



Celebration of the U.N. International day of Peace “Perspectives on Peace”

Oslo, Norway, September 19, 2019

By Steinar Murud

UPF Norway organized the celebration of the UN International Day of Peace in partnership with the mosque Central Jamaat E-Ahle Sunnat on Thursday 19th September.

During the years we have developed a good relationship with this community. This time the secretary

in the mosque gave a very good testimony of UPF's work in front of the delegation of the police who visited the mosque the same evening. He said; «UPF is doing very good work to bring people from different religions together and creating harmony among them. We are very happy for our cooperation».

Over the topic «Perspectives on Peace» we shared various views and ways to peace. The imam in the (sunni-)mosque opened the evening with a recitation from the Quran followed by welcoming words to the audience.

Our first speaker was the head monk from the Sri Lanka Buddhist temple in Oslo. He spoke of the importance of balance between the spiritual and physical dimension. And he emphasized how to create inner peace, elaborating on the eightfold path, which is a rather universal teaching with appeal, not only to Buddhists, but to all people.

The next speaker was a former editor in Norway's main Christian newspaper. In addition to be an editor, he is also an author of many books and also a tour guide in Middle East. He spoke of his positive experiences with «walks and pilgrimages for peace». From his experience, people can learn many things, build trust and overcome cultural barriers by walking and spending time together. He shared a personal story, how he as a Christian could develop a close friendship with his Muslim partner.

The third speaker was a shia-imam. He spoke of common values in the religious traditions.

Everybody is aware of the tension between Shia and Sunnis in our world. However, the Shia imam contributed warmly to overcome this by highlighting verses in the Quran that speaks of unity and friendship.

We had one Kurdish participant in the audience, a refugee from Iraq. He was very encouraged to see the two imams at the same table talking about peace. He kept repeating that we need more of such dialogues.

The final speaker was the UPF leader who spoke of religion and peace. When conflicts arise people usually calls for the politicians. This might be both necessary and important. But the cornerstone of peace is the family. This is the grassroot. When things break down on this level it has social consequences. Similarly, when things are fine, societies blossom. The cradle of peace is in the family and our sacred texts give much good guidance,

Finally, as a conclusion, the mosque offered a generous dinner to all the participants.