

HJ International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership Newsletter

Thomas G. Walsh
May 30, 2025



HJ International
GRADUATE SCHOOL for PEACE and PUBLIC LEADERSHIP

NEWSLETTER

May 30, Volume III, Number 7



HJ International
GRADUATE SCHOOL for
PEACE and PUBLIC LEADERSHIP



49TH ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT

May 31, 2025 • 2 PM ET • 4 W 43rd Street, NY, New York

Keynote Speaker and Recipient of Honorary Doctorate

DR. SAKENA YACOobi

EDUCATOR AND FOUNDER OF THE
AFGHAN INSTITUTE OF LEARNING

Honorary Doctorate To Be Conferred Upon Dr. Sakeena Yacoobi

We are honored to recognize Dr. Yacoobi for her exceptional contributions to presenting a fundamental solution to refugee resettlement through education and contributing to the improvement of human rights. Her remarkable career exemplifies the values of our institution, and we are privileged to have her as our keynote speaker for this momentous occasion.

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Annual Research Day Postponed to October

While ordinarily convened in the Spring, we have postponed Research Day to the fall, which gives everyone more time to prepare. Please keep that date in mind.

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Does Switzerland's Neutrality have an Expiration Date?

Neutrality has long been part of Switzerland's image in the world and its history spans half a millennium.

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STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS IN MAY



STUDENT *Spotlight*



Katarina Connery
Doctor of Ministry

I wanted to explore more deeply Dr. Hak Ja Han's teachings about God being a Heavenly Parent, loving us as Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother and how that might impact the daily life and sense of value for women.

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STUDENT *Spotlight*



Susan Bouachri
Master of Divinity

I started by taking a few courses in search of educational and spiritual stimulation and inspiration. I decided to matriculate as I got interested in working in Chaplaincy and realized a degree would be required.

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Keynote Speaker and Recipient of Honorary Doctorate

DR. SAKENA YACOobi

EDUCATOR AND FOUNDER OF THE
AFGHAN INSTITUTE OF LEARNING

HJ International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership is proud to announce the conferral of an honorary doctorate upon Dr. Sakeena Yacoobi as part of its 49th Commencement Ceremony. The event will take place on Saturday, May 31st at 2:00 pm ET at 4 West 43rd Street, New York, NY.

Dr. Sakeena Yacoobi, known as the mother of Afghan education, has been a pioneering and devoted educator of refugees for 24 years working under the conviction that education is key to social reconstruction.

Dr. Yacoobi began educating teachers and establishing schools for boys and girls in Afghan refugee camps where people were struggling to survive after decades of war and a complete collapse of the education and the health system. In 1995, she established the Afghan Institute for Learning (AIL) to provide systematic refugee education and provided education and vocational training to 13 million women and children. Despite the Taliban regime's ban on women's schools, AIL successfully operated and educated more than 3,000 girls.

Creating Hope International (CHI), an organization co-founded by Dr. Yacoobi, provides technical assistance to four private schools, hospitals, and radio stations, including the Afghan Institute of Learning. Through its projects since 1996, CHI has provided health education to more than 2 million women and children significantly reducing infant mortality and maternal mortality rates during pregnancy and childbirth. It also provides Love and Forgiveness workshops to help transform refugees who have been surrounded by social deprivation and anger into positive leaders who can revive their local communities. Its radio broadcasting reaches more than a million people a day and covers a diverse range of topics including social trends, health, family success models, human rights, literature, and music to support the desire of refugees for a peaceful and fruitful life.

We are honored to recognize Dr. Yacoobi for her exceptional contributions to presenting a fundamental solution to refugee resettlement through education and contributing to the improvement of human rights. Her remarkable career exemplifies the values of our institution, and we are privileged to have her as our keynote speaker for this momentous occasion.

To register to attend online (via Zoom), please [click here](#).



