vida misma.

Bendiciones,
Rev. Pbro., Pedro Martinez

UN Report submission to Holy Wisdom from Joseph Cannizzo



My martial art school Staten Island Judo Jujitsu Dojo is directly involved with the community of Staten Island on a grassroots level. There are many individuals in Staten Island that are struggling with depression, obesity, drug addiction and abuse.

This motivational video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbCTL44oIIM> was made to inspire individuals who are suffering from these problems and empower them to take action. Once enrolled, these people become stronger mentally, physically and spiritually. They become part of a small

community within the community. This elite group is comprised of people all working toward a common goal, self perfection. As an NGO representative to the United Nations Department of Public information, I know that many NGOs recognize sport as a high impact tool in humanitarian, development and peace building efforts. Sport can no longer be considered a luxury in any society, but is rather an important investment in the present and future.

In 2003, the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development defined sport as “all forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction, such as play, recreation, organized or competitive sport and indigenous sports and games.”

Sport has a unique power to attract, mobilize and inspire. By its very nature, sport is about participation. It is about inclusion and citizenship. It stands for human values such as respect for the opponent, acceptance of binding rules, teamwork and fairness, all of which are contained in the Charter of the United Nations.

My work in Staten Island is consistent with the goals and core philosophy of the United Nations Office on Sport and Development, as well as of this NGO which seeks to promote education, peace, human rights and the development of individuals.

Submitted by Joseph Cannizzo, SOCA Representative to UN/DPI, December 11, 2017

Video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbCTL44oIIM&authuser=0>

U.N. Event Supports Religious Pluralism in Nineveh Plains

By BETH GRIFFIN

Protection of religious and ethnic minorities is crucial to the long-term stability of the Middle East, but time is running out to provide meaningful aid to prevent permanent migration from the area by besieged minorities. On the Nineveh Plain of Iraq, a vigorous church-led effort is under way to resettle Christians who fled when ISIS fighters overran the region in 2014.

Speakers at a Nov. 30 conference at the United Nations organized by the Holy See Mission to the United Nations welcomed the military defeat of ISIS. Still, they cautioned the group could achieve its ideological goal to eliminate pluralism if the international community does not support the reintegration of returning minorities.

Using the common Arabic name for ISIS, Archbishop Bernardito Auza, permanent observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, said, “We seek to return to survivors, as much as possible, what Daesh pillaged from them. This means ensuring the conditions for them to return to their places of origin and live in dignity and safety, with the basic social, economic and political frameworks necessary to ensure community cohesion.”

Father Salar Kajo, vicar general and pastor of three parishes in the Chaldean Catholic Diocese of Al Qosh on the northern Nineveh Plain, said, “The towns in my parishes are 100 percent Christian towns,” where the Church is the center of life for the people.

“These are peaceful people, without any military or political power. They come from one of the oldest Christian cultures in the world, nearly 2,000 years old. They only want to live in peace,” he said.

ISIS chased them from their homes, and they lived for two years as displaced persons in other parts of Iraq, largely reliant on the Church for help, Father Kajo said. When the Christian towns in Nineveh were liberated in late 2016, people hurried home to find their towns looted and homes destroyed. “The churches and cemeteries had all been desecrated. There was no power and no water,” he said.

As 1,000 returning Christians families rebuilt their homes and life began to return to normal in the town of Teleskof, Father Kajo said new fighting erupted between the Kurdish government and the Iraqi army. Although a cease-fire is in place, people are deeply afraid of more violence and sleep with suitcases packed in case they have to evacuate, he said.

“I fear that if some stability cannot come in these next months, the Christian people will break and leave the land of Nineveh forever,” Father Kajo said.

Archbishop Bashar Matti Warda, Chaldean Catholic Archbishop of Erbil, Iraq, said Christians and Church leaders in Iraq “have shown their commitment to be part of the solution and not part of the problem in terms of bringing peace and human rights.” He said the Church cares for more than 125,000 internally displaced Christians who fled ISIS.

The three major Christian churches of Nineveh—Chaldean Catholic, Syriac Catholic and Syriac Orthodox—represent 90 percent of Iraqi Christians. They created the Nineveh Reconstruction Committee to coordinate the reconstruction of historic Christian towns in the region. Stephen Rasche, director and legal counsel for the committee, said his group “has successfully coordinated over \$7 million in reconstruction and rehabilitation aid into the Nineveh Plain.” The funds were provided by Aid to the Church in Need and the Knights of Columbus, along with a grant from the government of Hungary.

Edward Clancy, director of outreach and evangelization for Brooklyn-based Aid to the Church in Need, said his organization has donated more than \$65 million to aid Syria and Iraq since the rise of ISIS. He described its holistic approach to integrate humanitarian assistance with economic recovery, emotional and spiritual healing, and the protection of human rights of Christians and other minorities.

Carl Anderson, supreme knight of the Knights of Columbus, said his organization has committed about \$17 million to help Christians “and those in their care, targeted by IS since 2014.” He said it is critical that aid operations work with the leaders of the fragile communities who are best positioned to help resettle their people.

[DPINGO Year in Review Video](#)

Dear NGO Colleagues,

We would like to thank you for an exhilarating and informative year! Click on the link below to see ‘Year in Review’ video of DPI/NGO. See you all in the new year with more Briefings, more Chat Series, more Engagement. #2018

[DPI/NGO Year in Review](#)

Healthy Lives, Well Being and the Human Right to the Highest Attainable Standard of Physical and Mental Health

William P. Lynch

Associate of SOCA UN NGO



24 OCT 2017 1:15pm-2:45pm

This meeting, co-sponsored by the Permanent Missions of Chile, Ecuador, and South Africa, and organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in partnership with the World Health Organization, explored the interconnectedness of United Nations sustainable development goals (SDGs) and human rights, particularly in the areas of physical and mental health.

The moderator, a representative of the Permanent Mission of Ecuador, highlighted that the right to health presents a unique issue for many states. The absence of disease alone does not ensure well-being of a people, particularly in developing countries and especially for women, children and adolescents in these countries.

Mr. Ephraim Leshala Mminele, the Deputy Permanent Representative of South Africa explained the important steps taken by the South African government to ensure universal access to healthcare, while emphasizing the importance of the involvement of private sector organizations. The steps that need to be taken to ensure the promotion of the right to health, both physical and mental, requires engagement from all stakeholders involved.

Ms. Kate Gilmore, the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, emphasized the inalienable right to live in physical and mental dignity, which lay at the heart of the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda. She noted that current data shows that access to mental and physical healthcare resources without fear, discrimination or stigma are still undermined globally, and increased costs in healthcare and government policies are jeopardizing the stability of healthcare systems. In addition the ongoing refugee and migrant crisis presents unique challenges to these goals.

Dr. Nata Menabde, the Executive director of the WHO Office at the United Nations, also spoke to the unique struggles of marginalized peoples in obtaining adequate healthcare resources, as well as individuals worldwide that go into poverty due to illnesses and the costs associated with medical treatments. She highlighted the WHO's people-centered approach to involve the patient in their healthcare programs. The WHO's mental health programs have been working on ensuring the rights of

individuals suffering from mental illnesses in particular. The WHO has been focusing not just on access to healthcare resources, but also the quality, equity and dignity with which these services are provided

Lastly, Dr. Dainius Pūras, Special Rapporteur on the Right of Everyone to the Enjoyment of the Highest Attainable Standard of Physical and Mental Health, noted the important role of communities and civil society working collaboratively to improve resources for mental health, and psychosocial interventions.

