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Religious Studies Unit

Introduction

Interfaith matters and religious issues have always had a special place in PASSIA's regular meeting program, and having realized the increasing need for better understanding between the various religious communities, in early 1998, PASSIA decided to establish a *Religious Study Unit* devoted to inter-religious dialogue and activities. The unit's work focuses on the role and significance of religion for different people and tries to promote understanding of, and respect for, others in order to address this religious diversity. Subjects discussed include the causes and consequences of problems within and between the established religious communities and activities that contribute to the elimination of misconceptions and stereotypes.

The PASSIA Religious Studies Unit combines the following activities, some of which are held 'off the record' to allow for the frankest exchange and debates possible:

Coordinating Meetings and Briefings: Meetings and brainstorming sessions involving members of PASSIA's Religious Studies Unit and local and foreign counterparts/project partners from the three monotheistic religions with the aim of fostering coordination of ongoing and future activities.

Dialogue Sessions and Roundtables: Meetings with representatives from one or more of the three monotheistic religions, which usually include a guest speaker presenting a certain topic related to inter- or intra-religious issues followed by a discussion.

Seminars and Workshops: Encounters on a specific topic, involving either members of the three monotheistic religions or only representatives of the Christian or Muslim community. These seminars and workshops are intended to help participants to find common ground and to allow different religions to work in harmony and on an equal footing.

Conferences: Participation in conferences, here and abroad, that deal with aspects of religion, belief and interfaith relations, or foster an open and free debate on religious issues and aspects as they concern the people in the Holy Land.

Publication: Documentation and publication of research studies or proceedings from meetings/seminars.

Activities of the Religious Studies Unit in 2004 were all attended by Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi, Head of PASSIA; they included the following (presented in the following order: date; place; topic; speaker; participants):

Coordinating Meetings and Briefings

15 January 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: The PLO & Hamas -Two Visions

Participant(s): Jeffrey Beals, Political Officer, US Consulate General, Jerusalem.

28 January 2004, Bishop Residence in St. George's Cathedral, Jerusalem

Topic: The Wall and the Israeli Separation Plan.

Participant(s): The Most Reverend & Right Honorable Dr. Rowan Williams, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury; the Right Reverend Riah Abu El-'Assal, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem; 'Azmi Bishara, Member of the Knesset; Isam Makhoul, Member of the Knesset; Simon McDonald, Ambassador, British Embassy, Tel Aviv; Dr. John Jenkins, Consul General, British Consulate, Jerusalem; Mahdi Abdul Hadi, PASSIA.

29 January 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: The PLO and Hamas - Two Visions

Participant(s): Hanlie Booysen, South African Representative Office, Ramallah.

12 February 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: The Political Agenda of the PLO and of Hamas

Participant(s): Jumana Jaouni, Political and Press Officer, British Consulate General, Jerusalem

17 March 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: World Council of Churches Statement on Israel's Separation Barrier and Land Annexation in the Palestinian Territories

Participant(s): Salpy Eskidijian, WCC Executive Committee, Geneva

24 March 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: Implications of the Assassination of Sheikh Yassin

Participant(s): Keijo Ruokoranta, Head, Finland Representative Office; Jarno Syrjälä, Regional Manager, Unit for the Middle East and North Africa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Terhi Heinonen, Program Officer, Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

11 May 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: Muslim-Christian Relations in Palestine

Participant(s): A Delegation the Swedish Theological Institute (STI), Lund University, Sweden, Ann-Sofie Söderström, Student; Hanna Holender, Student; Aasulv Lande, Professor; Annette Oderwall, Student; Linda Foleback, Student; Anita Karlsson, Student; Sten Alsvall, Student; Anders Blomquist, Chaplain at STI; Magnus Persson, Student; Anna Ekstrom, Student; Jonathan Strömböck Sandstent, Student; Krell Jonasson, Jerusalem; Gunnel Arlin, Journalist; Jonna Hennig, Student.

29 July 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: Issues Related to Al-Aqsa Mosque

Participant(s): Adnan Hussein, Director, Islamic Waqf, Jerusalem

9 August 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: Holy Places in Jerusalem

Participant(s): Rabbi Edward Miller, Author, USA

24 August 2004, Ambassador Hotel, Jerusalem (*Working Dinner*)

Topic: Non-Violence Thesis

Participant(s): Dr. Arun Gandhi, M.K, Gandhi Institute for Non-Violence; Palestinian Campaign for Freedom and Peace.

