

## UPF London, UK Considers Global South Perspectives on the Russia-Ukraine War

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London, United Kingdom -- A distinguished panel at a UPF meeting considered the "Global South Perspectives on the Russia-Ukraine War and Consequent Geopolitical Tensions."

The meeting was convened on September 26, 2023, by UPF-UK in the name of its International Media Association for Peace.



Moderator **Keith Best**, the chair of UPF-UK, decried the West's poor level of understanding of the perspectives of the "Global South" -- a term used to describe the world's developing countries. In a common theme for the evening's discussion, he said the West had a tendency to not listen but rather to lecture the Global South.

**Humphrey Hawksley**, a former BBC World correspondent and award-winning author, reflected that UK citizens living a comfortable life in an orderly, reasonably well-governed society are the envy of many in the Global South. He said he felt reluctant to speak because this comfort denied him the credibility to

speak for the Global South on this panel.

He pointed out that the "Global West," with which he deals on a daily basis as a journalist, does not listen when families in Africa's Sahel region do not have a road on which to send their children to school but will lecture that government that the road will be built only if the nation has free and fair elections.



He spoke of the paralysis of the U.N. Security Council over the Russia-Ukraine war. He also gave a list of failures of the rules-based order to respond to violations of international law: Georgia in 2008, the Crimea in 2014 as well as the South China Sea, the Chagos Islands in the Indian Ocean (including the U.S. base on Diego Garcia), and the invasion of Iraq.

Mr. Hawksley sees a new system being established in reaction to the Global West's rules-based order with its lecturing-not-listening approach. In conclusion, he said he has a feeling that, unless we reverse this practice, "we are going to lose this one."

**Muhammad Hussein**, a staff writer and political analyst for the Middle East Monitor (MEMO), a monitoring organization, commented on 100 years of the nation-state initiated by the West. Whenever the nation-state borders were threatened, the West came down on it with great force. They sustained the national borders while trying to dominate the government.

However, Russia is now trying to change those borders by integrating new territories into Russia from Ukraine. Russia is not a savior to balance the United States, Mr. Hussein said. The real challenge for nations of the Global South is to navigate between those superpowers. Middle powers such as Saudi Arabia, India and Turkey are key victors in this effort.

The emergence of these middle powers is a geopolitical shift that challenges the Western global order, Mr. Hussein said. The expansion of the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India and China) and the multi-aligned world is another aspect of the challenge to the Global West. Saudi Arabia will have a key role in this, he said, as it now accepts the Chinese yuan in payment for its oil.

The dust has not settled yet in these shifts, Mr. Hussein said. When the shifts have settled, we will see the emergence of new powers. In conclusion, he said he could not predict what will happen but he has a sense that by 2030 a new geopolitical order will be formed.

Panelist **P. Unnikrishnan**, the chair of *The Daily Tribune: News of Bahrain* and a media pioneer, participated online. His well-researched talk repeated Mr. Hawksley's admonition to the West to listen more and not lecture the poorer nations of the Global South. He viewed far-reaching changes as a result of the conflict as the world is divided into two ideologically separated power blocs.

Referring to the Ukraine-Russia war, Mr. Unnikrishnan asked who benefits from the war. He pointed to reports that China stockpiled liquified natural gas and wheat prior to the war, which could suggest a foreknowledge of the invasion. He also commented on the explosion of the Nord Stream gas pipeline, which could have benefitted U.S. gas exports to Europe.

Mr. Unnikrishnan's sympathy for the poorer nations of the Global South in this changing world was clear. The war has altered trade supply patterns and resource availability, resulting in prices and poverty levels

rising, which affects poorer nations much more than developed ones.

Commentators in the West have been highly critical of Global South nations because of their failure to support the West's position on Ukraine, Mr. Unnikrishnan said. But the decisions of the poorer nations of the Global South, while they attempt to deal with their difficult economic situations, should be respected, he said. Collaboration and diplomacy are crucial as we navigate the crisis.

The evening concluded with an extended question-and-answer session.

For more, please view the video of the evening's program through the link:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/THUyQVYLIgo>



### Biographies of the Panelists

**P. Unnikrishnan:** Unnikrishnan Puravangara, a resident of Bahrain since 1994, is an entrepreneur by mission, a writer by passion, and a "sociopreneur" by vision.

Mr. Unnikrishnan, an architect of successful media brands across the Gulf Cooperation Council nations, is an acclaimed multilingual writer and orator. Through his entrepreneurial initiatives, his philosophy is to "inspire" people, businesses, and society. He hails from a family of talented writers and media personalities, and his inclination toward the media business was almost by default.

He is the first Indian businessman to start the operations of foreign media (Asianet Television) in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, a private radio station (Radio Voice 104.2) in Bahrain, and an evening newspaper in the Malayalam language (4 PM News). He is also the first Indian chairman and managing director of an English national daily (*The Daily Tribune*) outside India.

He is the chairman and managing director of strategic publicity and advertising company Update Media, Laurels Center for Global Education, *The Daily Tribune*, and 4 PM News. He is also the advisory member and director for K.H.K. Consultancy and A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Centre. He is also the chairman of Unisaki Agro Food company in Hebbal Mysore, India.

**Humphrey Hawksley** is an award-winning author and foreign correspondent whose assignments with the BBC have taken him to crises all over the world. His [Rake Ozenna series](#) of novels originated when reporting from the US-Russian border during heightened tension.

He has been a guest lecturer at universities and think tanks such as the RAND Corporation, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and MENSAs Cambridge. He moderates the monthly Democracy Forum debates on international issues and is a host on the weekly online [Goldster Book Club](#), where he

discusses books and talks to authors.

He has presented numerous BBC documentaries, and his latest non-fiction work is [\*Asian Waters: The Struggle over the Indo-Pacific and the Challenge to American Power.\*](#)



**Muhammad Hussein** is a political analyst on Middle Eastern affairs, primarily focusing on the Gulf region, Syria and Turkey, as well as their relation to Western foreign policy. He is a journalist with publications in three languages in a variety of news organizations as well as a martial arts practitioner, international politics graduate and visionary.

**Moderator: Keith Best, chair of the UPF-UK Board of Trustees**

Currently also the chair and CEO of Wyndham Place Charlemagne Trust; the chair of Charity 2020; the executive chair of the World Federalist Movement; the secretary of Parliamentary Outreach Trust, European Movement; a patron of the European-Atlantic Movement (TEAM); media appearances on migration and other matters; freeman of the City of London.

Author of several books and articles (latest, a chapter in the 2002 book *Religious Soft Diplomacy and the United Nations*); keynote speeches both in the UK and abroad; visiting lecturer at various universities.

Former CEO of national charities SurvivorsUK, Freedom from Torture, Immigration Advisory Service, Prisoners Abroad; vice chair of the European Council on Refugees and Exiles; served on the foreign secretary's Advisory Panel on Torture Prevention; a practicing barrister and member of Parliament (Anglesey/Ynys Môn); parliamentary private secretary to secretary of state for Wales; named in the Society Guardian as one of the 100 most influential people in public services in the UK; a major in airborne and commando forces. Speaks French and Welsh; married, two daughters. Ran the London Marathon and abseiled down the highest hospital tower in the world (Guy's) for charity.