Preparatory Meeting for the CRNGO's Celebration of World Interfaith Harmony Week

Christopher Casais

SOCA NGO Youth Representative



On Wednesday, January 10, 2017, the Committee of Religious NGOs (CRNGO) at the United Nations, gathered at the Salvation Army building located at, 221 East 52nd Street, New York. This meeting was chaired by the President of the CRNGO at the United Nations, Swami Parameshananda, and was in preparation for the World Interfaith Harmony Week, which will be celebrated on February 7, at the Tilman Chapel at 777 2nd Avenue. World Interfaith Harmony Week was decreed by the General Assembly in resolution A/Res/65/5 in October 2010. The resolution points out that mutual understanding and interfaith dialogue comprise important dimensions of a culture of peace and harmony between all people regardless of their faith. The World Interfaith Harmony Week is based on the work of The Common Word Initiative, which called for Muslims and Christians to engage in dialogue based on two common and fundamental religious Commandments: Love of God and love of neighbor.

This meeting, specifically, was a gathering of the various members of the CRNGOs in order to develop a program to be celebrated at the World Interfaith Harmony Week at the Tilman Chapel in February. Accordingly, the theme for this year will be, 'Inspiring faith in humanity through religion and spirituality'. In order to promote faith in humanity, the group mentioned the similarity between the United Nations and faith organizations. This same idea was expressed not long ago, at the Annual Orthodox Prayer Service for the United Nations Community, when H.E. Mr. Miroslav Lajcak stated that the reason why he was at the prayer service was not very different from the reasons why he meets at the UN. He mentioned in that statement, that the priorities and work of the faith community converge with those of the United Nations in that both provide aid to people in need throughout the world, both seek to get at the root of the problems affecting people, and the call to put all types of people first before anything else. Fittingly, the group wanted to develop ways that this idea can be demonstrated at the celebration of the World Interfaith Harmony Week in February and, more specifically, how the religious community can inspire us to action and to teach how all faiths teach human dignity, only in different ways.

Some of the ideas brought up by members at the meeting were to include in the celebration various forms of music, dance and prayer of the various religious groups, due to the uniting and harmony-promoting power of these. Additionally, certain religious NGOs decided on presenting and talking about a certain topic at the celebration. Each presentation will last approximately 5 minutes and will discuss topics ranging from the importance of the family as central to human dignity to an awareness of suffering, reconciliation and of how our faith inspires us to action.

Religions and Governments for Peace – Between Autonomy and Complementarity

Attended and reported by Dr. A. M. Riccitelli, SOCA representative to UN/DPI.



German House, New York – December 5, 2017

Sponsored by the German Federal Foreign Office, with co-sponsors United Nations Population Fund; United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect; United Nations Alliance of Civilizations; and Religions for Peace. On December 5, over 200 representatives of world religions, civil society, policymakers and multilateral organizations were welcomed to German House, across the street from the United Nations, by His Excellency David Gill, German Consul General, who said “All people must have their identities protected. H. E. UNSG Antonio Guterres sent a written message encouraging the role of religious leaders to support peace and build bridges. H.E Al-Nasser, High Representative of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, said “Surely, there is no greater purpose behind our various faiths than ...this effort of religion...in the pursuit of peace.” (Photo here:<https://www.unaoc.org/2017/12/remarks-responsibility-of-religions-and-governments-for-peace/>) Dr. William Vendley, Secretary General of Religions for Peace, also expressed concern that religions must be protecting from being politically hijacked by establishing inter religious dialogues among leaders of different faiths. (For more photos of this event: <http://www.sadrmedia.com/single-post/2017/12/06/Responsibility-of-Religions-and-Governments-for-Peace-Between-Autonomy-and-Complementarity>)

The Olympics, the Earth & Its Citizens: PyeongChang 2018, Winter Olympics Feb 9-25;
Paralympics March 9-18



Attended and reported by Dr. A. M. Riccitelli, SOCA NGO representative to UN/DPI

United Nations, December 13, 2017

The Governor of Gangwon Province, South Korean host of the XXIII Winter Olympics 2018, announced the formation of the annual PyeongChang Forum for the Earth and Its Citizens that will serve to create dialogues with people around the world on the critical need for the protection of the earth and its environment. International leaders in earth science and education will participate in the first forum to be held in Seoul two days before the opening of the Games. PyeongChang is the Olympic host city located in a mountainous region of Gangwon Province. Governor Choi Moon-soon told a conference of UN and government officials and NGOs that he continues to hope that “the North Korean skaters who have qualified will come overland to join young athletes from around the world.” He said that his passionate desire is a peaceful interlude through sports and a legacy of environmental accountability. “Ordinary citizens of all countries must work together to achieve New Horizons for Sustainability, the theme of our games,” Governor Choi said.

For photos: <http://www.korea.net/NewsFocus/policies/view?articleId=152172>

[A/HRC/35/L.18/Rev.1](#) Vote Item:3 - 37th Meeting, 35th Regular Session Human Rights Council

Alexandra Minichino

Associate of SOCA UN NGO



23 Jun 2017 - Vote on Draft Resolution - [A/HRC/35/L.18/Rev.1](#) - "The right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" submitted by Brazil, Mozambique, Paraguay, Portugal, Thailand - ADOPTED

INTRODUCTION – This is draft about the promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development.

The 37th meeting of the 35th session of the Human Rights Council at the United Nations. The Council is continuing to act on draft resolutions for adoption entitled, "The right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development." Brazil is the first country to present the draft for the fundamental human rights for all to live their life in dignity. Women and girls are the target that lack the full enjoyment of human rights and access to appropriate mental health and wellness to enjoy and live a sustainable life with the highest standard of a universally attainable and full sustainability to support the world population. In countries like Brazil, Mozambique, Paraguay, Portugal, Thailand that do not have the same access to mental health implementation as outline in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The agenda recognizes the need for full implementation of states in these regions to address the socio-economic and environmental determinates of health in these regions. Interrelatedness of poverty and health is the driving force of the agenda and therefore recognizes the need for universal health coverage; consequently, ensuring access to healthcare without discrimination. Healthcare and related the sexual and reproductive contraception is a scarce commodity for all socio-economic facets in all regions all over the world. The agenda protect, respect and fulfill the right for everyone to include the socio-economic disparity in those regions; to include, refugees and migrants.

The vote and adoption of this resolution leaves 'no one behind' in the UN's, United Nations, worldly efforts to fulfill the universal health coverage (to include contraceptives) in reaching the attaining the challenges of discrimination; age, sex, medical, etc. The human rights perspective should respect human rights principles on education, training and confidentially for the conclusive privacy of all persons seeking healthcare.

Member states and stakeholders are encouraged to contribute to the report in confidence the result in a draft resolution. The United States representative takes the floor in support of the regions mentioned and joins concession; "however the United States, dissociates from the reference to technology transfer in operational paragraph IV, ... which undermines intellectual property rights transfer."

The outcome is 36 co-sponsors to the draft resolution with no comments the vote took place on the aforementioned draft resolution and was adopted without a vote.

