



UPF EUROPE & MIDDLE EAST NEWSLETTER



MEDIA FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND DIGITAL GOVERNANCE IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

By Jacques Marion, Alan Sillitoe, and Bilbil Zharri, UPF Europe & Middle East

Parliamentarians, media leaders, academics and civil society representatives met in the Albanian Parliament on June 26, 2026, to examine the media's role in supporting democracy, regional cooperation and European integration. The Balkan Leadership Conference "Media Freedom, Democracy and Digital Governance in the Western Balkans" was co-organized by the Universal Peace Federation (UPF), the Albanian Parliament, the Washington Times Foundation, and partner organizations.

Speakers agreed that media freedom, democracy and digital governance are closely interconnected. While digital technologies create new opportunities for public participation, they also increase the spread of

disinformation, political manipulation and declining public trust. Participants stressed that protecting freedom of expression must be balanced with transparency, accountability, professional journalism and ethical digital governance.

The first session focused on challenges to media freedom in the Western Balkans. Pressure on independent journalists, political interference in public broadcasting, and online harassment—particularly of women journalists—were emphasized, as was the growing influence of artificial intelligence, social media algorithms and foreign disinformation campaigns. Speakers called for stronger legal protections for journalists, improved cybersecurity, enhanced media literacy and greater regional

cooperation. Several speakers emphasized that media freedom depends not only on legal guarantees but also on economic sustainability, fair working conditions and adequate protection for investigative journalism. The second session explored the media's role in promoting economic cooperation across the region. Responsible journalism builds public trust, encourages investment, strengthens transparency, and supports cross-border collaboration, participants argued. Rather than focusing on political divisions, the media should highlight regional economic opportunities, successful partnerships and shared development goals. Quality journalism is essential for exposing corruption, ensuring accountability and creating a stable



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environment for sustainable economic growth and European integration. Participants emphasized the importance of ethical journalism, digital literacy and responsible regulation to counter misinformation while protecting freedom of expression. There was broad agreement that stronger cooperation among governments, media organizations, civil society and regional institutions is essential to address democratic and technological challenges.

The conference concluded with the presentation of the UPF Ambassador for Peace Award to Hon. Danijela Đurović of Montenegro and Hon. Jorida Tabaku of Albania for their contributions to peacebuilding and public service. Jacques Marion closed the event by inviting participants to support the upcoming Mitrovica Youth Summit for Peace, which will bring young Serbian and Albanian leaders together in Kosovo to promote dialogue and reconciliation.



1 The conference was held in the Albanian Parliament.

2 Left to right: Mr. Defrim Methasani, chair, UPF Albania; Hon. Enver Hoxhaj, former deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs of Kosovo; Hon. Klodiana Spahiu, deputy speaker, Albanian Parliament; Mr. Aleksander Čipa, director, Union of Albanian Journalists; Hon. Danijela Đurović, former speaker of the Parliament of Montenegro; Ms. Armela Krasniqi, chair, Albanian Audiovisual Media Authority; Hon. Klajda Gjosha (moderator), former Albanian minister of European Integration (2013–2017); Hon. Iris Luarasi, vice chair, Parliamentary Commission on Human Rights and Public Media of Albania; Hon. Jovan Jovanović, former Serbian parliamentarian and former ambassador to Indonesia; Mr. Jacques Marion, president, UPF EUME

3 Left to right: Hon. Danijela Đurović, Hon. Klajda Gjosha and Hon. Jovan Jovanović

4 Left to right: Mr. Peter Zoehrer, executive director, FOREF, global coordinator, IMAP; Mr. Lutfi Dervishi, chair, Albanian Center for Quality Journalism; Hon. Senida Mesi, former deputy prime minister of Albania; Ms. Mirilda Tili (moderator), coordinator, Media for Peace Committee; Mr. Jacques Marion, president, UPF EUME; Professor Afet Mamuti, professor of law, Tetovo University, North Macedonia



LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

Mr. Jacques Marion, President, UPF Europe & the Middle East

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the 20th edition of our UPF Newsletter. Eight years ago we launched this publication with reports on the inauguration in Vienna of the European chapter of the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development and the World Africa Summit 2018 in Dakar, Senegal.

Through these major gatherings, our Founder, Dr. Hak Ja Han, called on world leaders to look beyond national and religious boundaries, embracing the ideals of interdependence, mutual prosperity, and universal values. In an age of globalization, these principles offer a vision rooted in heart, conscience, and cooperation to meet today's challenges and build a peaceful future.

