

Monthly Highlights

December 2012

International Interreligious Affairs

Events related to the end of the Mayan calendar cycle

On the occasion of the conclusion of the Mayan calendar cycle on December 21st, the state of Yucatan in Mexico held a week's Festival of Mayan Culture and the State Governor, Rolando Zapata Bello, invited certain world religious leaders to send a video message of hope and peace for humanity that would be repeatedly broadcast during the festival and I was honored to be one of these . Pasted below is an official announcement received from the office of the Governor of Yucatan:

INFORMATION RE THE MAYAN CULTURE FESTIVAL HELD IN MERIDA YUCATAN, MEXICO, DEC. 14-22, 2012

The Mayan Culture Festival celebrated in Merida to commemorate the new era of the Mayan calendar of the long account Baktun 13, was a very successful cultural program involving a public around 25,000 people from all over the world. The program included the messages of Religious and Social leaders from different parts of the world giving a touch of spirituality and universal wisdom. It was significant to see the universality of this the messages coming from all backgrounds.



The President of Mexico and many other dignitaries from this Country were present for the Closure ceremony in the Great Museum of The Mayan Culture and were able to see the Video of the Messages from the leaders who send their messages for this occasion.

All the public was touched by the messages and the people of the Yucatan felt honor to receive these blessings and good wishes from all over the world.

The film was projected in 4 mega screens in different main points of the city where the festival was taking place – the main one of these being in the Museum of the Mayan Culture.

On December 21st at David's Citadel at the Jaffa Gate of the Old City of Jerusalem, I addressed a multi-faith gathering entitled *Harmony in the Holy Land* (<http://www.harmonyintheholyland.org>) organized by the *Jerusalem Peacemakers* and the *Elijah Institute's Board of World Religious Leaders* on which I serve. This program was inspired by the "Unify" initiative synchronizing thousands of people in prayer, meditation and music events worldwide; and the events in Jerusalem featured Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Druze spiritual leaders as well as musicians from the Abrahamic faiths offering prayers, inspirational messages and sacred music. The events were broadcasted live around the world.



At the multi-faith prayer gathering at the King David Citadel

Israel Religious Leaders Council

The fifth annual meeting of the Israel Council of the Heads of Religious Communities was hosted at the Baha'i world Centre and focussed on the subject of Respect and Protection of Holy Sites. The meeting was addressed by President Shimon Peres, the Mayor of Haifa Yona

Yahav, the Chief Rabbis of Israel, Albert Lincoln Baha'i Secretary General, Patriarch Theophilos, Archbishop Elias Chacour, Khadi Iyad Zahalka, Sheikh Mouafaq Tarif, and Rabbi David Rosen.



With the heads of the religious communities in Israel

Greek Orthodox Patriarch Theophilos, President Shimon Peres and Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amar



Media

Reverberations continued in the media subsequent to the launch of the King Abdullah International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) of which I am one of the Board of Directors (see <http://www.ilsussidiario.net/News/English-Spoken-Here/Culture-Religion-Science/2012/12/6/DIALOGUE-Rabbi-Rosen-Saudi-Interfaith-Centre-Will-Give-Moderates-a-Voice/344992/> and <http://m.thetablet.co.uk/article/163531> .)

Vatican Insider covered the AJC response over the latest terrorist atrocities in Nigeria including a comment from me. (see <http://vaticaninsider.lastampa.it/en/world-news/detail/articolo/nigeria-christians-20950/>)