

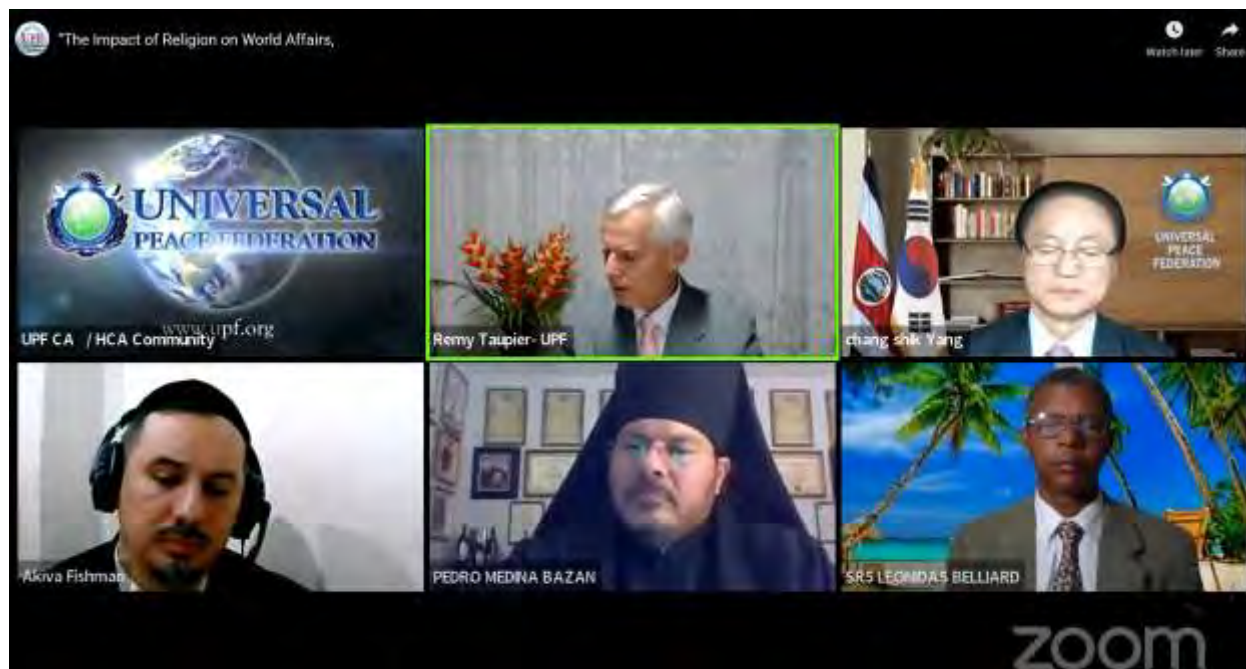
## UPF Central America and Caribbean Webinar: The Impact of Religion in World Affairs

Chang Shik Yang  
March 23, 2022



**UPF International** -- On March 23, 2022, UPF-Central America and the Caribbean held an ILC webinar of the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD) with the theme: "The Impact of Religion in World Affairs; Peace and Freedom in Ukraine."

The whole world is watching with a painful heart how Ukrainians are being killed and their homes being destroyed by the Russian army. This unprovoked invasion of Ukraine is unacceptable. All the nations of the world have overwhelmingly supported the resolution of the United Nations (U.N.) asking Russia to "immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine."



**Rev. Remy Taupier**, moderator. Regional coordinator of the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD), Central America and the Caribbean

"When God sees the Ukrainians dying every day, His heart is aching to see His loving children killed. God's heart is also aching because Russian soldiers are dying in this senseless war. They are His children too. We have to realize that God's heart is in great pain and as religious leaders, we have to do everything we can to ease His painful heart. Our prayers and actions to stop this war are precious."