Together with like-minded partners, UPF continues to advance this vision despite the conflicts and tensions affecting our region. This issue highlights inspiring initiatives—from Balkan parliamentarians to young "Football for Peace" players in Switzerland, from religious leaders in the Middle East to artists in Denmark. It also marks a significant milestone: the inauguration, at the United Nations in Geneva, of the NGO Committee on the Family, attended by representatives of 26 governments.

I wish you a wonderful summer, and thank you for your continued support!

ASSOCIATIONS

ISCP WEBINAR: ANALYZING THE CHANGING GLOBAL ORDER

By Alvin Pang, UPF-Asia Pacific

More than 360 participants from over 80 countries, including former heads of state and international experts, discussed the changes that are necessary for the post-World War II international order to meet today's challenges.

Speakers at the June 18 webinar held by the International Summit Council for Peace (ISCP) agreed that the rules-based international system should be strengthened through reform rather than dismantled. Former Philippine President Dr. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo highlighted the rise of a multipolar world, the growing influence of the Global South, and the need for democratic oversight of artificial intelligence. Former Nigerian President Dr. Goodluck Jonathan called for reform of the UN Security Council to ensure fairer global representation, particularly for Africa.

Former Trinidad and Tobago President Dr. Anthony Carmona proposed an International Environmental Court with compulsory jurisdiction to address environmental crimes, while former European Commission President Dr. José Manuel Barroso urged greater cooperation between the Global North and South. The webinar concluded that inclusive governance, environmental accountability and ethical leadership are essential for a stable and peaceful global future.



Clockwise from top left: Dr. Franco Famularo (moderator), H.E. Dr. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, H.E. Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, Dr. Tageldin Hamad (UPF international president), H.E. Dr. José Manuel Barroso, and H.E. Dr. Anthony Carmona.

A NEW DAWN FOR PEACE: THE ARTS AS A POWERFUL INSTRUMENT FOR DIALOGUE, DIPLOMACY, AND HUMAN CONNECTION

By Mrs. Eva Pejkořski, Chair, IAACP Europe and the Middle East

The International Association of Arts and Culture for Peace (IAACP), one of the eight UPF associations, was inaugurated in the Europe and Middle East region during an online event held on April 20, 2026. Participants from around the world celebrated the role of the arts in promoting peace and understanding.

A retrospective of the Arts for Peace movement traced its development from the 1960s to the launch of the IAACP in 2020, including initiatives such as the Little Angels, New Hope Singers, Universal Ballet, and the New York City Symphony.

Slovenian filmmaker Kristian Irgl was the event's host. Messages of congratulations were delivered by Mr. Jacques Marion, president of UPF EUME; Dr. Dieter Schmidt, vice president of FFWPU EUME; and Dr. Jozef Terék of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Hungarian Academy of Arts. Mrs. Eva Pejkořski, chair of IAACP EUME, presented the vision of expanding a culture of peace through the arts. The celebration concluded with a toast, short messages from Maestro David Eaton and soprano Mrs. Seiko Lee, and a performance of the Hallelu Cantata performed by Mr. Eaton and Israeli singer Mr. David D'Or.



Mrs. Eva Pejkořski, chair of IAACP Europe and the Middle East, encourages the participants to offer a toast for the inauguration.



The flyer for the inauguration

REGIONAL NEWS

UPF SUPPORTS NORTH MACEDONIA CONFERENCE FOR YOUNG PEACEBUILDERS

By Gani Rroshi, Secretary General, UPF Balkans

UPF Albania participated in the closing conference of the INNOV8PEACE Project, which highlighted the essential role of young people in building sustainable peace through education, leadership, and civic engagement.

Held at the University of Tetovo on March 24, 2026, “From Youth Initiatives to Sustainable Peace” brought together around 150 academics, students, and peace advocates. A panel of experts discussed the challenges facing today's youth and the importance of empowering them as peacebuilders.

The INNOV8PEACE Project is organized by the Europe and the Middle East branch of International Association of Youth and Students for Peace (IAYSP) in cooperation with the University of Tetovo and is co-funded by the European Union.

A special highlight was the presentation of the Ambassador for Peace award to four distinguished personalities from North Macedonia in recognition of their contributions to society. The program concluded with presentations of youth-led initiatives developed through the INNOV8PEACE training. Focusing on anti-corruption, social inclusion, and education for children with special needs, these initiatives demonstrate the positive impact of youth-driven solutions for peace.



