

UPF Czech Republic Observes UN Human Rights Day at the Prague Peace Embassy

Juraj Lajda
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Prague, Czech Republic -- On the occasion of UN Human Rights Day, the Czech chapter of UPF invited two speakers to discuss the significance of human rights, religious freedom and promoting world peace.

About 15 people attended the meeting at the Prague Peace Embassy on December 19, 2022.

Dr. Vladimír Sánka, chair of the Muslim community in Prague, said that according to Islam, human rights apply to each human being.

He contrasted *human concepts* -- which develop according to the historical time and are influenced by people -- and *revealed concepts*, which are stable, unchanging and may not be changed by people. In history these two concepts have intermingled.

Revealed concepts include the right to life -- which also applies to unborn children -- economic right, the right to freedom, and other rights. There should be freedom of conscience and religious freedom. People of different religions should not offend each other, Dr. Sánka said.

The next speaker, **Dr. Juraj Lajda**, the president of UPF in the Czech Republic, mentioned Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which declares that everyone has the right to religious freedom. In spite of this, there is a lot of persecution of religious believers around the world. Many people have a false concept of religion: that it is the opiate of humankind, as Karl Marx claimed. Due to these misconceptions, spiritual and religious values often are suppressed and ignored.

In some countries religion is misused for political and ideological purposes. Based on this, states often justify their wrongdoings.

As an example of violating religious freedom, Dr. Lajda spoke about the unjustified persecution of the Unification Church in Japan after the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on July 8, 2022. After his death a big wave of violence and hatred swept over the members of the Unification Church. In a democratic country this situation is unprecedented. It became obvious that some groups are interested in misusing this situation for political agenda.

After the two presentations, there was a vivid discussion. The participants expressed that they appreciated the content and value of the event.

