

UPF Europe and Middle East: European Experts Re-imagine the UN

Jacques Marion
July 28, 2026



IAAP, EUME – The International Association of Academicians for Peace (IAAP) Europe and Middle East (EUME) hosted a webinar entitled "Re-imagining the United Nations for a New Era of Peace" on July 28, 2026.



Ms. Jennifer Lambert, a research fellow for UPF-EUME, served as the moderator, welcoming participants from around the world. She noted that the event was taking place at a significant moment, as the United Nations marks its 80th anniversary, continues its 80th General Assembly under the theme, "Better Together: 80 Years and More for Peace, Development and Human Rights," and prepares for the selection of a new secretary-general. She said these developments provide a timely opportunity to reflect on how the United Nations can be renewed to address today's global challenges while advancing humanity's shared aspiration for world peace.



Mr. Jacques Marion, president of UPF-EUME, reaffirmed that strengthening the United Nations has always been a core objective of UPF, inspired by its founders' gratitude for the UN role in preserving freedom during the Korean War. He stressed that today's global challenges – including conflict, climate change and social division – require leadership guided by universal moral and spiritual values, not merely political or technical solutions. He expressed the hope that the webinar would generate fresh ideas for

strengthening international cooperation and make a meaningful contribution to discussions ahead of the forthcoming UN General Assembly.

Dr. Giuseppe Cali, consultant on research and education, UPF-EUME, argued that the United Nations must undergo profound structural and conceptual reform if it is to respond effectively to today's global challenges. While acknowledging the difficulty of reforming the Security Council because of competing national interests and disagreements over veto power, he suggested that the deeper issue is the need for a new model of global governance founded on shared moral principles rather than political interests alone.



Drawing on the proposals of Rev. Sun Myung Moon, he advocated a bicameral United Nations that would complement the existing assembly of states with an Interreligious Council representing the moral, spiritual, cultural and educational wisdom of humanity, a proposal that received endorsements from numerous governments. Such a body would provide ethical guidance and help shape legislation and oversight at the international level. He also proposed the establishment of UN Peace Zones in conflict areas, where joint environmental, cultural, educational and economic projects could foster reconciliation and build trust between former adversaries.

Dr. Cali concluded by calling for a renewed or "second" UN Charter that would help transform the United Nations from an arena of competing national interests into a more democratic institution, serving the common good of one human family.



Dr. Afsar Rathor, vice president of the Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations and a former UN diplomat, argued that renewing the United Nations requires both institutional reform and stronger political commitment from member states. Based on his experience in UN peacekeeping missions, he proposed a five-point agenda to make the organization more effective in preventing atrocities and protecting civilians. First, he called for peacekeeping mandates that prioritize civilian protection and give field commanders the authority to act immediately when lives are at risk. Second, he advocated restricting the use of the Security Council veto by prohibiting its use in cases of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, while allowing the General Assembly to override repeated vetoes. Third, he stressed the need for sustainable financing by introducing consequences for member states that fail to meet their financial obligations.

Fourth, he urged that the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle be made operational through a permanent UN commission empowered to monitor emerging atrocities and trigger emergency action when the Security Council is deadlocked. Finally, he called for stronger protection, training and accountability measures for UN peacekeepers. Beyond these institutional reforms, Dr. Rathor emphasized that the UN also needs a stronger moral foundation. He supported the creation of a bicameral UN including religious and cultural leaders, the establishment of UN Peace Zones, the appointment of religious ambassadors, and official recognition of the family as the foundation of peace. He concluded that only by combining effective institutions with moral leadership can the United Nations fulfil its mission of preventing conflict and building lasting peace.

Dr. Claude Béglé, former member of the Swiss Parliament and CEO of SymbioSwiss, proposed a comprehensive renewal of the United Nations based on three principal reforms designed to make it more representative, effective and responsive to contemporary global challenges. First, he argued that the Security Council should better reflect today's geopolitical realities by expanding its permanent membership and ensuring broader regional representation. He also proposed replacing the unilateral veto with a system requiring at least three permanent members to act together, encouraging dialogue and preventing a single country from blocking collective action. Second, he recommended strengthening the General Assembly through four specialized committees focused on economic and social development, peace and conflict prevention, environment and health, and culture and artificial intelligence.



These bodies would promote coordinated responses to issues such as poverty, migration, climate change, pandemics and the ethical development of AI, while placing greater emphasis on conflict prevention, mediation and stronger peacekeeping mandates. Finally, Dr. Béglé endorsed the creation of a bicameral United Nations, with a Lower House addressing practical political matters and an Upper House composed of respected religious, cultural and intellectual leaders to provide ethical guidance for international decision-making. He argued that effective global governance must combine political action with moral leadership, drawing on the world's diverse spiritual and cultural traditions to promote the common good and build a more peaceful and cooperative international order.

Following the presentations, there ensued a short question and answer session with the panelists, followed by closing remarks by **Mr. Yoshihiro Yamazaki**, coordinator of IAPP-EUME. Mr. Yamazaki thanked the speakers for their insightful contributions on integrating faith into global discussions, acknowledging the challenge given Europe's historical principle of separating church and state. He emphasized that European perspectives are crucial to UN reform, noting Europe's influence in the Security Council and regional integration. Highlighting his work in the Middle East, he lamented that religious voices – particularly Islamic perspectives – are often misunderstood globally due to strict secularism and associations with conflict. Ultimately, he expressed hope that ongoing dialogues will foster genuine communication and bridge cultural divides.