Campus:

4 West 43rd Street
New York, NY 10036
Phone: (212) 563-6647



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Research Day Postponed to October



Respected HJI Faculty and Students,

Please be advised that HJI Research Day, a highlight of our institutional profile, is scheduled this year for **Wednesday October 22, 2025**. While ordinarily convened in the Spring, we have postponed Research Day to the fall, which gives everyone more time to prepare. Please keep that date in mind. We strongly encourage our students, faculty and alumni to participate in Research Day 2025. Share your research project with our wider community. Additional announcements will follow as details for Research Day 2025 become clarified.



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Does Switzerland's neutrality have an expiration date?

HJI AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR THE INTEGRATION OF WORLD THOUGHT PRESENT
Does Switzerland's neutrality have an expiration date?

			
Host Dr. Thomas Walsh President, HJI	Presenter Yves Nidegger, Esq. Former member of Swiss parliament (National Council)	Respondent Dr. Thomas Ward Professor of Peace and Development Studies, HJI	Moderator Dr. Claude Perrottet President, RIIWT; Adjunct Professor of Philosophy, HJI

**FRIDAY, MAY 16
2PM EST**

 **HJ International**
GRADUATE SCHOOL for
PEACE AND PUBLIC LEADERSHIP





On May 16 HJ International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership co-hosted a special program with the Research Institute for the Integration of World Thought (RIIWT) on “Does Switzerland’s neutrality have an expiration date?”

Neutrality has long been part of Switzerland’s image in the world and its history spans half a millennium. It is an armed neutrality that has allowed Switzerland to remain unscathed during the two World Wars. It is also a reason why many international organizations related to the UN are headquartered in Geneva, the birthplace of the Geneva Conventions and a frequent venue for peace negotiations. But is neutrality still a desirable option in today’s political environment? Are there still legitimate grounds to claim that it furthers peace? This has been increasingly challenged, both inside and outside of the country.

Dr. Thomas Walsh, President of HJI, hosts this event and Yves Nidegger, Esq., former member of Swiss parliament (National Council), is the presenter. Dr. Thomas Ward, Professor of Peace and Development Studies, HJI, is the respondent and Dr. Claude Perrottet, president of RIIWT moderates the event.

This insightful program concludes with a Q&A with the audience.

[Watch the Recording Here!](#)



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Student Spotlight – Katarina Connery



STUDENT *Spotlight*



Katarina Connery
Doctor of Ministry

Katarina Connery, Doctor of Ministry | New Jersey, USA

What inspired you to apply to HJI and your program? What do you most appreciate about being a student at HJI?

I wanted to explore more deeply Dr. Hak Ja Han's teachings about God being a Heavenly Parent, loving us as Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother and how that might impact the daily life and sense of value for women. I appreciate that I have this space to explore theological and spiritual concepts from various religious traditions, including my own, and many different academic researchers and writers. Being part of the degree program gives a purpose and focus to my learning.

What do you enjoy in your free time?

I enjoy reading and going on adventures, exploring new places with my husband and kids.



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Student Spotlight – Susan Bouachri



STUDENT *Spotlight*



Susan Bouachri
Master of Divinity

Susan Bouachri, Master of Div, New York USA

What inspired you to apply to HJI and your program? What do you most appreciate about being a student at HJI?

I started by taking a few courses in search of educational and spiritual stimulation and inspiration. I decided to matriculate as I got interested in working in Chaplaincy and realized a degree would be required.

Share about the benefits of your online learning experience.

Easy to participate with a program that is entirely online. Stimulating to join with students from other locations, including other countries who may be able to add different points of view to the learning and the student experience.

Share about your internship or chaplaincy experience.

I'm currently participating in ACPE training as a Chaplain Intern at Westchester Medical Ctr. I've been happy to discover, one of the Staff Chaplains here is an instructor at HJI. Another is working on his doctoral thesis from HJI. I've found that HJI students have participated previously in the intern program.

What do you enjoy in your free time?

Reading, time with family and friends.



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