

PRESS RELEASE

18 September, 2012

UK and Overseas Mosques Embrace International Day of Peace

On the International Day of Peace, 21 September, mosques and Islamic centres in the UK will open their doors to visitors wishing to join them during or after Friday prayers. People of different faiths and none will exchange messages of peace, celebrate local peace-building and share hospitality. They will be joined by others overseas, some as far as Thailand.

The initiative, unprecedented on this scale (mosques are generally independent of one another), has been under development for several months. A group of London-based Muslim leaders, along with non-Muslim colleagues, began looking at ways to mark the International Day of Peace. But recognising that this year the Day fell on a Friday, when Muslims gather for their weekly afternoon Friday Prayers, *Salatul-Jumu'a*, they decided to share their peace commitments with friends and neighbours.

"Current events worldwide too readily lead to stereotyping and violence which harms us all," said Yousif Al-Khoei OBE of the Al Khoei Foundation based in London. "Such trench warfare leads nowhere, so we must come out of those trenches and embrace each other", he added.

Abdullah Faliq, Head of Research at The Cordoba Foundation, which has been working on this campaign from the outset, explained: "Unlike launching into war, establishing peace requires a lot of determination and continuous effort. We are delighted that people of all faith and none have come together to mark the International Day of Peace this year with so much vigor and passion."

The Cordoba Foundation is delighted to have released today a special edition of its Occasional Papers series, in commemoration of the International Day of Peace. Titled, *Sustainable Peace for a Sustainable Future*, it features an article by the Grand Mufti of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and messages of support from Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury; Jeremy Gilley, Founder of Peace One Day; Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary General of the Organisation of the Islamic Corporation (OIC); Catriona Robertson from London Peace Network and a foreword by Anas Altikriti, Chief Executive of The Cordoba Foundation.

London Peace Network convener, Catriona Robertson, who has been steering the UK campaign, commended the efforts of UK Islamic centres twinning with others, "I am very encouraged by

local Islamic centres in the UK pairing up with nearby churches, religious communities or schools, and linking their observance of the International Day of Peace to pairs overseas.”

Julian Bond, director of the London-based Christian-Muslim Forum, remarked, “This unprecedented initiative is led by the London Peace Network and a large number of Islamic bodies and is a London 2012 Inspire project.”

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Notes to editors:

1. For a full list of participating mosques and Islamic centres, see <http://londonpeacenetWORK.wordpress.com>

2. Media / general enquiries:

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3. Link to Occasional Papers, Sustainable Peace for a Sustainable Future, http://www.thecordobafoundation.com/attach/op_peace_final_draft_v3.PDF

4. Link to introductory film <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yrF7vSOBSbM&feature=youtu.be>