Around 150 academics, students, and peace activists listen to a panel of experts.



Ms. Elmia Amity, an undergraduate student, reports on "Mental Health Awareness for Youth."

RELIGIONS, CULTURES AND SOCIETIES - THE IMPORTANCE OF IDENTITIES

By Maria Gabriella Mieli, Coordinator, UPF Southern Europe, member of FEDINSIEME

The roundtable “Religions, Cultures and Society – The Importance of Identities” brought together representatives of religious communities, academics, and experts to discuss the role of identity in today's multicultural societies. Organized by the interfaith organization FEDINSIEME in cooperation with the Center for Studies on New Religions (CESNUR) and Freedom of Belief (F.O.B.), the event was held on May 15, 2026, at the Palazzo Civico in Turin under the patronage of the City of Turin.

Opening the conference, City Council Deputy Vice President Domenico Garcea stressed that a strong identity should foster dialogue rather than division and that respect for both diversity and the rule of law is essential for social cohesion. Speakers explored the challenges facing religious minorities, the importance of interreligious dialogue, and the need to protect freedom of religion while valuing cultural and spiritual identities.

The event concluded with FEDINSIEME presenting awards to Prophet Imboni Radebe and Deputy Vice President Garcea in recognition of their commitment to interreligious dialogue and religious freedom. UPF Italy was represented by Mrs. Gabriella Mieli.



The roundtable was held in the Palazzo Civico in the City of Turin.



Maria Gabriella Mieli (left) with Prophet Imboni Radebe, his wife and staff. (Photos by Carol Cimino)

REGIONAL NEWS

CHILDREN PRACTICE FAIR PLAY IN SWISS FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT

By Seraina Termine, UPF Ticino

The thirteenth annual Peace Cup, a football tournament for 10- and 11-year-olds, brought together ten Swiss and two Italian teams in the Swiss canton of Ticino to promote fair play, friendship, and inclusion through sport.

Opening the May 1, 2026, event, UPF cantonal president and social educator Mr. Giuseppe Termine encouraged the young players to see football as an opportunity to build character and relationships.

He reminded participants that true champions show respect for opponents, referees, coaches, and teammates, and demonstrate humility in victory and dignity in defeat. He also emphasized the importance of solidarity, urging the children to support one another and ensure that no one is left behind.

The tournament embodied these values throughout the day. Chiasso Base 10 won the competition, while Rapid Lugano received the Peace Cup Fair Play Trophy for exemplary sportsmanship. A special award was presented to the Insema team. The event attracted a large audience of families and supporters and received positive coverage in the *Corriere del Ticino* daily newspaper, highlighting its success in combining sport with peace education.



Peace Cup participants were encouraged to experience football as an educational and relational tool.



The Peace Cup went to Rapid Lugano for their exemplary sportsmanship.

UPF DENMARK: SUMMER FESTIVAL CELEBRATES UNITY THROUGH MUSIC AND CULTURE

By Karsten Nielsen, Secretary General, UPF Denmark

UPF Denmark, in cooperation with FFWPU Denmark, welcomed around 100 participants from diverse backgrounds to a celebration of culture as a bridge between people. Despite rainy weather, the Summer Festival created a warm atmosphere of friendship and cultural exchange. Ambassador for Peace Ms. Kamala Mais and Mr. Kerim Elhan of the Denmark-Azerbaijan Association for Youth Communication coordinated the event, which was held at the UPF Peace Center in Copenhagen on June 13, 2026.

Opening the program, Dr. Thorkil Christensen presented UPF's vision of peace based on Interdependence, Mutual Prosperity, and Universally Shared Values, noting that while politics can create agreements between states, culture builds understanding between hearts.

The program featured music from Azerbaijan, Türkiye, India, and Denmark, including performances by Kamala Mais' young piano students and a moving concert by award-winning Indian singer Ms. Nabanita Ghosh.



The Summer Festival took place at the UPF Peace Center in Copenhagen.

REGIONAL NEWS

FESTIVAL OF PEACE FOCUSES ON REMEMBRANCE AND HOPE

By Johann Rechberger, UPF Burgenland

The fourth Festival of Peace honoring the victims of National Socialism was held in the Austrian state of Burgenland on May 17, 2026. Austrian national broadcaster ORF covered the well-attended event in the town of Parndorf, which combined remembrance with a message of hope.

