
Interfaith Cooperation to Promote Human Values

MWL honored with Interfaith Award

The Makkah Charter Promotes Global Unity and Coexistence

A Year of Promoting Tolerance and Harmony



PROMOTING
HUMAN VALUES



The Charter of Makkah was once considered a unifying document that would bind Muslims worldwide to a relationship with their faith that is tolerant and that rejects recent false interpretations of Islam as a harsh, austere and joyless form of faith. ”



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Muslim World League

Recent Activities in Review



Dr. Al-Issa hosted Joey Hood, the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, where they discussed the critical role of interfaith dialogue and cooperation in fostering coexistence, building bridges of understanding and advancing peace around the world.

In Washington, D.C, Dr. Al-Issa met with U.S. Congresswoman Teresa Fernandez, who holds a leadership position in the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and serves as Chair of the Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples.



Dr. Al-Issa met with Mr. Adam Phillips, the Director of the Center for Faith-Based & Neighborhood Partnerships in the U.S. Agency for International Development. They discussed methods to increase cooperation and reviewed prospects to jointly address public health and economic issues.





Dr. Al-Issa hosted the U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Arabian Peninsula Affairs, Mr. Daniel Benaim, who praised MWL's efforts in building bridges between peoples and civilizations.

Dr. Al-Issa hosted a delegation that included the Director of Johns Hopkins University's Center for Injury Research and Policy, Dr. Shannon Frattaroli; Dr. Caleb Alexander, Co-Director of the JHU Center for Drug Safety and Effectiveness; and Bawa Jain, the Secretary-General of the Centre for Responsible Leadership. They discussed areas of cooperation to protect young people from addiction.



Dr. Al-Issa met with a group of Islamic leaders from around the United States, including His Eminence Sayyid Mohammad Baqir Al-Kashmiri, His Eminence Sheikh Dr. Rasul Naqvi, Sheikh Muhammad Majid, and Sheikh Dr. Mohammed Al-Senussi.





Dr. Al-Issa hosted the President of the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, Ambassador Douglas Silliman. For a wide-ranging discussion of issues of common interest.

Dr. Al-Issa was awarded the Norwegian Bridge Builder Award in a ceremony at the Oslo Opera House. The award cited his exceptional and tangible contribution to building bridges of understanding between followers of different religions and civilizations.



Dr. Al-Issa met with the Ambassador of the United Kingdom to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Mr. Neil Crompton.





The Declaration of Makkah was conceived and brought to fruition by the Muslim World League in 2019 in a conference of Islamic leaders and scholars, in Makkah, Saudi Arabia. Its purpose was to codify a set of progressive principles that stemmed from Islamic teaching and would bind all Muslims to a philosophy of tolerance.

The charter condemns extremism, exalts religious tolerance and cultural diversity, and supports the adoption of laws that would criminalize hate and severely punish acts of hate-based violence. It was approved by Islamic leaders of 139 countries and signed by around 1,200 prominent Muslim figures.

From the beginning, the Charter of Makkah was directed at Muslims. It brought together the leading Islamic scholars of the world, representing all sects of Islam, to affirm the long-standing teachings and traditions of the faith, especially as regards to the treatment of one's fellow human beings.

"God revealed Himself to all mankind and is the origin of all religious belief," reads one principle of the Charter, "its various messages and methods, when practiced in their true form. We shall not define any religion by the false political practices of those claiming to be adherents."

It brought the full weight of Islamic theological and scholarly authority to bear against the radicalization of Islam and the senseless violence that it spawned. It embraced the idea that Islam could embrace a diversity of expressions and sects within a framework that accepted basic teachings of the faith. No one sect with-

in Islam would represent "true" faith. And it specifically rejected the idea that anyone could declare himself an authority and issue fatwahas and public interpretations of Islam.

"Only learned scholars such as those gathered at this Conference and agreeing to this Charter can speak in the name of the Muslim Ummah," reads the first sentence of the last principle of the Charter, "or any matter pertaining to its affairs."