References

United Nations Live & On-Demand. UN WEB TV. A/HRC/35/L.18/Rev.1 Vote Item:3 - 37th Meeting, 35th Regular Session Human Rights Council. <http://webtv.un.org/search/ahrc35l.18rev.1-vote-item3-37th-meeting-35th-regular-session-human-rights-council/5480711093001/?term=Mental%20health&lan=English&cat=Meetings%2FEvents&sort=date>



Rachel Birkentall

Associate of SOCA UN NGO

28 Sep 2017 - Vote on Draft Resolution - [A/HRC/36/L.25](#) - "Mental health and human rights " submitted by Brazil and Portugal - ADOPTED WITHOUT A VOTE

Votes on Draft Resolutions under Agenda Item: 3 - Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

INTRODUCTION – This is draft about mental health and human rights

Portugal, Mr. Pedro Nuno Bártole – “This draft builds on main message about right to mental health from previous meeting. Mental health is one of the most neglected aspects of human rights. For too long mental health has been covered with layers of stigma, prejudice, segregation and also violation of human rights and freedoms. We are trying to undercover these problems, and hope to shed light on a very serious topic. We contribute to mainstream human rights across the UN system. The CRPD laid a change in the paradigm of mental health rights. The resolution urges states to create community-based people centered services that do not lead to over-medication but proper treatment. We submit this item to the council for your support”

Secretariat – “We now have 26 sponsors for this item. I now open the floor to those who have already voted before statements were given.”

United States of America, Mr. Jason Mack – “We interpret these resolutions only to those states which it is applicable. We understand the international human rights norms to refer to the human rights and fundamental freedoms that are set forth in international covenants and conventions as applicable. We join consensus on this resolution because we support its focus on helping those struggling with mental health and psychosocial conditions. We believe these persons should be respected and treated as equal members of society. Other concerns with this resolution will be considered in another discussion”

Mr. Joaquín Alexander Maza Martelli, President of the Human Rights Council (Adoption) – “There are no requests for a vote, so draft proposal can be submitted and accepted without a vote.”

Inside Major UN Actions & Events

October 2017 Religion and Foreign Policy Bulletin



This month's Religion and Foreign Policy Bulletin features CFR analysis on the 2017 United Nations General Assembly, the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar, and complimentary access to recent articles on religion from ForeignAffairs.com.

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Nikki Haley's Diplomacy

CFR Senior Fellow Stewart M. Patrick reviews U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley's tenure to date, concluding that the former South Carolina governor has emerged as a "vigorous and independent voice" in shaping U.S. foreign policy. [Read more at CFR.org »](#)

Funding the United Nations



In this article, CFR Data Visualization Designer Amanda Shendruk shows how the UN is funded, provides graphics for where U.S. funding goes, and discusses President Trump's proposed funding cuts. [Read more at CFR.org »](#)

Trump at the UN

CFR's Carla Anne Robbins and Stewart M. Patrick discuss President Trump's September 19 speech at the UN General Assembly and the response of the United States to global challenges, such as those posed by North Korea and Iran, in this recent media conference call. [Listen at CFR.org »](#)

CFR Explainers

For more information on the UN General Assembly, consult CFR's recently-updated backgrounder on the subject. Explore the library of CFR explainers->

<http://links.cfr.mkt5175.com/ctt?kn=25&ms=NTUxMzA2MzkS1&r=NTIzMzIzOTkwNTcS1&b=3&j=MTI2MjE5NzczMAS2&mt=1&rt=0>

ROHINGYA CRISIS

Backgrounder: The Rohingya Crisis



MOHAMMAD PONIR HOSSAIN/REUTERS

CFR.org Editorial's Eleanor Albert traces the underlying motivations, regional implications, and broader international response to the plight of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya, a Muslim ethnic minority group fleeing persecution in Myanmar's western Rakhine state. [Read more at CFR.org »](#)

Aung San Suu Kyi: Notably Absent from UNGA

Catherine Powell, CFR's adjunct senior fellow for the Women and Foreign Policy program, argues that while politically tricky, Myanmar State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi should exercise her moral authority by taking stronger steps, including visiting Rakhine, to halt the atrocities being committed against the Rohingya. [Read more »](#)

Bangladesh and the Rohingya

CFR Senior Fellow Alyssa Ayres describes Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's efforts to aid Rohingya migrants, noting the struggle that her Muslim-majority country has in meeting the needs of its own 160 million citizens. [Read more »](#)

American Health Care Debate

Fran Quigley, clinical professor at the Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law, led a recent Religion and Foreign Policy conference call on how faith communities have influenced, and will continue to shape, the American health care debate. Listen at CFR.org/rfp-calls

RELIGION ON FOREIGNAFFAIRS.COM

Moon Jae-In's Catholicism



JONG YEON-JE/REUTERS

The National Catholic Register's senior correspondent Victor Gaetan writes that the key to understanding South Korean President Moon Jae-in is through his Catholic faith, as it is difficult to categorize him in American political terms in that he mixes a socially conservative stance on domestic issues with a spirit of reconciliation with North Korea. [Read more on ForeignAffairs.com »](#)

Rethinking the USCIRF

Nearly twenty years after the creation of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), S. Frederick Starr and Svante Cornell of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program and Brenda Shaffer of Georgetown University's Center for Eurasian, Russian, and East European Studies question whether USCIRF might inadvertently be aiding groups that impose religious coercion on others. [Read more on ForeignAffairs.com »](#)

The Church and Duterte

Myanmar-based journalist Joe Freeman observes that compared to his predecessors, Filipino President Rodrigo Duterte harbors "nearly unrivaled animus" toward the Catholic Church, which is losing influence as it criticizes the popular president's crackdown on the drug trade and Islamist insurgency in Mindanao. [Read more on ForeignAffairs.com »](#)

Invitation to the fourth annual J. Michael Adams Lecture

The United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI) is pleased to invite you to the Fourth Annual J. Michael Adams Lecture and Conversation, to be held on Friday, 27 October from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The lecture, entitled "Women Uniting Nations: A Conversation on Struggles against Sexual Violence around the World", will be delivered this year by Prof. Ruchira Gupta, New York University, and Founder/President of Apne Aap Women Worldwide, a grassroots movement to end sex trafficking.

Please RSVP by Tuesday, 24 October 2017, 12:00 p.m. EDT [here](#).

Watch it live [here](#).

Invitation: Spiritual History of the UN



The Committee on Spirituality, Values, and Global Concerns of New York
Health, Transformation and Spirituality
Working Group of CSVGC-NY
Educating our Youth: Nurturing Conscientious Leaders
Thursday, 26 October, 2017
3:00 - 5:00 PM
UN Church Center, 10th floor
777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017

Program
Co-Chairs:
Dr. Leslie Popoff, UN Coordinator, ATOP Meaningfulworld
Dr. Ani Kalayjian, HTS, Chairperson, CSVGC Vice Chairperson

Opening Meditation - Rev. Sharon Hamilton-Getz
Drumming Meditation - Peter Maniscalco
Welcoming Remarks - Ambassador Felix Koroma, Permanent Representative of Sierra Leone to the UN

Presenters:
Mrs. Stephany Nwanmah, Peace Awardee, Nigeria, Africa -Tehilla Women and Youth Empowerment Foundation (TWYEF)
"Working Towards Well-Being in Mind, Body and Spirit"

Mr. John Engle, Director of Haiti Partners, Haiti
"Partnering for Sustainable Education in Haiti"

Holly Aldrich, LICSW, Center for Homicide Bereavement, Cambridge Health Alliance, MA
Janet Yassen, LICSW, Coordinator of Acute Crime Crisis Services, Cambridge Health Alliance, MA
"Educating Trauma Service Providers in Armenia"

Gayle Kirschenbaum, Kirchenbaum Productions
"Engaging Youth Through Film and Media"

Closing: Heart-to-Heart-Circle of Love and Gratitude

RSVP: by 21 October to Priscille at info@meaningfulworld.com

Gratitude to our Co-Sponsors: Association for Trauma Outreach Prevention; Meaningfulworld, ACRPC, Non-Violence International, National Ethical Service, and Psychology Coalition at the United Nations

