

UPF Oslo, Norway held its annual World Interfaith Harmony Week event

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Oslo, Norway -- UPF-Norway held its annual World Interfaith Harmony Week event in partnership with the largest mosque in Oslo, Central Jamaat E Ahle Sunnat. The mosque served as a great venue for the program titled "Similarities across Differences."

The mosque's imam, who is also the head of the imam council, welcomed the guests and expressed his happiness at being the host for this event, which was held on January 24, 2019.

The Norwegian UPF leader gave short opening remarks, with an explanation about the background of this United Nations observance.

As a symbolic sign of peace there was a "candle for peace" ceremony, with religious representatives lighting candles, accompanied by a few relevant quotations on peace and light.

Shortly before the event three out of five panelists canceled their participation, due to fever and sickness. In spite of this, the program went as scheduled with a good outcome.

One speaker, a postdoctoral scholar of systematic theology from the Christian Theological College in Oslo, spoke on "How Religions Can Be a Tool for Peace." Her presentation was very much based on her practical experiences with the peace process in South Sudan.

One of her main points and experiences was that religion can be a strong helper in the peace process when the religious dimension is included in the process. In such cases, she said, people have a double loyalty in the peace process: both to the agreement and to God or their faith.

The Norwegian UPF leader spoke about "Religion as a Provider of Universal Values." There might be different perspectives on this, he said, but we all need answers to fundamental questions in life. As long as religion can contribute with spiritual clarity on how to lead our lives, we do need it. In the meeting with new technologies, ideologies or politics, we need some universal principles to help us on the right course, he said.

The two speeches were followed by comments and questions before the concluding refreshments with further conversations and networking.