The festival was hosted by the Burgenland branch of UPF, together with the team establishing the Parndorf Memorial Site, and was supported by the Municipality of Parndorf.

Acting as moderator, actress Ms. Valentina Himmelbauer emphasized reconciliation, responsibility, and humanity. Parndorf Vice Mayor Wolfgang Daniel highlighted the importance of remembrance and respectful coexistence.

Writer Mag. Elisabeth Brandner-Balkovic recalled the lives of resistance fighter Hanna Sturm and Holocaust survivor Käthe Sasso. Dr. Christa Wendelin presented new research on forced laborers and the development of the Parndorf Memorial Site. Local UPF leader Mr. Johann Rechberger recounted the moving survival story of Hungarian Jew Ernő Lazarovits as told in his book *My Way Through Hell*.

The event featured the opening of the Yad Vashem exhibition "What Now," focusing on the lives of Jewish survivors after 1945 and introduced by Mag. Johannes Reiss.

The Cantovento woodwind trio provided an outstanding musical program.



Vice Mayor Wolfgang Daniel, representing Mayor Wolfgang Kovac, gave the welcoming address.



The Parndorf Memorial to Holocaust victims

SPIRITUAL DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL PEACE

By Patrick Jouan, Vice President, UPF France

From April 7 to 10, 2026, the French chapter of UPF hosted a series of meetings in Paris with Sheikh Thierno Amadou Ba, the general caliph of Bambilor (Senegal), and his delegation to explore the role of spiritual diplomacy in promoting peace.

The main conference, attended by more than 80 participants in person and others online, examined how moral and ethical values can complement traditional political diplomacy in addressing international conflicts.

Examples of successful faith-based mediation and interreligious cooperation were presented, highlighting the contribution of religious leaders to conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Participants also discussed training future religious diplomats and integrating spiritual diplomacy into international institutions. During the event, the caliph announced plans to establish a Scientific Center for Religious Diplomacy in Bambilor.

The conference concluded with UPF presenting Sheikh Thierno Amadou Ba with the title of Ambassador for Peace. During the visit, the delegation met with religious, diplomatic, academic, and international institutions to strengthen dialogue and develop future cooperation for peace.



The main event took place on April 7 at the Espace Barrault, the Paris headquarters of UPF.



Left to right: Patrick Jouan, vice president, UPF France; Ambassador for Peace Mrs. Dieng; Jacques Marion, president, UPF France; Sheikh Thierno Amadou Ba, the general caliph of Bambilor; H.E. Baye Moustar Diop, ambassador of Senegal to France; Sheikh Amadou Ba, president of the National Council of Imams in France

FOUNDERS' MESSAGE

MEDIA, RESPONSIBILITY, PEACE

Understanding the power of the media as a tool of information, Dr. Sun Myung Moon always stressed the great responsibility of media representatives. Over decades, he established several daily newspapers in different countries and brought together media leaders in annual World Media Conferences.

"The lesson of history is that the result of the abuse of power is the loss of freedom. To be a great journalist, you must be a great human being, living in accord with the moral law of God. Therefore, the challenge of journalism starts from the challenge of being a moral and righteous person," he said in Tokyo, Japan, Nov. 20, 1984, at the Seventh World Media Conference.

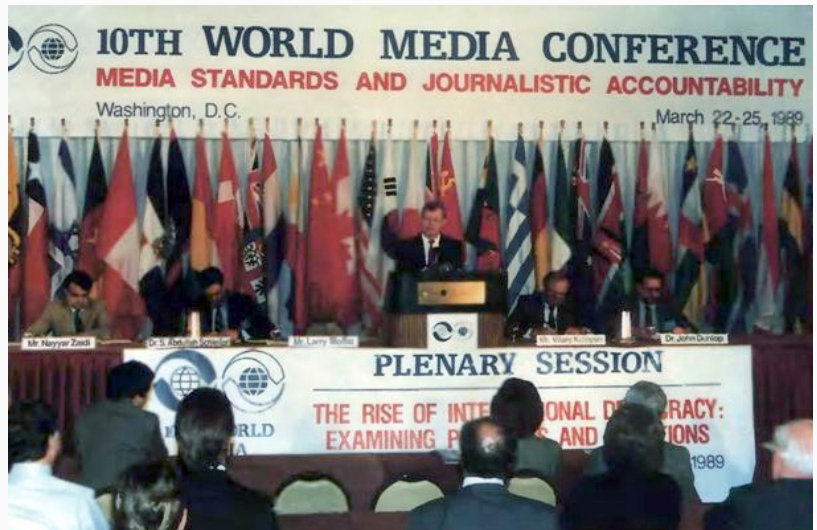
His words seem more important today than ever.

