

THREE FAITHS FORUM



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World Congress of Imams and Rabbis in Seville

"Bringing together 350 Imams, Rabbis, and experts for a conference such as this was a mammoth task," said Sidney Shipton OBE. The Coordinator of the Three Faiths Forum invited from the UK to the 2nd World Congress of Imams and Rabbis in Seville, Spain. "Alain Michel and his team at Hommes des Paroles must be congratulated on organizing such a historic event."

Although Prince Hassan of Jordan could not attend the Congress, his message was conveyed by video. "The noble art of conversation," he said, "is not a martial art! Dialogue is essential between adherents of faiths and humanity at large. We must look at each others' texts and respond to the spread of disinformation about each other."

"This Congress led to numerous informal contacts being made, to be followed up in the months ahead." In addressing the plenary sessions, Mr Shipton emphasized that the deliberations of this Congress and its final declaration must percolate to the grass roots, otherwise an important opportunity would be wasted.

The Congress concluded with a final declaration which stated, inter alia:

"We affirm that contrary to widespread misrepresentation, there is no inherent conflict between Islam and Judaism. On the contrary, while modern politics has regrettably impacted negatively upon the relationship, our two religions share the most fundamental values of faith in the One Almighty whose name is Peace, who is merciful, compassionate and just; and who calls on us human beings to manifest these values in our lives and to advance them in relation to all persons whose lives and dignity are sacred. Therefore we reiterate the message we sent from our first congress, that we deplore bloodshed or violence in the name of any ideology everywhere. Especially when such is perpetrated in the name of religion it is a desecration of religion itself and the gravest offence against the Holy Name of the Creator. Thus, in addition to calling upon all our co-religionists to respect all human life, dignity and rights, to promote peace and justice; we call upon them and the governments of the world and international institutions to show respect for the attachments and symbols of all religions, as well as their holy sites, houses of worship and cemeteries, particularly in the Holy Land, due to its special sensitivity. Accordingly, we condemn any negative representation of these, let alone any desecration.

Similarly, we condemn any incitement against a faith or people, let alone any call for their elimination, and we urge authorities to do likewise.

"We affirm therefore the urgent need for truthful and respectful education about each other's faith and tradition in our respective communities and schools and call upon those responsible to promote such essential education for peaceful co-existence."

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