It soon became clear, as MWL Secretary General Dr. Al-Issa traveled the world engaging with leaders of other faiths that the principles of the Charter of Makkah were universal. Some were clearly so, as its declaration that any attack on a place of worship was a crime. It upheld principles of charity, tolerance, environmental stewardship and the dignity and equality of women.

The Charter of Makkah was once considered a unifying document that would bind Muslims worldwide to a relationship with their faith that is tolerant and that rejects recent false interpretations of Islam as a harsh, austere and joyless form of faith. It is now a document that can bind all faith communities toward understanding, respect and love.

In this issue, we highlight some of the ways the Charter of Makkah is being transformed from a document of principles to a blueprint for action. As we go forward to build tolerance and understanding, we go forth with the spirit of Allah in our hearts and the Charter of Makkah in our hand.

The Editors





In New York, Dr. Al-Issa met with António Manuel de Oliveira Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Interfaith Cooperation to Promote Human Values

In October, Dr. Al-Issa made his first visit to the United States since the outbreak of the global COVID-19 pandemic. The MWL Secretary-General met with religious and community leaders, think tanks and scholars, and

government officials. They discussed the implementation of the Charter of Makkah, the need for further interfaith cooperation and partnership in the fight to combat extremism, intolerance, and discrimination, and the pro-



UN Chief and MWL SG discuss international efforts to confront hatred and promote interreligious peace and dialogue

motion of shared human values to advance peace and harmony.

Meeting with the UN Secretary General and Ambassador Lauder

Known for his commitment to rebuilding relations between Muslims and Jews and combating antisemitism, MWL Secretary-General Dr. Al-Issa met with representatives of several Jewish institutions and organizations. In New York, Dr. Al-Issa and Ambassador Ronald Lauder, the President of the World Jewish

Congress (WJC), met with UN Secretary-General António Guterres. They discussed the crucial interfaith work being done by the MWL and WJC, shared plans to continue to promote tolerance worldwide, ways to combat extremism and protect houses of worship for all faiths.

“The world is under threat from pernicious individuals and groups that seek to use hatred, violence, and discrimination to target Muslims, Jews, and many other global communities. Fortunately, however, we are seeing



UN Chief Guterres receives MWL Secretary General Dr. Al-Issa at the UN headquarters in New York City

interfaith partnerships blossom more than ever before as we unite to fight the scourge of racism and extremism, and build bridges of tolerance, understanding, peace, and harmony,” said Dr. Al-Issa during the meeting.

Conveying their vision to Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Dr. Al-Issa, and Ambassador Lauder emphasized the unique power of religion to unite individuals under common values of peace and mercy.

Engagement with Holocaust Survivors

Dr. Al-Issa met with a group of Holocaust sur-

vivors and listened to their stories of struggle, pain and ultimate triumph. During the meeting, the MWL Secretary-General expressed his immense admiration for their courage and noted that their willingness to share their experiences acts as a constant and powerful reminder that we must never allow the kinds of atrocities committed during the Holocaust to be repeated.

Event with Yeshiva University

New York’s Yeshiva University welcomed Dr. Al-Issa to participate in “Jews and Muslims: A Look Toward the Future,” which was the inaugural program of its Presidential forum



In Washington D.C., Dr. Al-Issa met with U.S. Congresswoman Teresa Fernandez, who holds a leadership position in the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and serves as Chair of the Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples.

conversation series, in which Yeshiva President Rabbi Ari Berman engages with global leaders. The event was conducted in association with the Rabbi Arthur Schneier Program for International Affairs of Yeshiva University, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, and the American Sephardi Federation.

After a private lunch that included close friends of Yeshiva University, Rabbi Berman and Dr. Al-Issa sat down to discuss the growing relationships between Muslim and Jewish communities across the globe before a contingent of faculty, staff, and students from

Yeshiva College, Sy Syms School of Business, the Graduate Program in Advanced Talmudic Studies for Women, the Yeshiva University High School for Girls-Central, and the Marsha Stern Talmudical Academy/Yeshiva University High School for Boys.