<http://csvgc-ny.org/>



The NGO Committee on
Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns

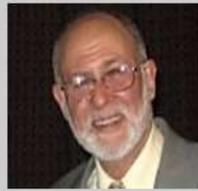


Cordially Invites You To A Unique Presentation organized by
The Spiritual History of the UN Working

“THE SACRED AND UN ORIGINS”



Alison Van Dyk
Chair of the Board & Exec. Dir.
Temple of Understanding



Rabbi Roger Ross
Chairman of the Board
New Vision Interspiritual Seminary



Grove Harris
UN Representative
Temple of Understanding

October 23, 2017
10:00 a.m. to 12 noon
777 UN Plaza, 2nd Floor
1st Ave. and 44th St.
New York, New York 10017

www.csvgc-ny



Week of Spirituality, Values and
Global Concerns - 23-27 October 2017



“The Spirit of the United Nations”: *SDG Success -
Spiritual Indicators and a Universal Push To
Transform the World*



The NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values and
Global Concerns Cordially Invites You to Attend the

“Spirit of the United Nations”

Awards Ceremony

Monday, 23 October 2017

1:00—3:00 p.m.

To be held at the

*United Nations Church Center—2nd Floor
777 UN Plaza—44th Street & 1st Avenue, N.Y.*

2017 “Spirit of the United Nations” Awardees

H.E. Ms. Katalin Annamária Bogyay
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of Hungary to the United Nations

Mr. Richard Jordan
NGO Representative at the UN
Royal Academy of Science International Trust

Mr. Danilo Parmegiani
The Legion of Good Will

Ambassador Isaiah Zimba Chabala
Former Ambassador of Zambia to the United Nations
and to the European Union

RSVP at csvgcny@gmail.com

2017 Week of Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns is sponsored by the following groups:

- CoNGO • NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns-NY • Committee of Religious NGOs at the United Nations • NGO Committee on Human Rights • NGO Committee on Sustainable Development-NY
- Committee on Children’s Rights • NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security • NGO Committee on Education, Learning & Literacy • Global Movement for the Culture of Peace (GMCoP) • UNSRC-Enlightenment Society (SEAT) • UNSRC-Feng Shui Group • Peace Vision and Action Coalition • Psychology Coalition at the UN
- UN Women’s Guild • Spiritual Caucus • Values Caucus • World Association of NGOs (WANGO)
- United Religions Initiative at the UN (URI-UN) Website: www.csvgc-ny.org



NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values
and Global Concerns - NY presents:

2017 Week of Spirituality

*SDG Success - The Spiritual Indicators
and a Universal Push to Transform the World*

23 October, 2017

Spiritual History of the UN Working Group presents:

The Sacred and UN Origins

10:00 a.m. to 12 noon

777 Church Center, 2nd Floor, 44th and 1st Avenue, NY

2017 Spirit of the United Nations Award Ceremony

1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

777 Church Center, 2nd Floor, 44th and 1st Avenue, NY

25 October, 2017

Women Rising Working Group presents:

Refugee Women and Reliance on Spirituality

10:00 a.m. to 12 noon

Salvation Army Auditorium

Spiritual Council for Global Challenges presents:

The Role of Spirituality in Youth Empowerment for Agenda 2030

1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

UN Foundation 801 2nd Avenue, Suite 900

26 October, 2017

Spiritual Caucus presents:

We Are One SDG Meditation

12 noon to 1 p.m.

Health, Transformation and Spirituality Working Group presents:

Educating the Youth of the World: Nurturing Conscientious Leaders

3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

10th Floor, 777 Church Center

www.csvgc-ny.org

Please join UNODC, Gloria Steinem and Nadia Murad November 10th

Dear Excellencies, Friends and Colleagues,

Please join the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)**, **Gloria Steinem**, and **Nadia Murad**, UNODC Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking, for the UN launch of Nadia's book ***"The Last Girl, My Story of Captivity, and My Fight Against the Islamic State,"*** **Friday, November 10th, 11:00 am, in Conference Room 12** at UN Headquarters, featuring a conversation between Nadia and Gloria w/ Q&A moderated by UNODC (flier attached). (To be followed by a book signing in UN Bookshop (Visitors' Concourse, GA Bldg) at 1pm). Kindly RSVP to unodcny@un.org at your earliest convenience and no later than Tuesday November 7th, indicating if you will need a special pass to enter the UN (seating is limited). We look forward to the honour of your presence.

Kind regards,

Simone Monasebian

Director UNODC NY Office [212-963-5631](tel:212-963-5631)

UN DESA Voice November 2017: Building capacity for the global goals, Youth at UNGA, World Toilet Day

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER, VOL 21, NO. 11 – NOVEMBER 2017

[Building capacity to realize the global goals](#)

Our world today faces unprecedented economic, social and environmental challenges. They are complex and closely connected. Countries need to address these challenges to move towards a sustainable future.

UN DESA partners on capacity development to support Member States in building integrated, evidence-based, inclusive and well-funded national strategies and plans to achieve sustainable development that ensure no one is left behind. How exactly does the department do that, and how is it able to extend its assistance to more than 75 countries?

[Read more](#)

[HIGHLIGHTS](#)

[Youth Delegates raise their voices at the UN General Assembly](#)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are often heralded as the new social contract between the world's leaders and the people they represent. But given the 15-year time span of the 2030 Agenda, it is also a unique agreement across time.

"I see Sustainable Development Goals as a contract between generations," said Clara Halvorsen who represents Denmark as Youth Delegate to the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly. "Two years ago, the world leaders decided on a plan for how the world should look like in 2030. And in 2030, it will be us, the young people who take over. That's why we should be incorporated in the implementation of the Agenda 2030."

[Read more](#)



[World Toilet Day 2017: Where does our poo go?](#)

By 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals aim to reach everyone with adequate and equitable sanitation, as well as halve the proportion of untreated wastewater and increase recycling and safe reuse. For that to be achieved, everyone's poo needs to be contained, transported, treated and disposed of in a safe and sustainable way. To raise awareness of the importance of this four-step journey, 'wastewater' is the theme of World Toilet Day 2017 on 19 November.

[Read more](#)



[GET INVOLVED](#)

[When it comes to climate action, small can be big](#)

Nearly 50 years ago, Neil Armstrong landed on the Moon with the famous quote: "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." Armstrong's single pace made history and to this day it symbolizes the overcoming of a generational challenge. For our generation, that challenge is climate change, but this time everyone can make their small step right here on Earth.

[Read more](#)



[EXPERT VOICES](#)

[World Toilet Day – no laughing matter](#)

Most people don't give much thought to what happens to their faeces once they flush their toilet. Others have their faces flush with shyness, when the subject of toilet pops up. But for billions of people who still lack access to sanitation services, toilets are often a matter of life and death. Ahead of this World Toilet Day, UN DESA Voice speaks to Kate Medicott, Technical Officer at Water, Sanitation, Hygiene and Health at the World Health Organization (WHO). WHO coordinates this year's World Toilet Day campaign on behalf of UN-Water.

[Read more](#)

[IN CASE YOU MISSED IT](#)

[Sophia the robot joins UN meeting](#)

The future of everything took center stage at a joint event of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the UN General Assembly's Second Committee on 11 October. But this was not your average UN meeting; neither were the panelists joining to discuss the role of artificial intelligence to help spur sustainable development. Among them was Sophia, the first ever robot to participate in an official UN meeting.

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OCEAN ACTION #1

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UNAI November Update

Dear UNAI members and friends,

Please find below the latest update from the United Nations Academic Impact and its members, as well as of other parts of the UN System.

