

A Religious Contribution to the UN

Oslo, Norway, 27. October 2015



By Steinar Murud

UPF celebrated the UN Day in Oslo on the 27th October in partnership with Central Jamaat Ahle Sunnat, the largest mosque in the city.



An evening programme was organised under the title, «A religious contribution to the UN». The format of the programme was simple; seven speakers with seven minutes each, concluding with a few comments and finally refreshments and social mingling.

Each speaker kept their time well.

The main imam in the mosque welcomed the participants with the words «peace is a word that unites us all».

The representative of the UN communication office in Oslo, mentioned the new sustainable development goals, and explained about the talks in the UN over the topic religion, freedom of speech and protection against blasphemy. Even

though there are different opinions on this issue and in other questions, the UN is still our best arena to solve international conflicts.



The deputy chief of mission from the Philippine Embassy gave a very interesting report on «UN and Interfaith». Particularly about the **Philippine's experiences with interfaith dialogue** both in the UN and in other international organisations.

A Sunni imam from a neighbouring mosque spoke on the topic «Religion and Peace.» No religion promote war. That is a wrong interpretation of religion. The Lord of the universe is the merciful Lord, Sustainer and Provider for all humans. He said the UN works to create an atmosphere of peace and added that this is also the work of religion.

A vicar from the Church of Norway addressed the title: «Is Peace without God Possible?» With the definition of

peace as absence of war, he said «yes». He said that the ability to discern between good and bad, is built into the heart of all human beings, independent of our belief. All of us have the same basic law in our hearts and by following this we can create peace in the world, even without faith in God.

The Shia imam elaborated on the question; «How can religion create peace?»

Dialogue with respect, was his key point. There are so many common points and principles in the religions. Peace can come when we practice these, while conflicts between religions is a result of ignorance of **one's** spiritual roots.

Finally, the Norwegian UPF leader commented on the topic «Religion, peace and the UN». He emphasized the relevance of religion. One important role is to promote universal values. He pointed at the need to strengthen our common platform of values. He expressed hope that religion could be a source of inspiration for individuals to work for peace, and introduced further the idea of an interfaith council in the UN.

Good refreshments provided by the helpful staff in the mosque closed the evening programme.

