

## **IN A WORLD OF HATRED AND MISTRUST ONLY THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS CAN HELP**

**So argued HRH Prince Ghazi Bin Muhammad of Jordan  
leading member of the C-1 World Dialogue  
in proposing the Resolution establishing  
the Annual World Interfaith Harmony Week  
(to be held in the First Week of February each year)  
at the United Nations General Assembly.**

**The Resolution was adopted unanimously.**

On September 23, 2010, HM King Abdullah II of Jordan proposed a World Interfaith Harmony Week at the Plenary Session of the 65th UN General Assembly in New York.

In his speech King Abdullah said:

It is essential to resist forces of division that spread misunderstanding and mistrust especially among peoples of different religions. The fact is, humanity everywhere is bound together, not only by mutual interests, but by shared commandments to love God and neighbour; to love the good and neighbour. This week, my delegation, with the support of our friends on every continent, will introduce a draft resolution for an annual World Interfaith Harmony Week. What we are proposing is a special week, during which the world's people, in their own places of worship, could express the teachings of their own faith about tolerance, respect for the other and peace. I hope this resolution will have your support.

On October 20, 2010, HRH Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad of Jordan, Special Advisor and Personal Envoy to the HM King Abdullah II and author of the resolution, presented the proposal for a World Interfaith Harmony Week before the UN General Assembly in New York where it was adopted unanimously.

The basis for the World Interfaith Harmony Week is the *A Common Word* Initiative which was authored by over 130 Muslim leaders and scholars under the aegis of HRH Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad and released in 2007. The *Common Word* Initiative and the World Interfaith Harmony Week both reflect the view that humanity is bound together by the two shared commandments of 'Love of God and Love of the Neighbor' or 'Love of the Good and Love of the Neighbour'.

The C-1 World Dialogue The C-1 World Dialogue is a multi-stakeholder community that engages public figures, business and religious leaders, as well as



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NGO's and media leaders. It seeks to promote the *Common Word* initiative and now the World Interfaith Harmony Week as an important part of its work.

The Members of its Executive include: H.E. Dr Ali Gomaa Grand Mufti of Egypt and H.E. Theodore Cardinal McCarrick, (Co-chairs) His Beatitude Theofilos III, Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem; H.E. the Grand Mufti of Bosnia, Mustafa Ceric, H.R.H. Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad bin Talal, Personal Envoy of His Majesty Abdullah II, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and President of the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought; The Rt Hon. Tony Blair, Former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom; The Rt Revd. and Rt. Hon. Dr. Richard Chartres, KCVO, D.D. The Bishop of London and others.

The Annual Interfaith Harmony resolution opens by citing seven previous resolutions of the General Assembly enjoining an end to discrimination on the basis of religious belief and urging the promotion of a culture of peace, understanding, cooperation and dialogue.

The resolution (A/65/L5 ) continues:

*Recognizing the imperative need for dialogue among different faiths and religions in enhancing mutual understanding, harmony and cooperation among people,*

*Recalling with appreciation various global, regional and subregional initiatives on mutual understanding and interfaith harmony including the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, and the initiative "A Common Word",*

*Recognizing that the moral imperatives of all religions, convictions and beliefs call for peace, tolerance and mutual understanding,*

*Reaffirms that mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue constitute important dimensions of a culture of peace;*

***Proclaims the first week of February of every year the World Interfaith Harmony Week between all religions, faiths and beliefs;***

*Encourages all States to support, on a voluntary basis, the spread of the message of interfaith harmony and goodwill in the world's churches, mosques, synagogues, temples and other places of worship during that week, based on love of God and love of one's neighbour or on love of the good and love of one's neighbour, each according to their own religious traditions or convictions;*

*Requests the Secretary-General to keep the General Assembly informed of the implementation of the present resolution.*

HRH Prince Ghazi bin Mohammad bin Talal, the Personal Envoy of the King formally moved the resolution before the General Assembly in October saying in his proposal speech that:

‘Our world is rife with religious tension and, sadly, mistrust, dislike and hatred. These religious tensions can easily erupt into communal violence. They also facilitate the demonizing of the other which in turn predisposes public opinion to support war against peoples of other religions.... The remedy for this problem can only come from the world's religions themselves. Religions must be part of the solution, not part of the problem.’



Noting that ‘the forces inciting inter-religious tensions (notable among them being religious fundamentalisms...) are better organized, more experienced, better coordinated, more motivated and more ruthless’ and that in contrast to those seeking peace ‘they have more stratagems, more institutes, more money, more power and garner more publicity’. The Prince therefore urged that this new global initiative was needed to

- unite ‘the efforts of all the interfaith groups doing positive work with one focused theme at one specific time annually’
- harness ‘the collective might’ of the whole world’s places of worship
- encourage the “the silent majority of preachers to declare themselves for peace and harmony“

He further stressed that the goal goes beyond mere tolerance which “can suggest that the other is so negative they have to be ‘tolerated’” to the richer Confucian concept of harmony which, “suggests not merely ‘peace’, but also the ‘beautiful and dynamic interaction between different elements within a whole’.”

While “clearly it is not the business of the UN to engage in theology” the Prince argued that when “85% of the world’s population... belongs to one or another faith,... a purely secular call for an interfaith harmony week” would be a “feckless platitude”. So the Jordanian proposal invites, on a voluntary basis, “every person of good will, with or without faith (to) ...commit to Love of the Neighbour and Love of God or Love of the Neighbour and Love of the Good. ‘As the Prophet Muhammad said: “*None of you has faith [in God] until you love for your neighbour what you love for yourself.*”

The Prince finally commended the initiative as being one that “unites all humanity” and “excludes no individual, compromises no one, commits no one, forces no one, harms no one, costs nothing, and — on the contrary — includes everyone, celebrates everyone, benefits everyone, unites everyone and has the potential to bring much needed Peace and Harmony to the entire world *in sha Allah.*”

The Resolution was passed unanimously by the General Assembly.

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