

## UPF UK: The Role of Religious Leaders in the Coronavirus Crisis

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The Role of Religious Leaders in the Coronavirus Crisis: How Should Faith Guide Us To Overcome The Challenge? This was convened by the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) UK and its

Inter-religious Association for Peace and Development component.

This conference was convened on Thursday May 7th 4 pm to 5.30 pm (BST) by Zoom.

Programme summary: (click on the name to see the video of their speech)

[Welcome remarks from Robin Marsh and Margaret Ali](#)

[Prayer by Patricia Earle](#)

Speakers:

[Sheikh Dr Hojjat Ramzy: Director, Oxford Islamic Information Centre](#)

Explaining the role of faith that supports health workers and those who are struggling at this time with Covid - 19 or going through a bereavement.

[Councillor Canon Ann Easter: Commissioner for Interfaith and Inter-religious Dialogue](#) in the London Borough of Newham.

Highlighting the positive aspects that have emerged from the virus. The friendliness of neighbours, the dissipation of pollution and even the birds singing that can be heard in the absence of the traffic.

[Baldev Singh Bains: Assistant Secretary General, Sikh Council UK](#)

[Balvir Kaur Dhillon – former College Vice Principal – Sewadar at GNNSJ \(B'ham\) and Director at Golden Ethics](#)

[Bhakti Vedanta Nemi Swami: Vaishnava - Bhakti Yoga](#)

[Rt Rev'd Riah Abu El-Assal, Former Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem](#)

[Edwin Shuker: Vice President of Jews from Arab Lands](#)

Edwin Shuker reflected on a good campaign of the Unity of Faiths to count the acts of kindness in each region. Accounting for the good acts that surpass the other depressing statistics we hear each day during the pandemic.

[Sheikh Nuru Mohammed](#)

[Dr Shiv Pande MBE, Presenter - Granada TV-1980-199, Hon. Sr. Lecturer at the J. M. University Liverpool](#)

[Comments from each of the speakers](#) in response to questions from the audience. In particular to a theme of questions asking how can we prevent the world from reverting to business as usual after the crisis?



**Backgrounder:**

There is great attention on 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 the United Kingdom enjoys or the economic benefits that have cushioned our experience while under lockdown. Religious Leaders could also emphasise 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 are cured no one will be entirely safe or the global economy revive. We would like to explore the role of Religious Leaders at this important time of challenge and upheaval.



Universal Peace Federation - Europe and the Middle East Interfaith Peace Talks: ["The Role of Faith in Times of Crisis" May 12 2 pm \(BST\)](#)