With this issue we'd like to bring the upcoming UN Climate Change Conference 2017 to your attention and highlight a number of recent articles on our website.

Enjoy the read,
Your UNAI team

**UN Climate Change Conference 2017:
Further, Faster, Together**

The city of Bonn, Germany, will host this year's UN Climate Change Conference and its more than 20,000 participants from 6-17 November.

To ensure a smooth running conference, more than 600 volunteers have been trained for this special occasion. Want to know more about their training? Read [this article](#).

To stay up to date with everything discussed during the conference, check out [this website](#).

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Fourth Annual J. Michael Adams Lecture

Did you miss our J. Michael Adams Lecture entitled "Women Uniting Nations" held by Prof. Ruchira Gupta from New York University last Friday? Don't worry, you can still watch the lecture on UN Web TV.

Watch the Webcast - <https://academicimpact.us12.list-manage.com/track/click?u=8572b4cc1ffd18424c6e34975&id=c8ed55e21c&e=ee54ceb241>

From Failed Governance to Building a New Future

How much do you know about the Central African Republic? Let UNAI member Euclid University (Pôle Universitaire Euclide) give you some background information on the current situation in the country.

Read more - <https://academicimpact.us12.list-manage.com/track/click?u=8572b4cc1ffd18424c6e34975&id=776301e837&e=ee54ceb241>

Latest News from UNAI Member Institutions

On this year's DU Good Day, more than 400 members of Drake University (USA) joined efforts to build three homes for the homeless in the university's hometown Des Moines, Iowa.

Read more - <https://academicimpact.us12.list-manage.com/track/click?u=8572b4cc1ffd18424c6e34975&id=f7cc3550de&e=ee54ceb241>

Victims of Islamic State in focus at UN forum



New York City, N.Y., Nov 6, 2017 / 03:18 pm ([CNA/EWTN News](#)).- Persecuted religious minorities in Syria and Iraq deserve a better future after suffering at the hands of the Islamic State group.

That was the message of Archbishop Bernadito Auza, the apostolic nuncio leading the Holy See's permanent observer mission to the U.N. He said justice for the survivors "demands that we seek to return to them, as much as possible, what Daesh pillaged from them."

"This means ensuring the conditions for religious and ethnic minorities to return to their places of origin and live in dignity and safety, with the basic social, economic and political frameworks necessary to ensure community cohesion."

The Holy See and the U.N. NGO Committee on Freedom of Religion or Belief co-organized the Nov. 2 event, held at the U.N. building in New York City. The event served as a forum for victims of Islamic State and for the civil society leaders who wanted to hold the group accountable. There was a speakers' panel with Archbishop Auza; Michael Farris, president of ADF International; and ambassadors from Iraq, Hungary, the U.K., and the U.S.

According to the archbishop, rebuilding homes, schools and houses of worship is a "crucial step." He praised the assistance of Aid to the Church in Need, the Knights of Columbus, and other groups.

However, this reconstruction is not enough. There must be "foundations for peaceful coexistence." All these efforts are "restoring hope not only to the region but to the world," he continued.

“We must, through education, interreligious dialogue, and international leadership make sure that we address the polluted environments in which hatred of the other is fomented, and arduously and perseveringly work to change such cultures into ecologies where human dignity and rights, mutual respect, solidarity, fraternity and peace reign,” he said.

Other speakers included Ekhlas Khudhur Bajoo, a 17-year-old Iraqi woman from the Yazidi ethno-religious group. The Islamic State slaughtered her family and enslaved her for six months before she escaped.

Also speaking was a Syrian man held in captivity by Islamic State, and psychologically and physically tortured.

Archbishop Auza commented: “We are all justly repelled by the horror stories we have heard about the atrocities committed by Daesh against religious and ethnic minorities... Their stories cannot but move us to action. We wish that what they endured could have been prevented outright, but while we tragically did not stop their sufferings, we can act to bring justice for them and other victims, help them to rehabilitate and rebuild, and do everything we can to prevent similar barbarity from happening to others.”

The archbishop cited the U.N. Security Council’s Resolution 2379, adopted Sept. 21, which condemned the Islamic State’s “gross, systematic and widespread attacks directed against civilians” as well as its violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses. Such acts may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide, the resolution said.

The U.N. Security Council has created a team to investigate crimes committed by the Islamic State group in Iraq.

For Archbishop Auza, the response to Islamic State must include a “rock-solid resolve” to prevent atrocities in the future.

“Those entrusted with protecting the innocent and safeguarding respect for fundamental human rights must live up to their indispensable and inescapable responsibility to defend those in danger of suffering atrocity crimes,” he said.

“Similarly religious leaders have a grave and specific duty to confront and condemn the abuse of religious belief and sentiment to justify violence and terrorism against believers of other religions,” the archbishop said. “They must constantly and unequivocally affirm that no one can justly kill the innocent in God’s name and say a clear and adamant ‘no’ to every form of violence, vengeance and hatred carried out supposedly in the name of God or religion.”

“It’s not enough to defeat, punish, and disband Daesh. We also must eradicate the pseudo-religious, dehumanizing, hateful, and indeed barbaric ideology that motivates it and similar extremist groups,” he said.

Part of this effort means addressing the social, political and economic issues exploited to recruit and radicalize others. Further, the response must create cultural conditions in which the rights of religious and ethnic minorities are respected. The archbishop stressed the need to defend a citizenship-focused attitude of equality before the law, regardless of religion, race, or ethnicity.

There also must be a right to religious freedom and freedom of conscience that has legal recourse when such rights are violated.

Other forum participants included leaders from ADF International and Aid to the Church in Need.

“It would be better to prevent crimes,” said Paul Coleman, executive director of ADF International. “But when crimes cannot be prevented, they must be prosecuted. Otherwise law is shown to be meaningless. The laws that protect freedom of religion are not meaningless, and now is the time to prove it.”

“No person or group should live in fear of being killed, tortured, or oppressed because of their religious beliefs,” he said. While the Islamic State appears to be falling apart, evidence of their atrocities must be collected and preserved and the perpetrators must be held accountable.

Source: https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/victims-of-islamic-state-in-focus-at-un-forum-54751?utm_source=CNA&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=daily_newsletter

Archbishop to UN: Christians are critical to Iraq’s future

New York City, N.Y., Dec 4, 2017 / 08:01 pm ([CNA/EWTN News](#)).- A UN panel met last week to discuss the aftermath of the Islamic State’s occupation in Iraq’s Nineveh Plain, saying that the region’s future depends upon the preservation of the practices of pluralism and diversity.

“During ISIS’ occupation of Nineveh, even as it sought to eliminate the religious minorities completely, many from the majority population were also victimized as their rights evaporated,” stated Supreme Knight Carl Anderson of the Knights of Columbus at the event.

“Without minorities, rights often vanish for everyone,” Anderson continued, according to a press release.

The panel was hosted in a joint effort by the Holy See’s Mission to the United Nations and the Knights of Columbus, as well as the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

The event took place at UN headquarters on Nov. 30 and was titled “Preserving Pluralism and Diversity in the Nineveh Region.” It was also part of the USCCB’s overarching initiative called “Solidarity in Suffering: A Week of Awareness and Education for Persecuted Christians.”

Some of the panelists included Supreme Knight Carl Anderson, Edward Clancy, the director of outreach and evangelization for Aid to the Church in Need, USA, Archbishop Bashar Warda of Erbil, Iraq, Archbishop Bernardito Auza, the Holy See’s permanent observer to the UN, and Fr. Salar Kajo, a parish priest from the Nineveh region.

