

3rd Catholic-Muslim Forum (Vatican City, 11-13 November 2014)

Mohammad Hashim Kamali

Professor Kamali presented a paper at the third Catholic-Muslim Forum held at the Vatican, 12 November 2014. His paper entitled “Catholics and Muslims in Dialogue: Working Together to Help Others” focused on youth issues and the achievement of interreligious dialogue from the Islamic perspectives.

The Catholic-Muslim Forum is a two-yearly event and its third in the series was held in Rome for three days from Tuesday 11 to Thursday 13 November 2014. For this year’s Catholic-Muslim Forum was “Working Together to Serve Others”. Three particular issues were addressed in papers presented at the Forum. These were: working together to serve young people, enhancing our interreligious dialogue, and service to society.

Each of the two delegations consisted of twelve members. The Muslim delegation was led by HE Prof Seyyed Hossein Nasr and prominent figures included:

- H E Prof Mohammad Hashim Kamali
- H E Prof Mustafa Ceric
- H E Prof M Din Syamsuddin
- Prof Abdal Hakim Murad Winter
- H E Prof Aref Ali Nayed
- Prof Ingrid Mattson
- Imam Yahya Sergio Yahe Pallavicini

The Catholic delegation was headed by His Eminence Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and including:

- Rev. Miguel Angel Ayuso Guixot, M.C.C.I., Secretary
- Monsignor Khaled Akasheh, Bureau Chief for Islam
- H E Mons. Ilario Antoniazzi, Archbishop of Tunis, Tunisia
- H E Mrs Pascale Warda, Former Minister of Migration and Displacement, Iraq
- H E Mrs Anne Leahy, Ambassador Emeritus of Canada of the Holy See

HRH Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad of Jordan, coordinator of the Muslim side, could not attend the event. The assembled participants sent him a message expressing their good wishes.

After the presentations of the papers and the discussions which ensued in a cordial and fraternal atmosphere, the participants agreed on the following points:

1. The delegates recognised that their gathering took place in a time of severe

tension and conflict in the world, underlining the vital importance of enhanced service and mutual cooperation. In this context, the delegates unanimously condemned acts of violence against innocent persons, terrorism, oppression, persecution, and the desecration of sacred places. It is never acceptable to use religion to justify such acts or to conflate such acts with religion.

2. The education of young people, be it in the family, school, university, church or mosque, is of the utmost importance for the promotion of a well-rounded identity which builds respect for others. To this end, school curricula and textbooks should portray an objective and respectful image of the other.
3. The participants affirmed the importance of the culture of interreligious dialogue for deepening mutual understanding. This is required to overcome prejudice, suspicions and inappropriate generalisations, all of which damage the peaceful relationships we all seek.
4. It was felt that dialogue should lead to action, particularly among young people. The delegates acknowledge many examples across the world of active Catholic-Muslim collaboration in educational, charitable and relief efforts, and recognised the need to build on this record and to intensify mutual cooperation in future.

On Wednesday 12th November, His Holiness Pope Francis gave an audience in which he greeted all the participants, encouraging them to persevere on the path of Christian-Muslim dialogue, and was pleased to note their shared commitment to the selfless and disinterested service of society.

Finally, the delegates expressed their satisfaction at a fruitful encounter, and looked forward to the next meeting of the Forum.

Seminar On Ten Years of the Afghan Constitution (Kabul, Afghanistan, 29 November 2014)

Mohammad Hashim Kamali

Professor Kamali's new book entitled "Afghanistan's Constitution Ten Years On: What are the Issues?" was launched in Kabul at an event in Kabul Serena Hotel organised by the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit on 29 November 2014. Professor Kamali spoke at the event which was officiated by the second Deputy President of Afghanistan, H E Sarwar Danish. A large number of prominent figures, MPs and media representatives attended the event. Prof Kamali also appeared on Afghanistan 1TV news and events that featured the occasion and book launch in