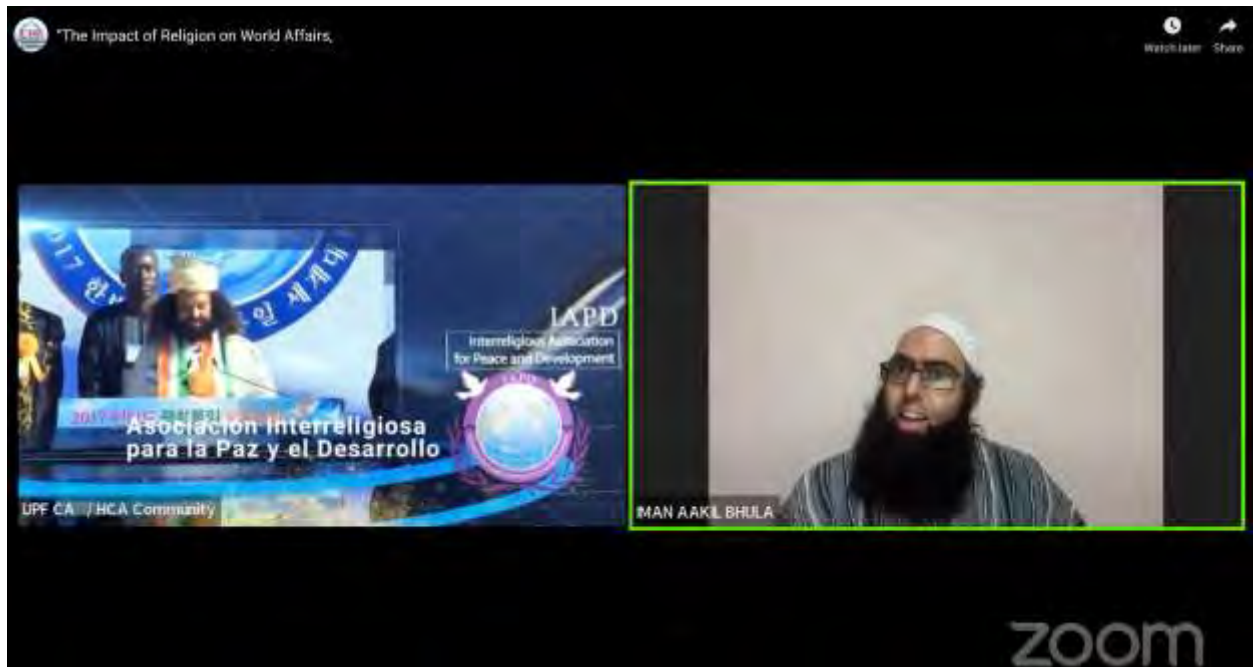
**Dr. Charles Yang**, Chair, UPF Central America and the Caribbean; President of UPF Initiative of Peace in the Middle East.

"Russia must immediately stop the war and return to constructive dialogue and diplomatic solution. Even the past conflicts of Central America and Caribbean could be solved by dialogue and now this region enjoys peace. May the dark shadow of war dissipate and give way to the light of development, prosperity and common welfare for God's children everywhere."



**Monseñor Fernando Barrios Zaragoza**, *Diocese Catholic Missionaries of Peace, México*

"It is fundamental that religion must have an impact for a World of Peace. We have a world of war, because there is a division in the human heart; it does not recognize the value of respect and the rights of others. Jesus Christ taught us to love and respect one another. We have to first fight the sin that exists in us and tends to divide us. We are one family under God. Let's seek good deeds just as Jesus Christ lived in the unity of the Spirit, Soul and Body."



**José Ramón Viñas Alonso**, *Grand Commander of the Supreme Council of Freemasonry in Cuba*

"Human beings aspire to be happy, but there is no happiness without peace and fraternal love. We insist on the need for both sides to reach an understanding and end the violence and bloodshed. With the strength of prayer and the energy of so many who dreamed of universal harmony and fraternal love, it is possible."

