

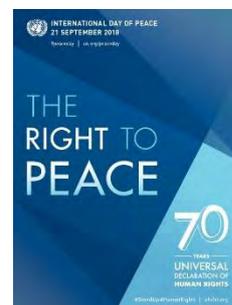
UN International Day of Peace 2018 in Denmark

Karsten Nielsen - September 23, 2018



Sunday Sept. 23rd UPF Denmark celebrated the UN International Day of Peace in the former Upper Chamber of the Danish Parliament in Christiansborg Palace from 2 to 5 pm.

The beautiful decorated room was filled with NGOs, politicians, artists, religious leaders, UPF Ambassadors for Peace and other firebrands of peace, with many young people in attendance.



The theme was

“The Right to Peace - The Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 70”



Hostess **MP Yildiz Akdogan** said in her opening address “We have no written down “Right to Peace”, but article 3 in the Human Right Declaration “*Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person*” comes close to that right. It also gives good meaning to connect human rights with the 17 SDGs in order to secure peace and security. A peaceful society is one where there is justice and equality for everyone. Peace will enable a sustainable environment to take shape and a sustainable environment will help promote peace. Without peace our fundamental institutions cannot keep together and function

well and we lose hope and faith in each other, in coexistence and in the future. Beside what the UN, governments and politicians can do, we ourselves need to think what we can do on the micro-level in our daily lives.”



Yildiz Akdogan then introduced the MC for the afternoon, **Zoraiz Khushdil**, Ambassador for Peace and chairman of Minhaj Youth in Denmark.



Lecturer and corporate counselor **Soulaima Gourani** sent her video greeting from Silicon Valley, CA. In 2014 she was selected ‘40 under 40’ European Young Leader by EuropaNova and Friends of Europe. “Everything I do serve a common purpose: to create more innovators, critical thinkers and problem solvers – more peace in the world.” She believes that trade and inter-dependence is the best way to have peace. But she always reminds people that “peace starts at home with my family, with me in cooperation with others” and she tells her children “peace starts in the children room.” We need to be good role models for our children and teach them not to

escalate conflicts.



Stand up and radio host of a classic music program, **Lotte Heise** spoke at and supported UPF’s UN Day of Peace events during the last 5 years. She emphasized the beauty of diversity and how important it is to always see the other person. Sometimes we have tendencies to ignore people of other colors, Muslims, or people we simply don’t like . . . but it feels super uncomfortable to be ignored, it is better to be rejected than to be ignored, it feels like you are non-existing. We need to reach out to others and it starts with a smile! A smile is the very shortest distance between human beings, it requires neither handshakes nor hugs. Of course, we need UN and other big

organizations, but peace starts with myself and the ways I educate my children.



Christian Balslev-Olesen, head of UN in Somalia and Yemen and a UN and UNICEF representative to several African countries and former general secretary of DanChurchAid (large relief organization in Denmark) said: “Looking at the world today there can be no better theme of today’s event than “the Right to Peace.” In Somalia in midst of war, chaos, with clans, tribes, terrorists . . . you cannot imagine a bigger gap between ideals and reality. However, besides 8 large UN peace agreements, 90 smaller local agreements were concluded and these smaller agreements were more effective and meant much more, because they secured food, water, land, schools and health for the local people. That is what peace and conflict resolution is all about.” Balslev-Olesen concluded with a quote of Nelson Mandela: “Peace, prosperity and security is only possible if they are shared by everyone without discrimination”



Helle Rabøl Hansen, PhD, associated professor and researcher in the field of bullying and disruptions in schools and specialized in the rights of children. “Children are our most vulnerable citizens and it is important to protect their rights. The first minister for children was in Poland and she wrote the first tight draft of the Convention of the Rights of the Child which later was recognized as a universal declaration. When we violate a child we lead kind of a war, that might eventually lead to bigger wars. Therefore, even the small war, bullying in school classes needs to be addressed and taken

care of. If we take this fundamental right to be a child and right of security away, we legitimize a form of war.”



Between the presentations **soprano Tatiana Kisselova Gudnæs** sang three pieces: “O mio bambino caro” of Puccini, “Cerubinos aria” from the marriage of Figaro by Mozart and “Summertime” of George Gershwin.



The final speaker was **Anja Ringgren Lovén**, founder and director of DINNoedhjælp. In Nigeria Anja helps save African witch children. Since she was young Anja had the dream to make a difference in Africa, but she put that dream on the shelf because of her mother’s sickness and death. At 30 she again felt strong and ready, she quit her job as shop manager, made herself free by selling everything she owned except for a backpack with clothes and a few personal things and went to Africa as an aid worker. In 2012 she founded her own relief organization in order to buy land, establish a children’s home, a hospital and a school. She named her 7,5 acres “Land of Hope”.

In 2016 Anja Lovén became known throughout the world when a picture from one of her rescue actions of witch children went viral. On the picture Anja is in front of a little naked and starved boy, as she gives water with her water bottle. Anja takes the boy to her children's center in Nigeria, where he miraculously survives. She gives him the name Hope [**Help One Person Everyday**]. It became an important catalyst in her struggle to tell the rest of the world about witchcraft and the superstition that prevails in Nigeria.

The Austrian OOOM Magazine voted her “The World’s Most Inspiring Person” in 2016. On the list president Obama was no. 2, the Pope no. 3 and Dalai Lama no. 7.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2016/02/16/africa/child-witchcraft-nigeria/index.html>

After that Dalai Lama invited her to visit him and recognized her as “his heroine”. She showed a short video with her meeting Dalai Lama.



Before the peace ceremony peace ambassador Laura Valesin from **We Make Peace** led all participants in a guided meditation.

We Make Peace is an NGO who publish textbooks about peace and work to raise peace awareness and implement peace education in schools.



Thorkil Christensen from UPF introduced the Peace Ceremony. “All people have a longing for peace. Even though such a right cannot be guaranteed by the state power, such a right cannot be neglected. The right to peace is close to another right, the right to be loved and valued. Even the newborn baby knows it, it is the source of all human rights, but that right also cannot be claimed or implemented by power. We cannot claim to be loved. Peace is something we want to enjoy with others, it is a good place we don’t want to leave or always want to return to. It can be compared to the peace the mother and baby feel when the baby is full after breastfeeding and lies safely in the mothers lab or the ecstasy we feel when something goes up into a higher unit, when two becomes one. It is such peace and unity religious people seek through their religious practices, and therefore it gives good meaning to ask religious leaders to conduct the next point of the program”.

The Peace Ceremony was carried out in a solemn atmosphere with nine representatives from Christianity, both Protestantism and Catholicism, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism pouring their water in a large bowl while soprano Tatiana Kisselova sang “Ave Maria” of Caccini.



It was followed by an inspiring performance of modern afro-ballet by **Root Astray**, two sisters, Maja and Esther Lindberg, who studied dance in Denmark, Germany and Brazil.

A cross cultural women choir “**World Sirens**” performed a potpourri of 7 songs in 7 different languages led by conductor and pianist Tatiana Kisselova. To help women create a network the choir is a meeting place for cultural exchange through singing. Every week the women meet and practice songs in their own languages, now more than 30 languages. They created a happy, enraptured atmosphere by encouraging the audience to sing along, clap, stand and dance and at the end they got a standing ovation.



To conclude this beautiful afternoon all participants sang together a new Danish song with a beautiful text about peace and freedom printed on the back of the program.

The event was broadcasted on a small local TV channel in Copenhagen.