6 September 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: Interfaith Dialogue

Participant(s): Imam Abduljalil Sajid, Muslim Council for Religious and Racial Harmony, Brighton Islamic Mission, UK.

9 September 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: Religious Dialogue in Jerusalem – Problems and Prospects

Participant(s): David Rosen, Rabbi; Rafiq Khoury, Priest; Mustafa Abu Sway, Professor, Al Quds University; John Bell, Visiting Researcher, University of Toronto, Canada; Michael Bell, Academic, Senior Scholar for Diplomacy, Canada; Michael Molloy, Visiting Researcher, University of Toronto, Canada.



October 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: Religious Issues

Participant(s): Rev. Julie Brenton Rowe, Communication Assistant to the Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jerusalem; Dennis Frado, Director, Lutheran Office for World Community, New York; Rev.Dr. James Vigen, International Relations and Human Rights, Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs, Washington DC

17 November 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: Dialogue on Holy Places

Participant(s): Bawa Gain, General Secretary, World Council of Religious Leaders, New York.

Dialogue Sessions and Roundtables

17 March 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: The Islamic View on the Issue of Weapons of Mass Destruction

Speaker: Sheikh Jamil Hamami, Lecturer, Al-Quds University

Participant(s): Jamal El-Aref, Deputy, ANERA; Walid Assali, Lawyer; Mohammed Nusseibeh, Islamic Higher Council; Jumana Jauni, Political Officer, British Consulate; Mufti Ekrima Sabri, Mufti of Jerusalem and Palestine; Mahdi Abdul Hadi, PASSIA.



Abdul Rahman Abbad



Maroun Lahham

13 April 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: Jesus in the Christian and Muslim Faiths

Speaker: Dr. Maroun Lahham; Dr. Abdul Rahman Abbad

Participant(s): Ibrahim Sha'aban, Lawyer; Sheikh Mohammed Hussein, Islamic Waqf; Mohammed Jadallah, Doctor; Abed Abu Diab, Member of Labor Union; Adnan Al-Husseini, Director, Islamic Waqf; Sheikh Jamil Hamami, Al-Quds University



28 April 2004, PASSIA, Ramallah

Topic: Aspects of Holiness & History in Islam

Speaker: Sheikh Bassam Jarrar, Head, Noon Center for Quranic Studies, Ramallah

Participant(s): Amer Aroui, Field Worker; Tareq Hamida, Noon Center; Basem Bassouma, Noon Center; Idrees Al-Hajjeh, Trader; Shadad Said, Trader; Issa Wadi, Noon Center; Muhsen Sinokrot, Sinokrot Food Company; Imad Al-Qadi, Teacher; Majed Saqer, Imam (Mosque); Raed Saqer, Trader; Khaled Sawalha, Teacher; Jamil Hamami, Al-Quds University; Ahmad Nader, Diplomat; Mahdi Abdul Hadi, Sana' Shannak, PASSIA.

Bassam Jarrar



Mohammed Sheikh Ali

26 May 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: "Ijtihad" In Islam

Speaker: Mohammed Sheikh Ali, Lecturer at the Faculty of Quranic and Islamic Studies, Al-Quds University

Participant(s): Musa Dweik, Dean, School of Law, Al-Quds University; Jamil Hamami, Lecturer, Al-Quds University; Ibrahim Sabri, member, Shari'a Appeal Court; Yousef Abu





Sneineh, Imam, Al-Aqsa Mosque; Mohammed Nusseibeh, Engineer; Adnan Hussein, Director, Islamic Waqf; Sael Sheikh Ali, Al-Furqan School; Ahmad Abu Lafi, Lecturer, Al-Quds University; Mohammed Jadallah, Physician; Mohammed Hussein, Islamic Waqf; Mahdi Abdul Hadi, Sana Shannak, PASSIA.