Yeshiva University also recognized Dr. Al-Issa for his unwavering dedication to promoting tolerance, mutual respect and interfaith cooperation. During the event, Yeshiva University's President, Rabbi Berman, hailed Dr. Al-Issa's efforts to rebuild the historical relationship between Muslims and Jews through engaging and educating the next generation of Jewish



Dr. Al-Issa also welcomed a number of American evangelical leaders in Washington, D.C. to review the contents of the Charter of Makkah and its purpose to establish community and global harmony.

and Muslim leaders. Participants included prominent Jewish leaders, faculty, and students at Yeshiva University's campus in New York.

World Philosophy Day

To commemorate World Philosophy Day, the Muslim World League, in cooperation with UNESCO, Columbia University and the American Sephardi Federation, organized a forum on Islamic values and shared religious philosophies. The event also highlighted historical contributions by Muslims, which included the Muslim World League's Charter of Makkah.

After a series of successful meetings in New York City, Dr. Al-Issa headed to the nation's capital, Washington, D.C., to deepen his engagement with local political and religious leaders.

Meeting with Representative Teresa Fernandez

In the nation's capital, the MWL's Secretary-General met with Congresswoman Teresa Fernandez, who holds a leadership position on the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and serves as Chair of the Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples. The two discussed the



Dr. Al-Issa and American evangelical leaders in Washington, D.C.

importance of working together to combat intolerance, discrimination, and racism in all its forms.

Meeting with Religious and Local Leaders

Subsequently, Dr. Al-Issa welcomed American evangelical leaders in Washington to review the contents of the Charter of Makkah and its purpose to establish a true sense of community and global harmony. In Washington, he also met with American muftis, imams and other Muslim leaders to discuss issues confronting Islam and preparations to enact the contents of the Charter of Makkah within

societal and official frameworks.

In separate meetings, Dr. Al-Issa sat down with African-American Muslim leaders to discuss how to combat racism and discrimination and implement the principles of the Charter of Makkah.

Event at Johns Hopkins University

Dr. Al-Issa hosted a delegation of leaders from the Johns Hopkins University's Bloomberg School of Public Health, Professor Shannon Frattaroli and Dr. Caleb Alexander, and the Secretary-General of the Centre for

Responsible Leadership, Bawa Jain. They discussed areas of cooperation to protect young people from addiction. This engagement followed previous virtual events and engagements among the different organizations.

Event for Implementation of the Charter of Makkah

During his visit to Washington, Dr. Alissa participated in the first forum of the Charter of Makkah. The event, titled "Makkah Charter for Promoting Global Unity and Coexistence: Interfaith Cooperation for Security, Health and Development," was organized by major Islamic and non-Muslim religious institutions from across the country.

The forum gathered high-ranking participants, including executive director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, Melissa Rogers, and a group of political and intellectual leaders, think tanks and research centers, and many other notable religious groups and academic figures.

The opening plenary session was followed by several religious freedom workshops and focused on interreligious cooperation and the role religion can play in responding to crises and eradicating social issues among minorities. The event's participants received a presentation on the executive planning of the Charter of Makkah, which is based on the higher purposes of Islamic law and embraces the United Nations' sustainable development goals. The common principles include promoting the fundamental issues of justice, peace, and coexistence while eradicating poverty, violence, and environmental degradation.

Meeting with State Department Officials

In several individual meetings, Dr. Al-Issa met

with senior State Department officials, including Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Joey Hood, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Arabian Peninsula Affairs Daniel Benaim, and Director of the Office of International Religious Freedom Daniel Nadel. During each meeting, Dr. Al-Issa discussed the critical role of interfaith dialogue and cooperation in fostering coexistence, building bridges of understanding, and advancing peace worldwide. The State Department officials highlighted the vital role the MWL and Dr. Al-Issa play in bridging divides between peoples and civilizations.

