

## Track 2 Consultation on Syria Held in Geneva

Geneva, Switzerland, 23. – 24. January 2014



UPF convened a special program entitled “Geneva: Track 2” in Geneva, Switzerland on Jan. 23-25, 2014, concurrent with the “Geneva II” inter-governmental conference that aims to bring about a peaceful resolution of the crisis in Syria. The theme for the consultation was “Toward Peace and Reconciliation in Syria: The Significance of Religion, Faith-Based Organizations and Civil Society.”

The tragic and devastating consequences of the conflict war in Syria, both in terms of the loss of life and the millions of displaced persons, is giving rise to a humanitarian disaster of epic proportion. UPF applauds the efforts of the United Nations, the United States, Russia and the participating nations, and sought to offer support for the success of Geneva II.

Following the recommendations of the Amman resolution of October 2013 and the Jerusalem resolution of December 2013, UPF convened the Track 2 conference in Geneva, Switzerland, to assist the daunting task of the Geneva II talks on the Syrian conflict. The intention in convening a wide variety of spiritual and religious leaders, as well as academicians, civil society representatives, women and youth, was to supplement the “track 1” initiative of Geneva II, with a “track 2” program that underscored the need to engage religious and spiritual leaders, faith-based organizations and a variety of civil society organizations in the pursuit of peace.

The consultation included a high-level segment of faith leaders, academicians and other stakeholders who deliberated on the current crisis in Syria, including the wider geopolitical context, and considering the role which religion, civil society, women and faith-based organizations can play in restoring peace and order in Syria.

["Geneva: Track 2" Session I - From Amman, to Jerusalem, to Geneva: For Peace in Syria](#)

[Session 2 - Contribution of Civil Society and NGOs in support of the Peace Process in Syria](#)

For videos of all sessions, click [here](#).

[See photos here.](#)

Recommendations

The religious and NGO leaders from various countries supported international diplomatic effort to bring together representatives of the conflicting sides in Syria and encouraged the sides of the conflict to continue direct talks despite all difficulties they may face. They called on the participants in Geneva II to move towards implementation of the Geneva Communique and also reminded political and military leaders of the conflicting sides of their personal responsibility of adhering to basic human rights standards and human security needs of the civilian population in Syria.

The UPF Track 2 conference discussed a Seven-Point Forward Plan for Peace, Reconciliation and Humanitarian Reconstruction for Syria, which included, as follows:

- A call for all journalists to be effectively involved in the peace, humanitarian aid and reconciliation process
- A call for all women to reunite across all boundaries and to participate in the humanitarian, reconstruction and peacebuilding process
- A call for all communities across civil society to reunite and to commence the rebuilding effort
- A call for the forward reconstruction of food corridors to enable humanitarian aid and food to be provided to all women, children and families
- A call for the establishment of medical humanitarian aid to facilitate humanitarian relief to all women and children
- A call for all women, children and families who are refugees to be granted access to safety and protection as a fundamental human right
- A call for the protection of all women and children as a fundamental human right

### **Interfaith program at St. Peter's Cathedral**

An interfaith program at St. Peter's Cathedral featured a variety of spiritual and religious voices, interfaith prayers for peace and artistic performances. The program was as follows:

Organ music

- Greetings by Emmanuel Rolland, pastor, and Dr. William McComish, pastor and president of the Geneva Spiritual Appeal

- Reading in French of the Geneva Spiritual Appeal by Mme Tatjana Darany, director general of the Geneva Foundation

- Prayer in French by M. Shady Amman, a Syrian in Switzerland

Oud music

- Reading in English of the Geneva Spiritual Appeal by M. Walter Gyger, ambassador of Switzerland.

- Prayer in English by Rt. Rev. Riah Hanna Abu El-Assa, Anglican bishop of Jerusalem and the Near East

- Message by Rabbi François Garaï of the Israelite community of Geneva, read by M. Hafid Ouairi, director of the Fondation de l'Entre-Connaissance

Oud music

- Prayer in Arabic by Shi'ite Imam Sheik Mohamad Ali Al-Hajj, from Lebanon, translated into French

- Reading of the Geneva Spiritual Appeal by Dr. Tawfik Chamaa, a Syrian in Switzerland

- Prayer in English by Sunni Imam Sheik Mohamad Al-Habash, from Syria

- Prayer in Arabic by Yazan Savoy, a Syrian in Switzerland

Oud music

- Prayer by Mme Danièle Bianchi, Baha'i community of Geneva

- Message by M. Gary Vachicouras, Orthodox Christian community of Geneva

- Benediction by Msgr. Pierre Farine, auxiliary bishop of Lausanne, Geneva and Fribourg, Roman Catholic Church

Organ music

- Collection of funds for the Union of Syrian Medical Relief Organizations ([www.uossm.org](http://www.uossm.org)).

- Group photo with participants in the UPF Geneva Track II consultation on "Towards Peace and Reconciliation in Syria: The Significance of Religion, Faith-based Organizations and Civil Society"

