

UPF Washington DC's Interfaith Iftar Dinner at The Washington Times

Tomiko Duggan
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Washington, D.C. – The Universal Peace Federation DC hosted an Interfaith Iftar Dinner held at the Founder’s Room of The Washington Times on Friday, June 16, 2017.

Mrs. Tomiko Duggan, Executive Director, Office of Public Affairs, UPF USA – Washington, DC, welcomed the 70 guests to the program prior to breaking the Ramadan fast at sundown.

Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam, it is a month-long fasting period of abstaining from food, drink, and sexual relations from the sun up to the sun down. It is a time of spiritual purification. “By cutting oneself off from worldly comforts, even for a short time, a fasting person gains true sympathy with those who go hungry, as well as gaining growth in his or her spiritual life and is considered a means of attaining God consciousness or Taqwa.”



Mrs. Duggan introduced Mr. Thomas McDevitt, Chairman of both the Washington Times and the Universal Peace Federation USA who greeted the guests. She also introduced Mr. Larry Moffitt, Executive Director of the Washington Times Foundation, co-founder of the program who also greeted the guests. Dr. Zulfiqar A. Kazmi, Executive Director of The Commongrounds, a co-sponsor of the program welcomed the guests and spoke with heart about the notable guests who were attending.



Dr. Akbar Khawaja, former Senator, Senate of Pakistan, offered remarks on Ramadan, “the end of Ramadan is followed by a day of celebration, called Eid ul Fitr. This year on the 25th June it will be celebrated by over 20% of the World Population or more than 1.5 billion Muslims worldwide.”

He concluded saying, “Dignity is a fundamental right of every human being. At this blessed occasion let’s remember the poor, hungry, homeless, and those less fortunate and less privileged. We pray for their freedom from poverty, from inequality, from injustice, and from oppression.”



Mr. Abid Saeed, Pakistani Press Minister, read the message of H. E. Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Ambassador to the US from Pakistan, who was out of town. The Ambassador began with words from the Holy Quran:

“O people! Indeed, your Lord is one and your father is one. There is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, nor of a non-Arab over an Arab, nor of a white over a black, nor a black over a white, except by taqwa (piety).”

He also cited the words of Pakistan’s founder, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, testifying to the religious freedom of the new nation:

“You are free; you are free to go to your temples you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed that has nothing to do with the business of the State.”



His remarks concluded by saying that Pakistan is trying to end extremism and to foster tolerance and equality of all peoples. He congratulated the organizers for holding the event which provided a platform for people of different faiths to interact and ‘break bread’ together.

Mrs. Rhonda Williams sang a song in Dari and English written for children calling for peace.

Mr. Asad Kamal, a UPF Ambassador for Peace, called the end of fasting with Azan, a prayer sung to call worshippers to prayer at exactly 8:36 pm.

The fast was broken by eating dates and a green tea juice offered by UPF founder, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, as a blessing of marriage.

Four Ambassadors for Peace were appointed by Susan Fefferman, AFP coordinator, before eating dinner. The new Ambassadors for Peace include, Mrs. Faiza Hassan, who is a voice of peace for thousands of Police Martyrs of Pakistan, who lost their lives striving for the restoration of peace. Also, Mr. Agha Hasnain, an American Muslim athlete who has participated in marathons in all 50 US states and around the world promoting peace through his example. He always wears a T-shirt with messages like “Peace for All” and “I am Muslim, I am American.” Another one is, Mr. Anwar Iqbal, Chief Correspondent for Daily Dawn (Pakistan’s Daily English Newspaper), is a noted poet and writer and Mr. Sahibzada Zunair Sultan, a descendant of the famous Sufi mystic and poet, Hazrat Sultan Bahu; the mystic tradition he established in Pakistan is called Sarwari Qadiri. Mr. Sultan was educated in the US and has established several elementary schools in Pakistan to promote literacy in deprived and neglected areas. He and his wife, Sara Zunair, live in Houston, TX where both of them lead Muslim communities.

A delicious Pakistani dinner was prepared by Mrs. Keiko Patton, wife of District Pastor, Ernest Patton. She received an appreciative round of applause.