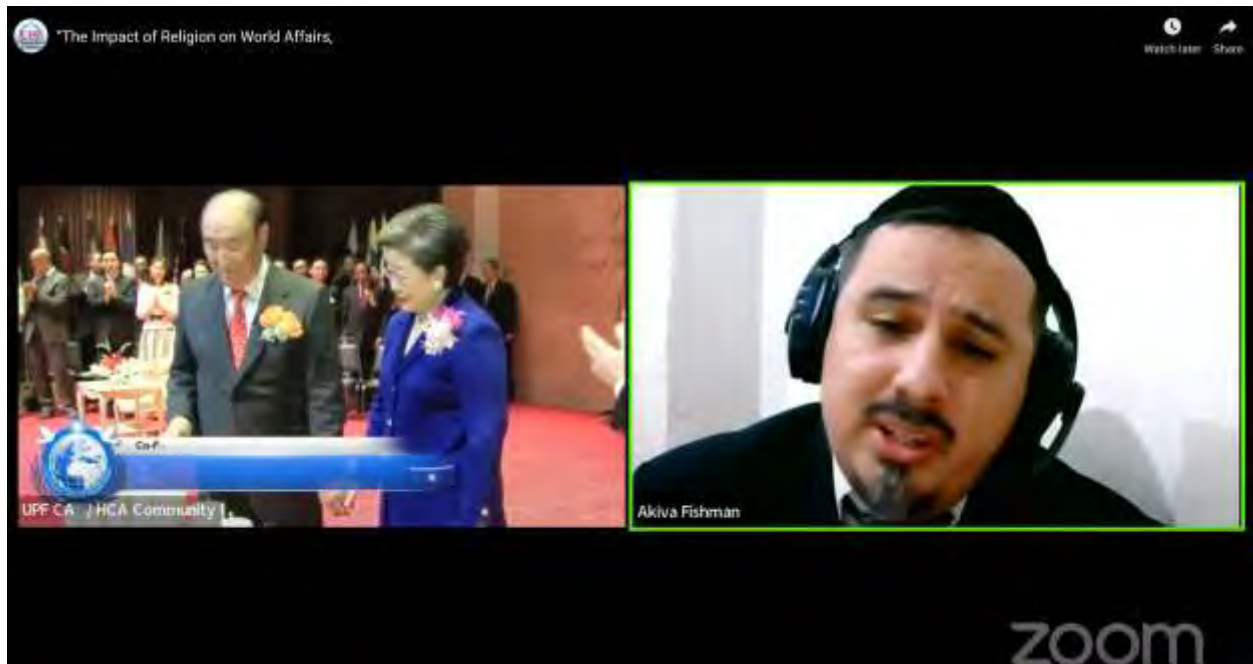
"Although the Cuban government has ties of affinity with Russia, many Cuban people oppose the invasion and the killing of Ukrainians by Russia."

**Imam Aakil Bhula**, *Imam of Jama Masjid Mosque of Bridgetown, Barbados since 2007*

"Imam Bhula pointed out to us that Mohammad (Peace be upon him) once said, 'Help your brother, whether he is an oppressor or he is an oppressed one.' Then he said that as religious leaders we have to encourage our congregations to show good will and love each other so that hate does not raise its ugly head and to never stop praying."

**Pastor Cristian Rodriguez Montero**, *Pastor of the Church of God Inc., Dominican Republic*

Pastor Rodriguez spoke of Jacob, who felt God's desire for him was to meet his angry brother Esau after 21 years in exile: "At the risk of his life, he was able to win his brother's heart and reconcile. All human beings are brothers and within our most profound nature there is a longing for peace. Mother Moon teaches us unceasingly that we have to love God first, and love our brothers as we love God. Let us make our greatest effort to support the reconciliation between Russia and Ukraine."



**Dr. Pedro Medina Bazan**, *Priest of the Russian Orthodox Church in Miami, Florida*

Priest Medina, with a clear voice, qualified the actions of Mr. Putin as criminal acts for no reason against the people of Ukraine. He said, "It is a serious sin. It is an unjust war. There is no excuse for the suffering of innocent children, elderly people, civilians who die because of this conflict. My prayers are for all the victims of this massacre. May God support and protect Ukraine."

**Rabbi Akiva Simja Fishman**, *Rabbi in charge of the Jewish community of Nicaragua*

"We were created to become God's image; therefore, we have to manifest His character of love and kindness in our lives. The act of aggression through war is the expression of separation and estrangement from God. War is an attack on the sovereignty, freedom and peace of those who suffer it; therefore [those who wage war are] guilty of going against the divine will."

Rabbi Akiva Fishman concluded by exhorting us all to become conveyors and builders of God's peace.

**Rev. Ren Rodney**, *Shiloh New Testament of God Ministries, St. Lucia*

"True peace is not just the absence of war. True peace is in the person of Jesus Christ. The foundation of peace is love. Genuine love is seeking the welfare of others ahead of myself."

"I pray that the love of God will touch the heart of President Putin and his advisers."