Dr. Sun Myung Moon at the Tenth World Media Conference

"The preservation of human rights and human dignity must be the standard of all ethics and morality.

"Therefore, the media have to stand at the very forefront in the defense of human dignity and freedom and in opposition to all forms of injustice. Doing this is the best possible way to cultivate world peace. The media have to lead the fight against all forms of oppression.

"In the service of morality, the media need to oppose corruption and racism and vindicate the unjustly accused. Moral media must lead the fight against drug abuse, pornography and many other destructive vices of our society. The media have to become the conscience of society."



Tenth World Media Conference on Media Standards and Journalistic Accountability on March 23, 1989, Washington, D.C., USA



Western journalists prepare to board a train from Moscow to Leningrad on the first of the fact-finding tours of the USSR sponsored by the World Media Association, 1985.



Dr. Moon being interviewed with Albert Vlasov, director of the Novosti press agency, which co-hosted the World Media Conference in Moscow in 1990.

UPF International welcomes the nomination of Dr. Hak Ja Han for the 2026 Nobel Peace Prize.

Dr. Ján Figel', former European Union special envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief and president of FOREF Europe, formally nominated Dr. Han in April, recognizing her decades-long contributions to international peacebuilding, interfaith dialogue, humanitarian cooperation, United Nations engagement, and reconciliation efforts, particularly in relation to the Korean Peninsula.



INTERFAITH

BRIDGES OF LOVE BETWEEN SIKHS AND MUSLIMS

By David Fraser Harris, Secretary General, UPF EUME

"Bridges of Love," a UPF webinar celebrating the shared values of Sikhism and Islam, was held on June 20, 2026. The event marked the launch of a new book of the same title, produced through the collaboration of two scholars in the United Arab Emirates – Dr. Surender Singh Kandhari, chair of Guru Nanak Darbar, and Dr. Mohamad Habash, chair of the Centre for Studies on Human Fraternity – with contributions from five scholars from each faith. Moderated by David Fraser Harris, the webinar featured Dr. Kandhari and Dr. Habash, as well as Dr. Ismail Yassin and historian Simar Singh. Speakers highlighted common principles including belief in one Creator, compassion, selfless service, patience, and peaceful coexistence. Drawing on scripture, history, and personal experience, they illustrated how Sikh and Muslim traditions have long fostered mutual respect and cooperation, from Guru Nanak's friendship with Bhai Mardana to contemporary examples of interfaith friendship.



Top row, from left: David Fraser Harris (moderator); Dr. Mohamad Habash, chair, Centre for Studies on Human Fraternity, UAE; Dr. Surender Singh Kandhari, chair, Guru Nanak Darbar, UAE; Dr. Ismail Yassin, director, Al Salam Center and Mosque, Vienna. Bottom row: The world's youngest Sikh historian, Simar Singh from India (third from left), along with two covers of the book.

"Bridges are not built by those who stay on their side of the river; they are built by those who believe the other shore is worth reaching."

GLOBAL INTERFAITH PROGRAM LINKS HAPPINESS TO SPIRITUALITY

By Tomiko Duggan, Global Coordinator, IAPD



The Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD) launched its first Global Interfaith Prayer for the Nation and the World, "Spirituality and the Principles of Happiness," on June 25, 2026, bringing together online 65 participants from around the world. The program was moderated by Patriarch George A. Stallings Jr.

Rabbi Michael Shevack reflected on happiness as both a habit and a spiritual practice, rooted in honoring parents, kindness, and faithfulness. Imam Arif Huskic emphasized that happiness transcends religion and nationality, calling for greater dialogue, compassion, justice, and service. Imboni Dr. uZwi-Lezwe Radebe spoke of spirituality as a

source of hope, purpose, and inner peace, describing happiness as a conscious choice nurtured through love and kindness. Dr. Michael Jenkins, chairman of UPF-North America, read a proclamation by Dr. Hak Ja Han. The program affirmed the close relationship between spirituality and happiness and reflected IAPD's vision of empowering faith leaders to promote reconciliation, moral leadership, and a culture of peace.