The panelists emphasized that pluralism and the flourishing of diversity are crucial players for the successful future of Iraq, with a particular emphasis on the local minorities.

Archbishop Warda noted that Christians in particular are a “key partner for the future of pluralism in Iraq,” and should be considered “part of the solution, not part of the problem, in terms of bringing peace and humans rights” to the country.

The Nineveh Plain, a territory between the city of Mosul and Iraqi Kurdistan, was overtaken by the Islamic State in 2014, forcing tens of thousands of people into exile and displacement. Two years later, Iraqi forces liberated the region, which was known to have a large Christian population.

The situation in the Nineveh Plain still remains uncertain, as many families, religious groups and minorities are questioning the return to their homes. During this delicate time, the UN panel voiced that respect and collaboration with minorities is critically important.

To that end, the Nineveh Reconstruction Committee has been created, in which the region's three major Christian communities are collaborating to work more effectively. These communities include the Chaldean Catholic, Syrian Catholic and Syrian Orthodox churches.

Archbishop Auza noted that the Holy See would put forth committed efforts to make sure that Christians "can return to their places of origin and live in dignity and safety with the basic social, political and economic frameworks necessary to ensure community cohesion."

"Daesh sought to eliminate pluralism and diversity from the Nineveh Plain," Auza said.

"Therefore, the only way to make sure Daesh cannot claim victory is to restore, and restore urgently, pluralism and diversity to the region."

Source: https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/archbishop-to-un-christians-are-critical-to-iraqs-future-89321?utm_source=CNA&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=daily_newsletter

UN chief issues 'red alert,' urges world to come together in 2018 to tackle pressing challenges



31 December 2017 – In his message on the New Year, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres is calling for unity among the global community to tackle overwhelming challenges and defend values shared by all.

“On New Year's Day 2018, I am not issuing an appeal. I am issuing an alert – a [red alert](#) for our world,” said the Secretary-General.

“As we begin 2018, I call for unity. [...] We can settle conflicts, overcome hatred and defend shared values. But we can only do that together,” he expressed.

Recalling that last year he urged that 2017 be a year for peace, the UN chief noted that unfortunately – in fundamental ways, the world went in reverse.

Perils, including deepening conflicts and new dangers emerged, and global concerns over nuclear weapons reached the highest since the Cold War, he added.

At the same time, impacts of climate change worsened at an alarming rate, inequalities grew and there were horrific violations of human rights.

“Nationalism and xenophobia are on the rise,” said Mr. Guterres.

Underscoring his belief that the world can be made more safe and secure, conflicts can be settled, hatred can be overcome and shared values defended, he emphasized that unity is indispensable to achieving these goals.

“Unity is the path. Our future depends on it,” said the Secretary-General, urging leaders everywhere to resolve in the New Year to: “Narrow the gaps. Bridge the divides. Rebuild trust by bringing people together around common goals.”

Other Related News

[Iraqi women visit historic monastery after its recapture from Islamic State](#)

Tuesday, October 10, 2017 - Last week 300 women visited a historic monastery near Mosul after its liberation from the Islamic State – a decision their priest said was made in order to show they aren't afraid, and that Christians in Iraq are there to stay

Greek Orthodox patriarch: Christians are not strangers in Middle East



By [Adelaide Mena](#)

Washington D.C., Oct 27, 2017 / 03:58 pm ([CNA/EWTN News](#)).- Middle Eastern Patriarchs reaffirmed the deep history of Christianity in the Middle East and called for its perseverance into the future at this week's In Defense of Christians summit in Washington, D.C.

They called for Western partners to remember that history, and to help keep Christianity in its ancient homeland, as people from around the world work for peace and an end to conflict in the Middle East.

“We as Christians in the Middle East: we are going to remain and stay there,” said the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch John X Yazigi. “We are not strangers in that part of the world: we are people of light and of truth.”

Patriarch John X spoke Oct. 24 at the opening press conference for the In Defense of Christians (IDC) 2017 Summit, bringing together Patriarchs of Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Oriental Orthodox Churches, Middle Eastern Christians of all denominations, and policy leaders from the United States.

The organization and the summit seek to preserve and protect Christian and other religious minorities living in the Middle East.

This year’s theme for the Oct. 24-26 summit was American Leadership and Securing the Future of Christians in the Middle East.

The keynote speaker at the event was US Vice President Mike Pence, who [promised direct American aid for persecuted Christians](#) in the Middle East. Congressman Chris Smith (R-N.J.) was the recipient of IDC's Cedars of God award.

Speaking alongside Yazigi at the press conference held at the National Press Club were Maronite Patriarch of Antioch Bechara Boutros Rai and IDC Vice President Andrew Doran.

Patriarch Rai pointed to the high number of refugees who had fled to his country of Lebanon, as well as to the West and other areas, as violence and instability has increased over the past several decades.

“The conflicts that have beset the Middle East have driven out millions of busy citizens, including so many Christians, and with their exodus, our region becomes more extreme, more dangerous to the outside world,” the patriarch said.

He pointed out that Lebanon has taken on an immense number of these refugees over the past 70 years, first from Palestine and now Syria, stressing the nation’s resources.

He noted that the proportion of refugees now living in Lebanon would be analogous to more than 150 million refugees living in the United States. He thus called on Americans to help solve these problems. “We have been abandoned to solve the problems we did not create,” the patriarch urged.

“We look to America to exercise its diplomacy to solve the many challenges in the region that have a direct and indirect impact on Lebanon,” he stated. “We have a long tradition of pluralism in the Middle East, but in recent years we have been divided against one another,” he lamented, calling for Middle Eastern Christians to come together with Muslims as well as with people from the West who wish to help in order to form a solution together.

Rai also pointed out that the West’s approach to refugees could be more helpful. While he emphasized that Christians want to go back to their countries, he questioned rhetoric from nations that say that “refugees should be allowed to live in dignity wherever they may be, while those nations have closed their borders and prevented them from entering into their countries.”

“Where is the human dignity of all that? If the family is living under a tent and you’ve given them a meal, do you think that’s enough for their human dignity to be guarded?” he asked.

Patriarch John X echoed many of Rai’s concerns, especially the ability of Christians to have the “right to express on our destiny and our own plight.” He stressed that the Christian message is one of peace, of truth, and of the Good News: “The Church is the beacon of truth in this agitated world and we will continue to witness to that truth even if we are hanged on the Cross.”

In addition to calling for the end of war, the Greek Orthodox patriarch also stressed the necessity for Middle Eastern Christians to be involved in finding the solution to the problems they face – to be partners in finding peace. “Sometimes the media may portray us in a negative way, not necessarily in the way that we would have us portrayed,” he said, adding that “if we are talking about our destiny in our land, we have something to say.”

One of the solutions Christians of the Middle East want, he stressed, is the ability to “seek unity of our own country” and rebuild their lives in their own homelands.

“We call all Christians and Muslims to work together for the well-being of their country.”

Mother Olga of the Sacred Heart, founder of the Daughters of Mary of Nazareth and an Iraqi Christian, offered a statement as a member of the audience, saying that many Christians from the region “are lost in-between” political and military struggles of actors within the region and from overseas.

She urged Americans to consider the long history of Christianity in the Middle East, where it has thrived since the first century, and asked if “we expect it will be easy for people to leave their land?” when proposing solutions that require resettlement into new areas or permanent residency in the West.

She called for increased awareness and education on Middle Eastern Christianity among the American people, and advocated for all to seek permanent peace.

