

Today's Youth, Architects of Peace?

Robin Marsh
October 23, 2014



The youth of today are architects of peace but they are paying a high price for their desire for a better, more fair and just world. To a standing room only Ballroom in Universal Peace Federation HQ, Lord Jack McConnell addressed the issue of peaceful, youthful idealism and the injustices in the world. These clashed once more resulting in the tragic murder of Tawfik Bensaud, the eighteen year old Libyan activist, in Bengazi last month.

Organised by Dare2Lead and Tutu Foundation together with UPF-UK, the event featured many Libyans who knew Tawfik Bensaud. The testimonies and speeches regarding

this tragic loss were very moving. The second part of the programme allowed those who wanted to share and commemorate Tawfik Bensaud's life.

22. OCTOBER
WEDNESDAY
6:30-8:30 PM

AT UNIVERSAL PEACE
FEDERATION HQ,
48 LANCASTER GATE,
CENTRAL LONDON
W2 3NA

**"TODAY'S YOUTH-
ARCHITECTS OF
P E A C E ? "**

An event of solidarity promoting
peace through youth empowerment

SPEAKERS

LINDSEY HILSUM
International Editor,
Channel 4 News.

LORD JACK MCCONNELL
Former First Minister of
Scotland and Prime Minister's
Special Rep on Peace.

JOHN LOUGHTON
Founder Dare2Lead and
British youth activist.

HUDA ELKHOJA
Libyan youth activist.

To **ATTEND FREE**
or for questions
please contact
organisers at
info@dare2lead.co.uk

Attendance is on a first come
first serve basis.
Nearest station Lancaster
Gate and Queenway

#TAWFIKUK
#IAMTAWFIK

**VIGIL FOR SOLIDARITY TO TAWFIK AND
OTHERS AFTER THE EVENT FINISHES**

EVENT
ORGANISED BY:

DARE2 LEAD  

John Loughton, founder of Dare2Lead and the one who initiated this event at short notice, emphasised that young people were disillusioned by the pantomime nature of politics of the House of Commons and Prime Ministers Questions but politics was too important to ignore.

Khoja Huda and Aya Ameid gave a passionate testimony to Tawfik Bensaud and the idealism he represented.

SHERIF DHAIMISH, reporting on the event in 'Libyan Youth Voices', ([Link to full article here](#)) wrote 'Huda Khoja, Tawfik Bensaud's cousin, delivered a moving speech at the event stressing the continued resilience and vision of young civil society in Libya.

"As a youth, how can we propagate peace? Nowadays, we still can't reach peace in our hands. So many other questions. As a youth how can we make a worldly change in this phenomena? A person showed me through his life story, an answer for all these questions. Tawfik showed me that we can raise the voice of peace in a simple way. Just behaving peacefully as individuals."

She paused before continuing her brave, intimate account of her cousin. Despite losing his father and his home during the ongoing violence, Tawfik "didn't allow his grief to overwhelm or frustrate his spirit", she continued. "He knew he was a target, but from what I see, his passion exceeded his fear." Huda's speech conveyed no sign of Libya's youth slowing down as a result of recent events, and instead, they have ignited the necessity for further action and participation from people around the globe.'

Guest speaker Lord Jack McConnell, former First Minister of Scotland, praised the bravery of Libya's youth and placed Tawfik and Sami's death into a global context. Dare2Lead founder John Loughton reflected on the bigger picture, highlighting how there are youths from all walks of life who share Tawfik's values.

"Hope. Tomorrow can be bright when the past was dark," He said. "You can shoot our bodies but you can't kill what we embody...youth can redefine the paradigms of politics."



LIBYAN YOUTH VOICES

Today's Youth – Architects of Peace?

Sherif Dhaimish
October, 24, 2014



The death of a young person is always a tragedy. A premature exit from this world leaves behind feelings of anger, confusion and frustration. Their life was canvas bearing only a few strokes. Innocence is lost at the hands of ignorance.

In the 1970s, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi was responsible for the killing of students who protested against his autocracy. He turned April into a dark month reserved for anti-regime executions. Many of those who were imprisoned faced years of torture behind bars, where they were left to rot at the hands of his wicked regime. Youth and Civil Society continue to be the backbone of justice and democracy in Libya, and those who lose their lives for such causes deserve nothing short of heroic status.