17 July 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: "Jesus Christ: The Second Coming" - An Islamic Perspective

Speaker: Sheikh Yusef Abu Sneineh; Dar Al-Hadith, Al-Aqsa Mosque

Participant(s): Engineer Adnan Hussein, General Director of the Jerusalem Islamic Waqf; Mohammed Abu Ghazaleh, Electric Company; Muezz Nashashibi, Engineer; Samer Nusseibeh, Engineer; Mohammed Saleem Ali, Teacher;

Yusef Abu Sneineh





Ahmed Abu Lafi, Lecturer, Al-Quds University; Sayel Sheikh Ali, Al-Furqan Schools; Ibrahim Sabri, Appeal Court Member; Sheikh Ekrima Sabri, Mufti of Jerusalem & Palestine; Ishaq Al-Qutub, Professor, Al-Quds University.

22 July 2004, PASSIA, Ramallah

Topic: Islamic Culture and the Palestinian Society

Speaker: Jamal Bawatneh; Dar Al-Fatwa and Islamic Research Studies, Ramallah

Participant(s): Idrees Al-Hajeh, Retailer; Abdul Rahman Naser; Rima Merriman, Communications Specialist; Lily Habash, Advisor, Prime Minister's Office, Ramallah; Orayb Najjar, Associate Professor, Communications; Rasem Kamal, Rule of Law Specialist, USAID; Faisal Awartani, CEO, Alpha International, Ramallah; Ahmad Bawatneh, Student; Hasan Fayyad, Head of Research and Translation, Negotiation Department, BirZeit University; Sheikh Mohammed Hasan Amro; Ismail Talahmeh, Engineer; Sheikh Jamil Hammami, Al-Quds University

Jamal Bawatneh





Hani Abdeen



Mousa Al-Basit



30 November 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: Euthanasia: between Shari'a Law and Medical Perceptions

Speakers: Dr. Hani Abdeen, Dean, Faculty of Medicine, Al-Quds University, Dr. Musa Al-Basit, Lecturer, Faculty of Da'wa and Principles of Religion, Al-Quds University

Participant(s): Mohammed Abu Ghazaleh, Services Director, Electric Company, Jerusalem; Bishop Munib Younan, Evangelical Lutheran Church, Jerusalem; Dr. Mustafa Abu Sway, Al-Quds University; Mohammed Salim Ali, Lecture, Faculty of Quranic and Islamic Studies, Al-Quds University; Dr. Musa Dweik, Dean, Faculty of Law, Al-Quds University; Sheikh Jamil Hamami, Lecturer, Al-Quds University; Elise Aghazarian, Hayat Alami, Sana Shannak, PASSIA.

28 December 2004, PASSIA, Ramallah

Topic: The Islamic Concept of Truce (Hudna) and Its Implications for the Palestinian Struggle

Speaker: Sheikh Hassan Yousef

Participant(s): Hazem Kawasmi, Economist; Jamil Hamami, Lecturer; Holger Tillmann, German Representative Office; Maysoon Ramahi, Al-Khansa Women Association; Rami Hussein, Hussein-Husseini; Samir Qirreish, Hussein-Husseini; Jamal Bawatneh, Mufti, Ramallah; Shafer Ahmad, Teacher; Mohammed Turman, Deputy, Ramallah Waqf; Bassem Amriyeh, Ramallah Waqf; Shadid, Avocit.

Hassan Yousef



Seminars and Workshops

16 August 2004, PASSIA, Ramallah

Topic: The Friday Sermon (Khutba) between Religious Narrative and Social Issues

Speakers: Dr. Ibrahim Abu Salem, Dr. Ismail Nawahdah, Aziz Kayed

Participant(s): Sheikh Ikrima Sabri, Mufti of Jerusalem and Palestine; Issa Wadi, Imam, Abu Obaida Mosque; Nasser Ed-Din Sayyed Ahmad; Imam, Al Rahman Mosque; Assem Sayyed Ahmad, Imam,



Ibrahim Abu Salem



Ismail Nawahdah



Aziz Kayed



Al Ama'ri Camp Mosque; Wafeeq 'Alawi, Imam, Abween New Mosque; Abdul Hafeez Ataya, Property Department, Ramallah Waqf; Shaher Ahmad, Imam, Ali Mosque, Al Bireh; Basem 'Amriyyeh, Director for Mosques Department, Ramallah Waqf; Khairi Taha, Imam, Ramallah