INTERFAITH

WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK

From the outset, UPF has actively supported this initiative, both at the United Nations and as observed by UPF chapters around the world. Below are a few representative programs organized by the Europe and Middle East branch of UPF to celebrate World Interfaith Harmony Week 2026. For more information, visit www.worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com

The Relevance of Religions for a Peaceful World Order

UPF-Austria, together with UNCAV, CFBO, IAYSP and WFWP, hosted a conference at the Vienna International Centre (UN Vienna). Attended by 200 participants, the event brought together diplomats, parliamentarians, academics, religious leaders, and youth representatives. Speakers emphasized that authentic religion promotes peace, justice, and human dignity, while warning against its political misuse. The conference concluded with a joint call to strengthen interreligious dialogue, education, and cooperation as essential foundations for a just and peaceful world.



Hon. Lukas Mandl, an Austrian member of the European Parliament, addresses the assembly at the Vienna International Center (UN Vienna) with 200 guests in attendance.



Hungary: Several faith groups participated in a Water of Peace ceremony. The event concluded with the establishment of the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD).



Italy: Sharing and friendship in Bergamo between representatives of different faiths including the Christ Victory Church, Church of Scientology, FFWPU, and a Buddhist monk.



The Netherlands: Mr. Wim Koetsier, secretary general of UPF-The Netherlands, was one of the speakers to address representatives of various religious groups at the Scientology Chapel in Amsterdam.



Norway: UPF Norway in the main library in Oslo, with representatives from the Catholic Church, Church of Norway, Bahai, Hindu and Islamic communities.



Sweden: The event in Sundbyberg brought together some 25 participants from 5 different religious traditions.



UK: UPF UK West Midlands' event on the theme of 'Strengthening our Bonds of Friendship' was attended by 75 people including many religious leaders.

REGIONAL NEWS

KNESSET CAUCUS FOR PEACE AND NORMALIZATION BETWEEN ISRAEL AND LEBANON

By Mrs. Adi Sasaki, Secretary-General of UPF Israel



The inaugural meeting of the “Knesset Caucus for the Promotion of Peace and Normalization between the State of Israel and Lebanon” was held on June 29 at the Knesset. Founded by MK Dr. Akram Hasson with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the caucus aims to advance peace through faith diplomacy, grassroots engagement, and people-to-people connections.

Members of the Knesset, Foreign Ministry officials, international diplomats, journalists, civil society representatives, women and youth leaders underscored their shared commitment to dialogue, coexistence, and lasting peace.

Discussions highlighted Lebanon’s historical legacy and explored opportunities for future cooperation between the two countries. Speakers included UPF representatives, the Jerusalem Institute of Justice, youth activists, media professionals, and members of families of former South Lebanon Army veterans, alongside experts on regional affairs and coexistence. Their contributions emphasized the importance of mutual respect, shared humanity and dignity, and cross-border engagement.

In his closing remarks, Dr. Hasson stressed that lasting peace requires courage, sustained investment, and strong relationships between the Lebanese and Israeli peoples — not only between their governments.

1 The event took place at the Knesset on June 29, 2026.

2 Left to right: Mr. Amir Wietmann; MK Sharren Haskel, deputy minister of foreign affairs; MK Dr. Akram Hasson; and Gideon Sa'ar, minister of foreign affairs

"A PATH TO PEACE" IN FÁTIMA, PORTUGAL

By Sérgio Vieira, President, UPF Portugal

A "Path to Peace" event was held in Fátima, organized by the Order of the Christian Templar Knights and the International Templar Confederation (OCTC-CTI) in partnership with UPF Portugal. The gathering on May 29, 2026, brought together representatives of diverse faiths, humanitarian organizations, and Templar orders to promote dialogue and cooperation. Speakers emphasized the importance of interfaith dialogue, family values, and cooperation in fostering peace. The



1 Representatives of various faith communities poured water into a common bowl and prayed side by side.

2 International Grand Prior Massimo Maria Civale with Dr. Sérgio Vieira

program also featured the presentation of the International "Dove of Peace" Award and concluded with a symbolic Water Ceremony involving representatives of different faiths expressing unity, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to peace.

