

UPF London, UK organized online conference to discuss coronavirus pandemic

Robin Marsh
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London, United Kingdom -- A UPF-organized online conference brought together religious leaders to discuss responses to the coronavirus pandemic.

"The Role of Religious Leaders in the Coronavirus Crisis: How Should Faith Guide Us to Overcome the Challenge?" was convened on May 7, 2020, by the U.K. chapters of UPF and its supporting organization the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD).



Background information from UPF-UK stated: "There is great attention to the role of politicians in the COVID-19 virus crisis that faces all nations in the world. We at UPF feel there is also an important role for religious leaders. Faith provides hope and morale to fortify those struggling to keep going on the front lines of this effort but also those who are staying at home in lockdown in difficult circumstances, whether it is economic, social or spiritual. There are many reasons why a strong faith can assist the quality of life of the believers in the UK today. Religious leaders can answer doubts about divine love in the midst of this tragic crisis by sharing their scriptural wisdom. Religious leaders can comfort those who are grieving with long-tested words of solace and understanding. Religious leaders can inspire others to seek for meaning and value in life and guide our motivation when investing in our daily roles in our family, community and work, especially during challenging times.

"Religious leaders could influence the national discourse to keep a sense of perspective. Despite our

problems, most of the world does not have the National Health Service that the United Kingdom enjoys or the economic benefits that have cushioned our experience while under lockdown. Religious leaders could also emphasize the importance of including more vulnerable nations in our calculations. It is in expressing God's love in our concern for and sharing with the less fortunate of the human family that the solution to this crisis will be found. Unless all of the world is cured, no one will be entirely safe nor will the global economy revive. We would like to explore the role of religious leaders at this important time of challenge and upheaval."



Welcoming remarks were given by [UPF-UK Secretary General Robin Marsh and Director Margaret Ali Patricia Earle](#), a UPF representative for the city of Birmingham, offered a prayer.

The speakers were:

[Sheikh Dr Hojjat Ramzy](#), the director of the Oxford Islamic Information Centre

[Councilor Canon Ann Easter](#), commissioner for Interfaith and Interreligious Dialogue.

[Baldev Singh Bains](#), assistant secretary general of the Sikh Council UK

[Balvir Kaur Dhillon](#), a former college vice principal – a sewadar (volunteer) at GNNSJ (Birmingham) and director at Golden Ethics

[Bhakti Vedanta Nemi Swami](#), a Vaishnava, Bhakti Yoga

[Right Reverend Riah Abu El-Assal](#), former Anglican bishop of Jerusalem

[Edwin Shuker](#), the vice president of Jews from Arab Lands

[Sheikh Nuru Mohammed](#), an Islamic scholar

[Dr. Shiv Pande MBE](#), a former presenter for the Granada TV channel and an honorary senior lecturer at the J.M. University, Liverpool