Source: https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/greek-orthodox-patriarch-christians-are-not-strangers-in-middle-east-29603?utm_source=CNA&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=daily_newsletter

Religion on the Global Stage



This month's Religion and Foreign Policy Bulletin features commentary on ethnonationalism and vulnerable populations, religion and society in Latin America, and political Islam. Please note that CFR will be at the 2017 American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting from November 18 to 21 in Boston.

The Unraveling of the Balkans Peace Agreements

CFR's Center for Preventive Action recently released a contingency planning memorandum authored by Daniel P. Serwer, academic director of conflict management at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies. The memorandum explores the risk of renewed violence in the Balkans amidst rising tensions and discusses the role the United States can play in promoting regional stability.

[Read more](#)

ETHNONATIONALISM AND VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting

CFR's Religion and Foreign Policy Program will be hosting a free luncheon panel discussion on ethnonationalism and vulnerable populations during the American Academy of Religion (AAR) Annual Meeting at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston on Monday, November 20, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Register at <https://CFRatAAR2017.eventbrite.com>. Please also visit us at Booth 2407 in Exhibitor Hall CD from November 18 to 21. An AAR participant's pass is necessary to enter the exhibitor hall, but not to attend the luncheon panel. [Register online »](#)

Nationalism and U.S. Foreign Policy



SEIT SERKAN GURBUZ/REUTERS

Writing in the May/June issue of *Foreign Affairs*, G. John Ikenberry, the Albert G. Milbank professor of politics and international affairs at Princeton University, describes the rise of nationalism and its effects on tenets of the international liberal order, including multiculturalism, which he describes as one of the "core convictions of the postwar U.S. global project." [Read more »](#)

Women and Girls in the Rohingya Crisis

CFR Women and Foreign Policy Program guest blogger Mayesha Alam, a Soros New American fellow and Yale Law School Global Health Justice Partnership fellow, explains how the Rohingya crisis has "severe and unique consequences for women, who make up a substantial portion of the displaced population." [Read more »](#)

The Sovereignty Wars

CFR Senior Fellow Stewart M. Patrick's newly released book *The Sovereignty Wars: Reconciling America with the World* argues that international cooperation does not necessarily undermine sovereignty and that the United States cannot manage globalization on its own. [Read more](#)

RELIGION AND SOCIETY LATIN AMERICA

Church and State in Nicaragua



OSWALDO RIVAS/REUTERS

Freelance journalist Ian Bateson provides an overview of how atheist Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega is courting the Catholic Church to broaden his appeal and strengthen his political power. [Read more at ForeignAffairs.com »](#)

The Mexican Standoff

In this September/October 2017 Foreign Affairs essay, CFR Senior Fellow Shannon K. O'Neil outlines options for the Mexican government's relationship with the United States, recommending that it should look outside Washington to "deepen its already rich connections to U.S. states, municipalities, businesses, civic institutions, and communities." Read more at ForeignAffairs.com »

Hurricanes and Cuba

Writing in the wake of Hurricane Irma, Eric Gettig, lecturer in the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University and senior associate in the Americas Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, reflects on how hurricanes have shaped Cuban politics and society and suggests that Cuba and the United States mend frayed ties through storm relief efforts. [Read more at ForeignAffairs.com »](#)

A World in Disarray

Watch the VICE Special Report A World in Disarray, a feature-length documentary that draws on the eponymous book by CFR President Richard Haass and explores the disorder in today's international landscape using four regional case studies, then explore newly-released teaching notes to help guide group discussion and analysis.

POLITICAL ISLAM

Political Islam After the Arab Spring

Olivier Roy, joint chair of the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies at the European University Institute, reviews the new book Rethinking Political Islam by Director William McCants and Senior Fellow Shadi Hamid of the Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World at the Brookings Institution's Center for Middle East Policy. The review notes the popular appeal of moderate Islamist political groups across the Islamic world and provides comparisons with the "Western liberal concept of the separation of church and state." [Read more at ForeignAffairs.com »](#)

Saudi Arabia's Shaky Experiment in Modernization

Ray Takeyh, Hasib J. Sabbagh senior fellow for Middle East studies at CFR, describes an ambitious modernization program launched by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman that aims in part to counter internal Islamist opposition to the monarchy and would, in his view, contribute to regional political stability. [Read more at CFR.org »](#)

Tunisian Democracy Derailed?



ZOUBEIR SOUISSI/REUTERS

In this ForeignAffairs.com essay, Sarah E. Yerkes, fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, reflects on the state of Tunisian democracy following her September 2017 trip to the country, observing that distrust between the people and the government is widening. [Read more »](#)

Humanitarian Crisis and Conflict in Syria

Gayle Tzemach Lemmon, senior fellow for the Women and Foreign Policy Program at the Council on Foreign Relations, leads a recent Religion and Foreign Policy Conference Call on the humanitarian crisis and conflict in Syria. Listen at CFR.org/rfp-calls

The men saving history from ISIS

In the face of danger, a pair of padres are finding and protecting ancient religious books and manuscripts from terrorists

We have come across an unlikely band of brothers on the battlefield against terrorism. They are men of the cloth, a pair of padres, who go into harm's way to find and protect ancient religious books and manuscripts.

We joined them in a region of Iraq that was once Mesopotamia where human culture and learning really began. It's believed to be the birthplace of mathematics, writing and agriculture and recently, the scene of some of the fiercest battles in the U.S.-backed war against ISIS.

Father Columba: I think it's the graffiti that's most horrifying to me.



Father Columba, left, and Father Najeeb Michael

CBS NEWS

Father Columba, a Benedictine monk from Minnesota and Father Najeeb Michael, a Dominican friar from Iraq decided to partner up to rescue what old documents they could from places like this monastery, Mar Behnam, in Northern Iraq that goes back to the 4th century. It was occupied and defaced by ISIS.

Father Najeeb Michael: They destroy everything.

Leslie Stahl: They seem to wanna destroy everything Christian.

Father Najeeb Michael: Exactly – to delete our history. To say that there are no Christians, nothing before Islam. And even here, the statue of Virgin Mary – they destroyed it.



Graffiti left by ISIS

CBS NEWS

The monastery, according to historians, was sacred to both Christians and Muslims in medieval times. It had amassed a collection of manuscripts dating back to the 12th century.

Father Najeeb Michael: In this kind of container...

As ISIS was closing in, the resident monks hid the texts in these barrels which they entombed behind a fake wall.

Leslie Stahl: And ISIS never found it?

Father Najeeb Michael: No, because--

Leslie Stahl: For two years?

Father Najeeb Michael: Exactly, because the monks more intelligent than ISIS.



One of the containers the monks used to hide texts from ISIS

CBS NEWS

When this part of Iraq was liberated last year, those intelligent monks returned, drilled through the two walls, found the barrels – and the precious hand-written books.

Father Columba: So it's the one thing that they couldn't replace, 'cause you could rebuild a building. You can put a new cross up. Those could not be replaced, and those were saved.

There were more than 500, now protected in a house in Erbil, the capital of Kurdistan.

Father Najeeb Michael: Very good condition.

Father Columba: Very good condition. Early 5th-century author.

They include Bibles, scientific works and a grammar book filled with random doodles scribbled down centuries ago.

Fathers Columba and Najeeb have been cleaning, restoring and photographing the documents they have rescued from all over Iraq.



Correspondent Lesley Stahl with Fathers Najeeb and Columba

CBS NEWS

In going through them they're unearthing finds like this copy of a 7th-century contract believed to be a mandate by the Prophet Muhammed that says Christians will be protected from their enemies and allowed to practice their religion.