UPF Portugal appointed eight new Ambassadors for Peace during the event. Before the official session, participants joined a Templar march to a nearby chapel, where a Catholic Mass was celebrated, followed by an Order Ceremony that included the reception of new novices into the Order of the Poor Knights of Christ. Two representatives of UPF Portugal were also invested as Knights of Christ.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FAMILIES



**INTERNATIONAL
DAY OF FAMILIES
15 MAY [2026]**



Albania: UPF and the Tirana Peace Council held an event titled "The Family – The Foundation of Peace and Social Order" with 200 participants representing various fields.



Austria: UPF, together with FFWPU and WFWP, discussed "Family – School of Love: Strong Families, Happy Children" with speakers from different backgrounds and 120 guests.



Czech Republic: Experts such as Hon. Nina Nováková, former MP; Aleš Hodina, founder, International Institute for Family and Children; and Jana Jočová, chair, Alliance for the Family spoke at UPF's International Day of Families event.



France: UPF and WFWP met in Paris to discuss "Living Together in the Family and in Society." Speakers included Christine Jouan-Bruneau, an academic and honorary deputy mayor of Boulogne-Billancourt.



Germany: This nationwide UPF Zoom "Peace Talk" featured a lively interview with Jonathan Makkonen and Janine Förster of "Das Relationship" about conflict in close relationships and ways to build healthier family dynamics.



Moldova: UPF, in partnership with FFWPU and the Personal Assistance Social Service (SSAP), organized an event for families of people with disabilities and their personal assistants..



Netherlands: UPF and WFWP held a celebration in which WFWP President Elizabeth Giuliano and family counselor Margriet Noot Heidemann discussed "Families, Inequalities and Child Well-Being."



Slovakia: The UPF event featured Patrik Daniška, chair, Institute for Human Rights and Family Policy, known as the main organizer of the National March for Life which has taken place annually in various cities since 2013.

GLOBAL DAY OF PARENTS

NGO COMMITTEE ON THE FAMILY AT UN GENEVA

By Heiner W. Handschin, Director, UPF Office for UN Relations, Geneva

The NGO “Committee on the Family – Geneva” was formally established at the United Nations in Geneva on April 29, 2026, as a subsidiary of the NGO Committee on the Family – New York, creating a new platform for civil society engagement on family policy. Membership is open to non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the UN. At its inaugural event on June 1, 2026, the founding members, including UPF, held a joint observance of the International Day of Families and Global Day of Parents. The conference, “Families and Parenting Support as Foundations of Peaceful and Resilient Societies,” was co-sponsored by the Permanent Missions of Egypt, Cameroon, Jordan and El Salvador and attended by around 60 participants, including 26 government representatives.



The panelists at the observance in Hall 9 of the United Nations at Geneva

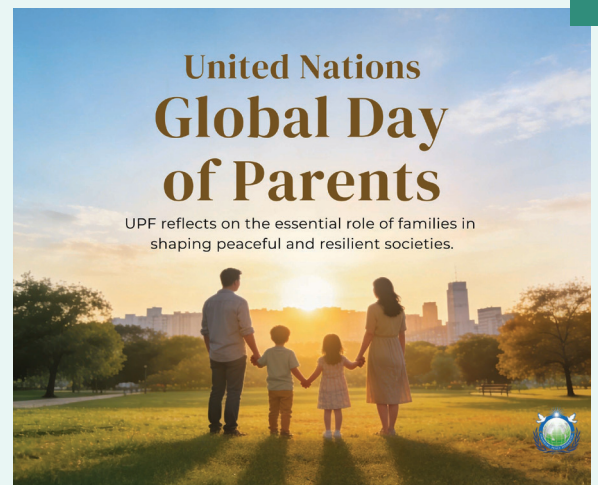


The event drew roughly 60 attendees, including about 26 government representatives.

GLOBAL DAY OF PARENTS: WHERE PEACE LEARNS ITS FIRST LANGUAGE

From a statement by Dr. Tageldin Hamad, President, UPF International

The Global Day of Parents was a fitting way for UPF's 100-day campaign “Serving Community,” carried out by UPF chapters around the world, to reach its conclusion. After partnerships, service projects, interfaith meetings, youth programs, cultural events, and family conversations, the road returns to the place where peace first becomes visible: the home, based on the vision of its founders, who placed the family at the center of peace.



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Visit www.eume.upf.org/nl20 for the complete reports.

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contact@eume.upf.org · www.eume.upf.org

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UPCOMING EVENTS

21 September	International Day of Peace
24 October	United Nations Day
25 November	International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
10 December	Human Rights Day

See the calendar of events at www.eume.upf.org/agenda/events