

Monthly Highlights

May 2013

International Interreligious Affairs

May 5-8, Murcia, Spain

The Pontifical Catholic University of Murcia (UCAM) in south east Spain , hosted a conference promoting Spanish-Israel /Jewish-Catholic relations in cooperation with the Fondation Don Juan de Borbon (www.fdonjuandeborbon-ei.org), established by Spanish Jewish businessman Sadia Cohen to promote relations between Spain and Israel,as well as between the Jewish people and the Catholic Church.



Being greeted in Murcia by UCAM President Mendoza Perez

In addition to Bar Ilan University that had been invited to be the academic partner of UCAM, the conference also involved participation from the Spanish Episcopate and the Chief Rabbinate of Israel. The opening session was addressed inter alia by Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amar, and the closing session which focused on Jewish-Catholic relations was addressed by Cardinal Canisares (former head of the Spanish Bishops Conference and currently at the Vatican) and myself.



Audience at the opening session



Closing Session

In between there were sessions that focussed on technology, medicine, commerce and law; as well as on Sephardic heritage and customs. The conference received wide coverage in the Spanish media and was also reported on in the Israeli media, e.g.

<http://www.nrg.co.il/online/11/ART2/465/489.html?hp=11&cat=1102&loc=10;>

<http://www.jpost.com/Features/In-Thespotlight/Grapevine-Honoring-the-House-of-Orange-311894;>

Mazav HaRuach, May 17, 2013

<http://www.sofash.co.il/%D7%9E%D7%A6%D7%91%2520%D7%94%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%97.html>

May 22/23, Vienna, Austria

The work of the Board of the King Abdullah International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID www.kaiciid.org) continued facilitating the full running of the Centre including the hiring of its key personnel ; and advancing its initial projects in the field of combatting infant mortality and advancing basic health education through religious delivery systems; and holding its first mini-conference on “ Images of the Other ” in preparation for a major conference on interfaith education globally, due to take place in November.



May 22-24, Dead Sea, Jordan

At the annual Middle East summit of the World Economic Forum that took place at the Dead Sea in Jordan, I was one of the panelists in a session on Conflict Resolution and Co-existence, moderated by Professor Daniel Shapiro of Harvard.

The gathering was addressed by world leaders including King Abdullah of Jordan, US Secretary of State John Kerry, Israeli President Shimon Peres and the PA President Mahmoud Abbas.

The summit also announced an initiative of Israeli and Palestinian businessmen and civil society leaders called Breaking the Impasse (BTI) that had been facilitated by the WEF in which I am also a participant. The BTI is designed to provide support for efforts of the political leadership to move the peace process forward.



Munib al-Masri and Yossi Vardi, leaders of the Breaking the Impasse Initiative, at WEF MENA summit, Dead Sea, Jordan

In preparation for the summit, I had been requested by the WEF to write a blog on the role of religion in overcoming conflicts and advancing civil society, which appear on the WEF site at :-<http://forumblog.org/2013/05/religion-must-be-part-of-the-solution-in-the-middle-east/>

May 30th , Chicago, USA

The AJC Chicago Regional Office requested my presence on my way to the AJC ACCESS summit and the Global Forum. In addition to meeting with Cardinal George (accompanied by David Inlander, Emily Soloff and Jane Charney) and Presbyterian leaders; I addressed an AJC Board lunch meeting on Jewish-Muslim relations and an evening event on Jewish-Catholic relations.

Speaking at AJC
Chicago Board event

