

UPF Vavuniya, Sri Lanka celebrated the UN International Day of Peace 2018

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September 22, 2018



Vavuniya, Sri Lanka -- A celebration of the UN International Day of Peace 2018 was held in Sri Lanka at the National Muslim College in Vavuniya, a large town in Northern province, on September 22. The theme for this year's Day was "The Right to Peace – The Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 70."

The event was jointly organized by UPF-Sri Lanka and the UN Information Centre (UNIC) Colombo under the patronage of deputy minister of resettlement, rehabilitation and northern development, Hon. Kader Masthan. Around 500 Sinhalese, Muslim and Tamil school children participated in the program.

The program began with prayers offered by religious leaders and a welcome speech, which was delivered by the president of Youth and Students for Peace-Sri Lanka, Mr. Sajjidin Sarrajh.

UPF-Sri Lanka secretary general, Dr. Chula Senaratne, read the UN Secretary-General's message for this year's Day. Also, Dr. Senaratne mentioned that in 2002, 16 years ago, he had visited Vavuniya for a Religious Youth Service project.

The director of education for Vanni district in Northern province, Mr. A.M. Subair, said in his special address that most school children will not remember the tension they experienced during the Sri Lankan Civil War, and therefore, will need to make extra effort to foster reconciliation so that conflict will never occur again.

The principal of the National Muslim College, Mr. S.M. Ransin, and social service worker and attorney, S.A. Samad, also spoke about the importance of reconciliation among the different ethnic groups in the community for advancing the development of the country.



The guest of honor of the event, Hon. Sivasakthy Anathan, a member of parliament representing Vanni district, also gave remarks. He mentioned that he is Tamil and was on the opposing side of the Sri Lankan Civil War (1983-2009), and said that religious and ethnic groups not understanding each other was a main issue in the conflict. Although the conflict has ended, there is still a long way to go in terms of reconciliation in various areas, he also stated.

In his address, Hon. Masthan expressed his gratitude to UPF and UNIC Colombo for organizing the event in his district. He also said that at a time when many conflicts are occurring in the world, he is happy to see a peaceful Sri Lanka that has a strong commitment to reconciliation and achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

A member of the staff of the college who was the event coordinator, Mr. M. Thajoon, gave the vote of thanks.

