



PROMOTING PEACE AND
RECONCILIATION TO COUNTER
VIOLENT EXTREMISM

THURSDAY, 4 FEBRUARY 2016

11 A.M. TO 12:45 P.M.

CONFERENCE ROOM 1

UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS IN NEW YORK

focus on faith
BRIEFING

Focus on Faith Series: an Introduction



The NGO Relations and Advocacy Section of the United Nations Department of Public Information started the **Focus on Faith Series** as part of the weekly briefings for the NGO community at the UN in 2008. This series within the DPI/NGO Briefings was created out of demand from the NGO Community, as many NGOs affiliated with the UN over the years have created committees and sub-committees of faith-based NGOs, religious tolerance and dialogue and interfaith groups.

The primary focus of the series is to explore the work of Faith-Based Organizations and how their work ties with the mission of the UN.

Focus on Faith Chronology:

2008 - The first briefing in the Focus on Faith Series took place to celebrate the visit of His Holiness the Pope Benedict XVI to the United Nations. This first briefing was warmly welcomed by the NGO community and focused on the Catholic Faith & the relevance of the visit of the Pope to the United Nations.

2009 - In June of this year the series focused on Islam with the Briefing entitled: Understanding Islam.

2010 - This was a particularly productive year for the Focus on Faith Series, as it had two Briefings dedicated to religious traditions:

1. "Unveiling Judaism and its Place in the Dialogue among Civilizations"
2. "Building Bridges between Cultures: A Closer Look at Hinduism"

2011 - This year the focus was on the Bahá'í Faith with the title: "An Introduction to the Bahá'í Faith"

2013 - The subject of this year's Focus on Faith Briefing was Buddhism, of the same title.

2014 - This briefing was titled "Discovering Mormonism and its Role in Humanitarian Affairs"

2015 - This briefing explored the role of Women & Faith

Faith as a Peace Tool

Religious leaders have a pivotal role to play in times of turmoil, during which they can provide a values-based glue to hold communities together and provide common ground for peace-making and problem solving, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in June 2015 at a conference in Kazakhstan.

"You can do so by fostering dialogue; by using spiritual authority to encourage individuals to act humanely; and by promoting shared values – as enshrined in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights – and as reflected in the teachings of all world religions," Mr. Ban said in his remarks to the Congress of

Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, held in Astana.



Speakers



Father Roger Landry is a priest of the Diocese of Fall River, Massachusetts (USA), is attaché at the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the U.N. Prior to his service for the Holy See, he served for 15 years as a parish priest, diocesan newspaper editor, and chaplain for high school students. A graduate of Harvard College and Rome's Gregorian University, he has taught widely on the thought of Popes Francis, Benedict and John Paul II, writes for various Catholic publications, and regularly appears on Catholic television and radio programs.



Matthew Hodes is the Director of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, a special initiative of the Secretary-General. From 1992-2001, Mr. Hodes served the international community in multiple capacities, including service at UNHQ. He served briefly in Mogadishu with UNOSOM II in 1993 and then with UNPROFOR during the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s. In 1995 he opened the first office in Sarajevo for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Hodes returned to Sarajevo to focus on rebuilding the Bosnian judicial system for the Office of the High Representative of Bosnia from 1999–2001. From 2001-2007 he worked at The Carter Center and was Director of its Conflict Resolution Program working on unofficial diplomacy projects in Venezuela, Nepal and the Middle East. He returned to UN service in 2013.



Edward J. Flynn is the Senior Human Rights Officer at the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), at the United Nations in New York. Prior to serving with CTED, Mr. Flynn was adviser on human rights and counter-terrorism issues at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in Geneva from 2003 to 2005. Before that, from 1998-2003, he was the OHCHR coordinator for all human rights programs in Europe, Central Asia and North America, concentrating on field operations in the Balkans. He served as a UN human rights field officer in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina during the wars in that region, as well as in Haiti. Before joining the UN in 1993, he worked for six years as a human rights and refugee-defense lawyer in the United States.



Azza Karam, Ph.D. serves as a Senior Advisor on Culture and Social Development, at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). In this capacity, Dr Karam supports Fund-wide culture outreach; is a Lead Facilitator for the United Nations Strategic Learning Exchanges on Religion, development and humanitarian issues. She represents UNFPA as Coordinator/Chair of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Engaging Faith-Based Organizations for Development; and coordinates engagement with members of a Global Interfaith Network for Population and Development with over 500 faith-based organizations. She is also a visiting Lecturer at the United States Military Academy (West Point). Prior to UNFPA, Dr. Karam served in various capacities in the academic, NGO and international inter-governmental sectors. She taught at a number of universities, and has published widely on international political dynamics, including democratization, human rights, gender, and religion and development.

Speakers



Rev. Chloe Breyer, since 2007, the Rev. Chloe Breyer has directed The Interfaith Center of New York, a nationally-recognized non-profit organization that catalyzes collaborations among hundreds of grassroots and immigrant religious leaders and civic officials (judges, teachers, and social workers) to address New York's most pressing social problems. During Rev. Breyer's tenure as Executive Director, ICNY has spearhead multi-faith advocacy efforts on issues including immigration reform and religious freedom. In the year directly following the attacks, she volunteered as a Chaplain with the Red Cross at the World Trade Center Site and then worked with the Episcopal Muslim Relations Committee of the Diocese of New York and the Afghan community in Flushing, NY on an interfaith initiative to rebuild a bombed mosque in Afghanistan. She traveled to Afghanistan in '03, '04, and '06, '07, '08 and '11 to assist an Afghan NGO-sponsored girls' school in Kabul and school and health clinic in Wardak Province.



Rev. Victor H. Kazanjian Jr. is Executive Director of the United Religions Initiative (URI). Prior to URI, Victor was dean of Intercultural Education and Religious and Spiritual Life, and co-director of the Peace and Justice Studies Program at Wellesley College in Massachusetts, USA. He is co-founder of Education as Transformation Inc., and is a visiting faculty member at the Malaviya Center for Peace Research in Varanasi, India. Specializing in interreligious dialogue and conflict transformation, diversity and democracy, and grassroots peace building, Victor is a recognized thought leader and the author and editor of numerous books and articles.

Moderator



Jeffrey Brez, is the Chief of NGO Relations, Advocacy and Special Events in the Department of Public Information. Mr. Brez oversees the relations with non-governmental organizations, the Messengers of Peace Programme, the Creative Community Outreach Initiative and Special Events. His work in international humanitarian aid and development assistance has spanned more than a decade and covered a range of issues including children's and women's rights, refugee assistance, child soldiers, health, education, sustainable agriculture and food security, environmental sustainability, anticorruption and climate change. His experience includes all aspects of strategic communications and campaign planning, social media, video and photography, development of knowledge products and events as well as global, multi-stakeholder policy consultation processes and relations with civil society. He has worked for four United Nations entities (IFAD, OCHA, UNICEF, and UNDP) and the World Bank Group, and been posted in Albania and Côte d'Ivoire.