Mosque; Khaled Sawalha, Teacher; Mustafa Abu Swai, Al-Quds University; Jamal Bawatneh, Mufti, Ramallah; Munier Nabulsi, Imam, Ein Yabroud Mosque; Nizar Suleiman, Imam, Al-Kawthar Mosque; Mohammed Tarman, Vice President, Ramallah Waqf; Abdul Kareem Elwan, Imam, Jaljelia Mosque; Mustafa Habash, Dar Al-Fatwa, Atallah Fallaheen, Public Relations, Dar Al-Fatwa; Saeed Ma'tan, Imam, Hamza Mosque; Saleh Ma'tan, Imam, Al-Bireh Al Kabeer Mosque, Sana Shannak, PASSIA.



29 September 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: Religious Teachings

Speaker(s): Dr. Ahmed Fahim Jabir, Dean of Faculty of Arts, Al-Quds University; Dr. Mohammed Abdeen, Assistant Prof., Al-Quds University

Participants: Hasan Baraghiti, Al-Aqsa Secondary Religious School for Boys; Imad Abu Libdeh, Islamic Waqf, Jerusalem; Ahmed Al-Kurd, Islamic Waqf, Jerusalem; Dr. Sheikh Ekrima Sabri, Mufti of Jerusalem and Palestine; Sheikh Ibrahim Sabri, Appeal Court, Jerusalem; Riyadh Khwais, Al-Iman Secondary School for Boys; Yusef Al-Ozbaki, Al-Iman Secondary School for Boys; Sayel Sheikh Ali, Al-Furqan Islamic School; Hasan Al-Qiq, Engineer, Head of Industrial Secondary School- Al-Yateem Al-Arabi Committee; Walid Salem, Director, Panorama Center; Samia Houry, Sabeel; Walid Assali, Lawyer; Mohammed Sheikh Ali, Teacher; Sheikh Mohammed Hussein, Al-Aqsa Mosque; Dr. Mohammed Ghoshah, Head Islamic Research and Heritage Revival Instaution, Jerusalem; Ula Hab Rumman, Al-Iman Secondary School for Girls.



Ahmed Fahim Jabir



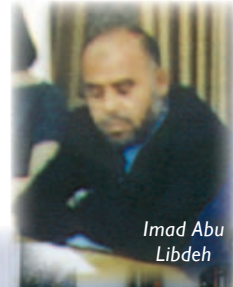
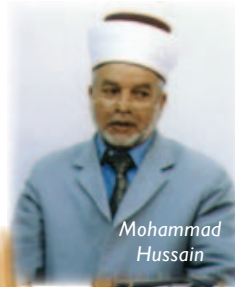
Mohammed Abdeen



26 October 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: Zakat in Islam between Theory & Practice

Speakers: Imad Abu Libdeh, Head of Zakat Department, Islamic Waqf; Sheikh Mohammad Hussain, Khatib & Director of Al-Aqsa Mosque, Jerusalem



Participants: Mohammad Salim Ali, Teacher, Al-Quds University; Abdul Majid Nassar, Dir, Dar Al Fatwa, Jerusalem; Sheikh Ishaq Taha, Manager, Al Fatwa Council; Maher Daoudi, Program Manager, Swedish Consulate, Jerusalem ; Mats Svensson, Consul, Swedish Consulate, Jerusalem; Nora Carmi, Coordinator, Sabeel; Mitzi Naddecl, Student; Nuzia Medive, Spanish Cooperation; Renata Capella Soler, Humanitarian Coordinator, EC; Sayel Mohammed Ali, Al Furqan School; Elena Mancusi, UNRWA; Valentina De Bernard, UNRWA; Dr. Mustafa Abu Sway, Al-Quds University; Hayat Alami, PASSIA.



Conferences

12-15 January 2004, Knight's Palace, Old City, Jerusalem

Topic: **The Universal Church in Solidarity with the Church of the Holy Land.**

Bishops' Conference Presidents with Assembly of Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land.

19 April 2004, YWCA, Jerusalem

Topic: **Palestinians and the Current Situation**

Lecture by: Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi, Head of PASSIA.

Organized by: Sabeel, as Part of its Annual Conference on Challenging Christian Zionism, Political, Theology and the Israel-Palestine Conflict.

