

UPF Denmark: Danish NGOs Celebrate Religious Harmony and a Special Birthday

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Copenhagen, Denmark – UPF-Denmark, the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), the Church of Scientology, and United for Human Rights (UHR) hosted a meaningful event in honor of World Interfaith Harmony Week on Sunday, February 2, 2025. The occasion also marked the 80th birthday of ambassador for peace Mr. Bashy Quraishy.

The gathering took place in the elegant and welcoming event space at the Church of Scientology in central Copenhagen, bringing together more than 50 invited leaders from diverse faith communities and various NGOs.



Mr. Bashy Quraishy, chairman of ENAR Denmark, warmly welcomed the attendees on behalf of the

organizers. He emphasized the significance of World Interfaith Harmony Week in promoting peace and stability, fostering mutual respect, preventing extremism, strengthening social unity, and supporting human rights and ethical values. He noted that interfaith harmony is essential for a just and progressive society in an increasingly globalized and diverse world.



Ms. Anette Refstrup, information officer of the Church of Scientology, shared insights into the church’s human rights initiatives and its commitment to helping people live fulfilling lives. She highlighted the "Golden Rule" of interfaith dialogue – respect and acceptance of others – and the transformative power of collaboration.

Mr. Nobu Igarashi, chair of UPF-Denmark, underscored the role of faith in building peace among individuals and nations. He spoke about UPF founder Rev. Sun Myung Moon’s decades-long dedication to interfaith dialogue and his advisory work with the United Nations. He also shared uplifting passages from Rev. Moon’s autobiography, illustrating the common threads between faith traditions and the value of learning from one another.



Pastor Lene Skovmark from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark reflected on her experiences engaging with different religious communities. Drawing from her eight years in the Central African Republic and work in Africa and Asia, she emphasized the power of shared narratives in fostering spiritual and personal transformation.

Dr. Tali Padan, director of Mellem Education and founder of Salaam Shalom, provided a compelling perspective on Jewish-Muslim dialogue and intercultural communication. She spoke about growing up in a Jewish family in Israel and the United States, reconciling conflicting narratives, and finding a path to inclusion and peace despite differing perspectives.

Ms. Heena Salamat, representing Pakistani Christians in Denmark, expressed her enthusiasm for interfaith engagement. While new to interfaith work, she highlighted the importance of bridge-building and strengthening relationships and voiced her eagerness to participate in future initiatives.

The event featured beautiful cultural performances, including soulful Punjabi Sufi music by music therapist **Mr.**

Pervaiz Akhtar, and piano pieces by **Ms. Christine Astrupgaard** and German musician and composer **Mr. Makob Wegmann**.

During the intermission, guests enjoyed delicious soups, coffee, tea, and snacks.

The second part of the event was a celebration of Mr. Bashy Quraishy's 80th birthday. A heartfelt slideshow showcased his life and achievements, accompanied by speeches, video messages, and dance performances. Having arrived in Denmark from Canada in 1970, Mr. Quraishy has tirelessly advocated for human and minority rights across Europe. His unwavering fight against discrimination, racism, and social injustice has played a key role in shaping policies, fostering multicultural dialogue, and promoting inclusivity. In 2005, he was honored as an ambassador for peace in Brussels.

The event was a resounding success, filled with inspiring presentations, meaningful networking, and a shared passion for peace. With smiles and hearts full of hope, attendees expressed a strong commitment to expanding interfaith collaboration and engaging more organizations in future efforts to foster harmony and understanding in society.