Other Meetings with Interreligious Leaders

During his stay in the U.S. capital, Dr. Al-Issa concluded several other meetings with senior representatives of different religions. He visited the Washington National Cathedral to meet with its leadership, including the Very Reverend Dean Randolph Hollerith. They discussed the importance of working together across faiths and communities to foster more peaceful coexistence and understanding.

Additionally, Dr. Al-Issa met with a group of Islamic leaders from around the country, including Sayyid Mohammad Baqir Al-Kashmiri, Sheikh Dr. Rasul Naqvi, Sheikh Muhammad Majid, and Sheikh Dr. Mohammed Al-Senussi. They discussed the importance of interfaith cooperation and understanding within the Muslim community in the U.S. and worldwide.

Dr. Al-Issa's busy program of meetings in the U.S. gave him the opportunity to press his commitment to interreligious dialogue and encourage more active participation by others. Many of these engagements have already borne fruit, with plans for more joint efforts to strengthen the fight against extremism and promote common human values beyond geographical, cultural, and religious borders.



Muslim World League Convenes Sunni and Shiite leaders from Iraq in Makkah to Bridge the Divide.

The Charter of Makkah: Global Implementation for a Global Vision

In 2021, the Muslim World League led and participated in high-impact conferences around the world to raise global awareness of the vision laid out in the Charter of Makkah, and to take practical steps to ensure its implementation.

In June, The MWL facilitated the signing of the Declaration of Peace in Afghanistan during a conference in Makkah for senior Pakistani and Afghan scholars sponsored by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. By encouraging negotiations among various factions, the MWL took a concrete step in the spirit of the

Charter of Makkah to ease tensions, reject violence, and foster coexistence. Distinguished participants included Sheikh Dr. Noor Al-Haq Qadri, Pakistan's Minister of Islamic Affairs and Tolerance of Religions, and Sheikh Mohammed Qasim Halimi, Afghanistan's Minister of Hajj, Endowments and Guidance.

Dr. Al-Issa highlighted during the forum that "This blessed sponsorship and great support by Saudi Arabia's government comes in line with the Kingdom's extensive Islamic work, as part of its Islamic duties and responsibilities." The conference brought the true peaceful



Senior Islamic scholars from Afghanistan and Pakistan convene with the MWL ahead of historic Afghan peace declaration.

message of Islam to the forefront during a tumultuous year for Afghanistan.

In August, the Muslim World League convened the “Forum of Iraqi References” with eighty prominent Iraqi Sunni and Shiite religious leaders and scholars to promote unity and reconciliation around the threads that connect all Muslims, regardless of their sect, nationality, or ethnicity. The religious leaders went beyond verbal agreements and developed a framework on the roles of scholars in combating sectarianism and religious extremism, promoting interfaith coexistence, and providing support to Iraqi government efforts to achieve a lasting peace. Consensus emerged to plan and create a new high-level permanent commission for cooperation on Iraqi Islamic affairs. The commission will focus on outreach both domestically and

throughout the Ummah and to other faiths, and the leaders agreed to establish a new coordination committee that will serve as a direct platform to allow religious leaders to resolve disagreements within Iraq before they escalate. In this way, leaders are focusing the universal values of the Charter of Makkah on the local context of sectarian tensions in Iraq.

In September, Dr. Al-Issa delivered remarks on global health at a World Health Organization Summit in Geneva, stating that Islamic values should serve as a main driver to combat the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Secretary General outlined to global health leaders in Geneva that contributions to the pandemic by the MWL included “material aid in direct coordination with governments, as well as medical equipment for health institutions and food aid for vulnerable groups.”



Secretary General Mohammed Dr. Al-Issa in Geneva Outlining MWL's Support to Global Health Amid COVID-19 Pandemic

The MWL's relief during the pandemic has been in line with the Charter of Makkah's mandate to foster a world in which we can cooperate effectively across borders to solve humanity's challenges in a peaceful fashion.

In October, