



Monthly Highlights

May-June 2018

International Interreligious Affairs

May 3rd – UN

The Holy See's Mission to the United Nations and Caritas Internationalis held an event at the United Nations on Religious Perspectives on Migrants and Refugees in advance of the Compacts on this subject due to be presented shortly at the UN. I was honored to be one of the speakers together with Cardinal Antonio Tagle of the Philippines (President of Caritas), Metropolitan Emmanuel of France, Sheikh Mohammed Abu Zaid of Lebanon, the Rev. Gijun Sugitani of Japan and the Rev. Rachel Carnegie of the Anglican Communion.

This report is from Religions for Peace (of which I am an international president.)

Religions for Peace Leaders Offer Recommendations on Global Compact on Refugees



On 3 May, Rabbi Sir David Rosen [Co-President of Religions for Peace], Metropolitan Emmanuel Adamakis [Co-President of Religions for Peace] and Venerable Gijun Sugitani [Chair of Religions for Peace Japan] participated in a multi-religious panel at the United Nations Headquarters during which they each offered recommendations – grounded in their respective faith traditions – for the High Commissioner for Refugees' Global Compact on Refugees which will be presented to the General Assembly in 2018.

Bringing their respective religious perspectives, wisdom, and moral authority to the panel, **Religions for Peace** leaders offered the following remarks:

Metropolitan Emmanuel Adamakis said, “Forced migration is one of the greatest challenges of today’s world. The great religious traditions all emphasize the dignity of each person and the unity and common destiny of the entire human race in our common home. Accordingly, each faith calls upon individuals and communities to welcome, assist, and protect refugees and migrants displaced in our midst. [...] To do so, we need to have better cooperation between religions and international organizations on a global level. We should train people to welcome migrants – mediation and facilitation should become mandatory in the Global Compacts.”

Rabbi David Rosen said, “The Hebrew bible calls on us to affirm human life and dignity assuming justice, righteousness, and peace; and especially protecting the vulnerable in society. We are commanded not only to love our neighbor in the bible but also specifically to love and empathize with others who seek to dwell in our community. We must fulfill these commandments; especially in relation to refugees in migrants. We must recognize the divine in every person and truly love our neighbors as ourselves.”

Ven. Gijun Sugitani said, “All religions preach the importance of love for people, including neighborly love, brotherly love, family love, and love for humanity as much as of respect for human dignity. I am a Buddhist and in Mahayana Buddhism it is said that all people have Buddha-nature, which is the fundamental element that makes each individual an indispensable existence that embodies the truth of the universe. Buddha-nature is nurtured through the practice of wisdom and compassion. Protecting refugees is nurturing Buddha-nature.”

Other coverage of the event may be viewed at : <http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/treaty-bodies/watch/sharing-the-journey-of-migrants-and-refugees-an-interfaith-perspective-on-the-global-compact/5780082516001/?term=&page=4?lanfrench>

See also : <https://twitter.com/KAICIID/status/993422397159170048> ,

<https://twitter.com/KAICIID/status/993423463632244736>

<https://twitter.com/KAICIID/status/993423886636199941>

<https://twitter.com/KAICIID/status/993424292019949568>

<https://twitter.com/KAICIID/status/993425696608477184>

<https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/you-shall-love-sojourner-yourself>

<http://www.catholicmissourianonline.com/stories/faith-groups-care-for-refugees-in-ways-governments-cant-group-tells-un,685>

June

10th, Jerusalem

The AJC Global Forum was held for the first time in Jerusalem and attended by over 2,400 participants. One of the most distinguished guests of this event was Pak Yahya Staquf of the Nahdlatul Ulama in Indonesia, the largest Muslim organization in the world of some sixty million members. David Inlander, AJC's Chair of Interreligious Affairs introduced the session and Rabbi David Rosen was Pak Yahya's interlocutor. The interview received wide global circulation and elicited strong reactions overwhelmingly positive but some negative as well.

The following report is also from Religions for Peace

Rabbi David Rosen Leads Conversation on Inter-Religious Dialogue



Rabbi Sir David Rosen (left) and Yahya Cholil Staquf (right)

As part of the American Jewish Committee's 2018 Global Forum 10-13 June in Jerusalem, **Rabbi Sir David Rosen** [Co-President of *Religions for Peace*] helped lead a conversation on the importance of inter-religious dialogue to AJC's mission. Rabbi Rosen pointed out that although many questioned the possibility of real improvement between Catholics and Jews, for example, the last 50 years have demonstrated that peace is possible.

Indeed, in conversation with The Jerusalem Post, **Rabbi Rosen** emphasized "that while very often religion is part of the problem, it can and should also be part of the solution."

This sentiment was echoed by Pak Yahya, Secretary General of Nahdlatul Ulama Supreme Council in Indonesia the world's largest Muslim organization, who called for compassion while sharing the stage with Rabbi Rosen at the Global Forum. In fact, Yahya placed responsibility on all religious people to find solutions to the problems of religious conflict.

For more from **Rabbi Rosen**, find his conversation with the Jerusalem Post [here](#).

For more from on the conversation between **Rabbi Rosen** and Pak Yahya, see [here](#).

Below are links to other media coverage including from Indonesia where Pak Yahya's visit elicited much controversial reaction

<https://www.algemeiner.com/2018/06/10/in-speech-to-jewish-group-leader-of-worlds-largest-muslim-organization-calls-for-compassion/>

<http://news.rakyatku.com/read/105515/2018/06/12/transkrip-lengkap-gus-yahya-di-israel-hidayat-tidak-ada-pernyataan-bela-palestina>

<https://geotimes.co.id/kolom/yahya-cholil-staquf-israel-palestina/>

<http://m.hidayatullah.com/berita/wawancara/read/2018/06/12/144086/wawancara-rabi-david-rosen-dengan-yahya-c-staquf.html>

Other sessions relating to interreligious affairs took place during this Global Forum as well as on the Shabbaton that preceded it, in which members of the AJC Interreligious Affairs staff were involved and in which many members of the Interreligious Affairs Commission Steering Committee as well as other members of the BOG actively participated. These included a morning walking tour to meet with heads of non-Jewish religious communities in Jerusalem – see report below:

[Jerusalem- city of many faiths - AJC Global Forum program/tour led by Rabbi David Rosen](#)

The half-day program commenced with an introduction to the Christian and Muslim communities in Jerusalem by Rabbi Rosen who emphasized both the different political contexts between these communities in Jerusalem and environs from their co-religionists in the Galilee, but also the different challenges faced by the clergy of the different denominations both internally and in relation to the political and civic authorities.

The group first met at the Latin Patriarchate with Archbishop Pierbattista Pizzaballa the head of the Catholic Church in the Holy Land, who provided an overview of the life of the church in Jerusalem and its role in particular in education and health care. He described the political and security challenges the Christian communities have to face, but also with great candor presented the internal challenges of the church and what he described as “the crisis of identity” of the local Christian communities that do not see themselves and are not seen by others as fully part of the larger and dominant religious/ethnic/national communities of the Holy Land. He also discussed some of the practical challenges that the church has to face - specifically he discussed the taxations issues and indicated that the Church is interested in paying its taxes as fully as is appropriate but that the State of Israel has never regularized their status and apparently prefers not to do so.

The next meeting was at the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate where the group was received by Patriarch Theophilos who dwelt at length on the historic role of the patriarchate since the birth of Christianity and how

it is profoundly connected to its Jewish roots. He described the relations that the Patriarchate maintains with the different local communities as well as its unique universal role. In response to a question he referred to some of the local initiatives for interreligious collaboration and acknowledged AJC's contribution and role in these.

The last stage on the itinerary of the encounter with the non-Jewish communities in Jerusalem took place at the Lutheran Hospice where the four quarters of the Old City of Jerusalem meet.

The group was received by Propst Wolfgang Schmidt who reviewed the history of the Lutheran and German speaking communities in Jerusalem and the work of the Lutheran church to promote interreligious coexistence and cooperation both in Jerusalem and internationally. He presented the church's plans to establish a garden of reconciliation on the site celebrating the diverse religious heritages of Jerusalem.

The Lutheran hospice looks out over the Haram El Sharif/ Temple Mount, the third holiest site of Islam, and the Muslim attachment to Jerusalem was addressed by Professor Mohammed Dajani Daoudi who also introduced his own work of the movement he established, Wasatia, and its efforts to promote a tolerant vision of Islam in keeping with the its most noble aspirations. Dajani addressed the manifold social, political, and educational challenges that the Muslim community currently confronts and espoused his vision for a Jerusalem in which the various traditions and heritages will live in peace respect and celebration of one another.

The tour concluded with lunch at the Eucalyptus restaurant.

22nd, Vatican

I participated in the Sustainable Development Solutions Network meeting in the Pontifical Academy of Sciences inside the Vatican to explore ways of combatting modern slavery, human trafficking slavery and exploitation.



25th, Florence

I was honored with the Galileo 2000 prize (see <https://gouvernement.lu/dam-assets/fr/actualites/communiqués/2011/05-mai/06-juncker/galileo.pdf> ; https://gallery.mailchimp.com/6bc45b16011309758956f0670/files/5252efc1-86c2-46dd-b051-8847a50d778f/PREMIATI_storia_e_attuali_PREMIO_GALILEO.01.pdf) for the year 2018, together with the Secretary General of the Saudi World Muslim League and Cardinal Angelo Scola former Cardinal of Milan and Patriarch of Venice and others



<https://www.pressreader.com/italy/corriere-fiorentino/20180626/281496457016863>

Press Coverage

Media coverage included reports about AJC's letter of concern to the Vatican regarding the beatification process form Cardinal Hlond, the Polish Primate during the period of the Shoah :-

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/jewish-group-questions-sainthood-for-wwii-era-cardinal/>

<https://www.jta.org/2018/05/24/news-opinion/wwii-era-polish-cardinal-hostile-jews-path-sainthood>

a report/interview on the occasion of AJC's Global Forum

<https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Pioneering-interreligious-relations-559669>

and an interview on Canadian Broadcasting regarding Judaism and Veganism

<http://www.cbc.ca/radio/tapestry/redefining-kosher-and-connecting-with-your-haters-1.4669026/vegan-is-the-new-kosher-rabbis-worldwide-declare-1.4669036>