3-6 July 2004, Cairo, Egypt

Topic: **Muslim-Christian Dialogue: from Covenant to Commitment**

Organized by: Arab Group for Christian-Muslim Dialogue

18-21 July 2004, Aachen, Germany

Topic: **2004 Annual Conference - Changing Borders**

Organized by: The International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ), Aachen, Germany



21-22 September 2004, Best Eastern Hotel, Ramallah

Topic: Islam in Contemporary Palestine

Organized by: Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA), Jerusalem



Islam in Contemporary Palestine
21-22 September 2004

Agenda

Day One: Tuesday, 21 September 2004



9:00-9:30 Registration
9:30-10:00 **Opening Speech**
Sheikh Dr. Ekrima Sabri, Mufti of Jerusalem and Palestine

Session I: **Worldviews and Challenges**

Chair: Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi, *Chairman of PASSIA, Jerusalem*

10:00-11:30 **The Islamic Movements**
Speaker: Sheikh Jamil Hamami, *Al-Quds University, Jerusalem*
Discussant: Dr. Nasser Al-Din Al-Sha`ir, *An-Najah National University, Nablus*
Open Discussion

11:30-1:30 **The Islamic Movements, the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Occupation**
Speaker: Dr. Abd Al-Sattar Qassim, *An-Najah National University, Nablus*
Discussants: Abdul Malek Dahamsheh, *Member, Israeli Knesset*
Open Discussion

1:30-2:30 LUNCH BREAK

Session II: **Issues of Coexistence and Interfaith Dialogue**

Chair: Sheikh Muhammad Hussein, *Director of Al-Aqsa Mosque, Jerusalem*

2:30-4:00 **Jerusalem , Holy Places and Conflict Resolutions**
Speaker: Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi, *Chairman of PASSIA, Jerusalem*
Discussants: Fr. Dr. Maroun Laham, *Latin Theological Seminary, Beit Jala*
Ibrahim Sha`ban, *Faculty of Law, Al-Quds University, Jerusalem*
Open Discussion

4:00-5:30 **Islamic-Christian Relations: Convivencia and Interfaith Dialogue**
Speaker: Dr. Mustafa Abu Sway, *Al-Quds University, Jerusalem*
Open Discussion



Day Two: Wednesday, 22 September 2004



Session III: Religious and National Identities

10:00-12:00

Islam and Women Issues in Palestine

Speakers: Iffat Al-Ja`bari , *Dir., Young Women's Muslim Association, Hebron*
(Women Institutions)

Maysoon Al-Ramahi, *Head, Al-Khansa' Women's Association, Ramallah*
(Woman's Rights)

Ghazalah `Arar, *General Union of Palestinian Teachers, Ramallah*
(Globalization & Women Issues)

Open Discussion

12:30-1:30

Islam and the Palestinian Constitution

Chair: Ali Safarini, *Lawyer*

Speakers: Dr. Isma`il Nawahdah, *AI-Quds University, Jerusalem* (The Position of
Majlis Al-Fatwa)

Dr. Ahmad Al-Khalidi, *An-Njah National University, Nablus*
(The View of the PLC Constitution Committee)

Dr. Ali Al-Khashshan, *Gen. Sec. of the Palestinian Constitutional
Committee, Jerusalem* (Islam and the Constitution-Women Issues)

Open Discussion

1:30-2:30

LUNCH BREAK

Session IV: Islamic Movements and Institutions

Chair: Sheikh Jamal Bawatneh, *Mufti of Ramallah, Ramallah*

2:30-4:00

The Islamic Movement within the Green Line

Speakers: Ibrahim Sarsour, *President, The Islamic Movement (South)*
Abdul Malek Dahamsheh, *Member, Israeli Knesset*

Mohanad Mustafa, *Researcher, UMM Al-Fahm Center for Contemporary
Studies, UMM Al-Fahm*

Open Discussion

4:00-5:30

Muslims in Europe and the Palestinian Issue

Speaker: Andrew Rigby, *Prof. of Peace Studies, Dir. of the Centre for the Study of
Forgiveness and Reconciliation, Coventry University, UK*

The Image of Islam in the US Media and the Palestine Question

Speaker: 'Ayshah Wazwaz, *Researcher in the Islamic Studies, Jerusalem*

Open Discussion



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