Father Columba: The whole Middle East at one time was characterized by pluralism, different peoples, different languages, different religions coexisting.

Leslie Stahl: You know, it's interesting that there are people who are risking their lives to preserve these documents, they're the very documents that ISIS is risking their lives to destroy. You know, there's a war over these books.

Father Columba: There's a real war.

In that war, ISIS swept across Northern Iraq in 2014, causing Christians and Yazidis to flee in desperate caravans.

When the city of Qaraqosh was attacked by ISIS, 50,000 Christians were driven out in a matter of days -- many on foot, the ill on makeshift stretchers. Before Father Najeeb left on the final night of the siege, he gathered up as many books as he could from his monastery there.

Father Najeeb Michael: We have many, many children. And many families with us. And I ask them to carry something with me. So they help me.

Leslie Stahl: Carry the manuscripts?

Father Najeeb Michael: Even the little girls and boys ten to 12 years, they carry the heritage and manuscripts from 13th, 14th century. I don't save it alone.

They raced from Qaraqosh to the safety of Kurdistan as ISIS fighters chased after them.

Father Najeeb Michael: I saw many hundreds of ISIS flags and cars. And they are ready to attack us and to cut our, our route. And kill us.

Leslie Stahl: Frightening. Totally frightening.

Father Najeeb Michael: I feel at that moment is the end of my life. And the end of the life of everyone.

Then it got worse. When they got to the checkpoint, the Kurdish Army, the Peshmerga, wouldn't let them in.

Father Najeeb Michael: The Peshmerga try to attack ISIS by gun and by fighting like that and we saw the fire became over our head.

Leslie Stahl: You're right in the middle.

Father Najeeb Michael: We are in the middle between both of them. I start to pray in my heart, "Our Father who art in Heaven, forgive us our sin." I start to give the absolution to all the population. To everyone, Christian or no Christian. And at that moment, sure, we heard a voice, many voice, the checkpoint is open. We are very happy and very quickly, we start to escape at that moment to be in the safe side in Kurdistan.

He said it was a miracle, that all those lives were saved but he wasn't able to save *all* his books. ISIS burned the ones left behind, as we saw when he took us back to his old house in Qaraqosh.



Father Najeeb's house after ISIS destroyed it

CBS NEWS

Leslie Stahl: Are you okay father?

Father Najeeb Michael: No.

Leslie Stahl: You're not okay

Father Najeeb Michael: I'm so sad from inside.

He showed us what ISIS did to the 40,000 books that were in his library.

Leslie Stahl: That's books?

Father Najeeb Michael: That's books.

Leslie Stahl: Oh, you can see the pages? And they just torched it—

Father Najeeb Michael: This part, yes.

The books he did manage to save are here...



CBS NEWS

Father Najeeb Michael: Here's the Holy of Holies.

The Holy of Holies is a room in a secret location in the Kurdish region of Northern Iraq. It's where Father Najeeb is protecting his most treasured possessions.

Father Najeeb Michael: It's a Gospel, the New Testament.

Leslie Stahl: Wow, look at that.

Father Najeeb Michael: Palm Sunday. This one when Jesus go to Jerusalem and with a donkey.

Leslie Stahl: This is by hand obviously--

Father Najeeb Michael: All is handwritten. And this one--

Leslie Stahl: Look at those colors.

Father Najeeb Michael: This with eggs -- yellow.

Father Columba: The egg yolk?

Leslie Stahl: The yellow is made from egg yolks?

FR Father Najeeb Michael: Exactly.

Leslie Stahl: And what's the red, do you know?

Father Najeeb Michael: Pomegranate

Father Columba: Pomegranate.

Leslie Stahl: And it survived!

Father Najeeb Michael: Yeah.

It's just one of the 3,500 texts he saved from ISIS.

Books from the 16th and 17th centuries that were used by missionaries dispatched by the church to spread Roman Catholicism in this region.

Father Najeeb Michael: St. Thomas Aquinas.

Some show the ravages of time and war, like this fragment of the New Testament written in about the year 500 and --

Father Najeeb Michael: So, this is a parchment from ten, 11-century. It's a parchment with a sheepskin.

Leslie Stahl: What lang-- is that Hebrew?

Father Najeeb Michael: This is in-- in Aramaic. Old Aramaic.

Leslie Stahl: Aramaic? That's the language of Jesus?

Father Najeeb Michael: It's the language of Jesus Christ and our mother tongue.

Father Columba: And the other thing to remember is that these aren't all religious manuscripts. So some of them are purely history so those are ones that tell us about political events, and kings, and battles, and famines and all of these other things. So it's not simply history of religion, it's history of every aspect of life.

Home base for Father Columba is 6,000 miles from Iraq -- at St. John's Abbey and University in Collegeville, Minnesota, where he spends his days with his fellow monks in prayer and contemplation.



Father Colomba in his library

CBS NEWS

He's also director of this library, the world's largest repository of ancient texts, more than 50 million pages from both Christian and Islamic works, all photographed and archived in an online database.

The collection includes the sacred and the secular, like a 1771 account by a priest telling of a plague that killed 45,000. Father Colomba found it in Turkey. And a tax receipt from the Roman Empire in the year 222 for the purchase of military equipment.

Leslie Stahl: So how do these texts and these manuscripts – how do they relate to today? What's the best lesson you've read about?

Father Colomba: We can learn about places in our past where people could live together reasonably peacefully for certain periods of time. And then very often what made it impossible was an external intervention so the crusaders come and that makes it very difficult for Christians in the Middle East.

He learned that from this 12th-century text that he found in Aleppo, Syria called "World Chronicle" by Michael the Great about how the crusades triggered a backlash against the local Christians.

Until now, scholars tell us, the history of Christianity in the Middle East has largely been told from a Western perspective. These texts provide historical details that cannot be found anywhere else and, when taken together, will rewrite this history from the point of view of those who actually lived it.

Leslie Stahl: A lot of the places you've gone to are under threat by some radical Islamic group. And you're kinda just following them around.

Father Colomba: In a sense where the hotspots are.

On this trip to Iraq – he went hunting for old documents at the University of Mosul, in a section of the city that had been liberated.

Father Columba: So one of our questions is: Can anything possibly have survived?

The library here -- once among the finest in the Middle East -- was reduced to rubble in the battle to retake the city.

Leslie Stahl: It looks like the apocalypse.

Father Columba: It's unbelievable. It's totally devastated.

Leslie Stahl: So what do you think happened here?

Father Columba: It must've been an airstrike. The U.S.-backed coalition forces, as part of the liberation of Mosul.

Leslie Stahl: A bomb?

Father Columba: That may have been what started the fire. It must've been a bomb. It came through the roof. And then you can see it coming through two floors. And then presumably exploding below.

Leslie Stahl: But not ISIS? It was the U.S.-backed forces?

Father Columba: Absolutely. So ISIS had been here, had done their damage, had burned their books, and this kind of destruction of the building that we're looking at would have happened right at the end. Liberation brings a lot of destruction.

The university library used to hold about a million books and a collection of ancient maps and manuscripts.

Father Columba: It's a horrible loss.

In this age of intolerance, there are very few Christians left in Iraq. Many who fled Qaraqosh with Father Najeeb have left the country. Others are here -- in a refugee camp in Erbil where religion remains at the center of their lives.

Even as their presence in Iraq continues to fade, what will always remain -- thanks to the work of Fathers Columba and Najeeb -- is a written record of their history and heritage.

Produced by Richard Bonin and Ayesha Siddiqi.

Source: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/the-men-saving-history-from-isis/>

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[\(718\) 698-0700](tel:(718)698-0700)

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