Following on from the 2011 revolution, Libya is now facing a new battle where youth play a key role in determining the future for the North African nation. On Wednesday October 22, Dare2Lead held an evening 'Today's Youth – Architects of Peace?', which stemmed from last month's killing of Tawfik Ben Saud, 18, and Sami El-Kawafi, 17. The murders received international attention. Two teenagers who shared a peaceful, democratic vision for Libya were forcefully left to pay the price with their lives. In post-revolution Libya, vocally opposing certain ideologies places your life at risk. Prominent figures such as [Salwa Bugaighis](#), human rights lawyer and women's right activist, Bernice Newspaper editor Muftah Buzaid, activist Abdulsalam al-Mismari, and former GNC official Fariha Berkawi are among hundreds who have lost their lives for supporting peace and democracy.

Located on London's Lancaster Gate at the Universal Peace Federation Headquarters, the event was attended by an array of Libyans and non-Libyans alike, united in the vision that Tawfik, Sami and millions of others around the world share. An emotional speech by Huda El-Khoja, Tawfik's cousin, started off the evening following an introduction by co-organiser Rukiyah Khatun.

"As a youth, how can we propagate peace? Nowadays, we still can't reach peace in our hands. So many other questions. As a youth how can we make a worldly change in this phenomena? A person showed me through his life story, an answer for all these questions. Tawfik showed me that we can raise the voice of peace in a simple way. Just behaving peacefully as individuals."



[Huda Khoja, Tawfik Bensaud's cousin, delivered a moving speech at the event stressing the continued resilience and vision of young civil society in Libya. Photo: Nader Elgadi]

She paused before continuing her brave, intimate account of her cousin. Despite losing his father and his home during the ongoing violence, Tawfik “didn’t allow his grief to overwhelm or frustrate his spirit”, she continued. “He knew he was a target, but from what I see, his passion exceeded his fear.” Huda’s speech conveyed no sign of Libya’s youth slowing down as a result of recent events, and instead, they have ignited the necessity for further action and participation from people around the globe.

“We must take our responsibilities and translate them into action”, Huda highlighted. Tawfik was nothing short of an inspiration to many around him, and his cousin’s commemoration was a fine portrayal of how he did so.



[Speakers Lord Jack McConnell, John Loughton, and Aya Ameid. Photo: Nader Elgadi]

Activist Aya Ameid was next to speak, delivering another sincere account of her relationship with Tawfik, and the changes the past three and half years have brought. Despite the gloom that accompanied Tawfik’s death, she reminisced about meetings where outspoken Tawfik was often the youngest in the

room. He was left wide open for good-natured banter although his contributions were never dismissed. Like many others, Aya left Libya due to the violence whilst Tawfik was one of the very few who stayed. She concluded by urging people to get involved with campaigns such as the #IAmTawfik to help “promote his beliefs and values.”

Guest speaker Lord Jack McConnell, former First Minister of Scotland, praised the bravery of Libya’s youth and placed Tawfik and Sami’s death into a global context. Dare2Lead founder John Loughton reflected on the bigger picture, highlighting how there are youths from all walks of life who share Tawfik’s values.

“Hope. Tomorrow can be bright when the past was dark,” He said. “You can shoot our bodies but you can’t kill what we embody... youth can redefine the paradigms of politics.”

The event was a reassurance of the momentum youth activism has created inside and outside Libya. Nothing will deter those using their voices against violence. “Yes, I see a hero”, Huda said referring to Tawfik. Like many who have fallen before him, volatile emotions should be transformed into tools of empowerment, and help enable a brighter future for generations to come. All young people are susceptible to vulnerability, and it is up to those around them to be a positive influence and promote peace.



[Full house at the event, many of which came to show tribute to their fallen friends, Sami, Tawfik and others. Photo: Nader Elgadi]

If you would like to get involved with the ongoing campaign, please use #IAmTawfik, and ‘Like’ the [Official I am Tawfik Facebook page](#). You can also follow [@iamtawfik](#) on Twitter for more information.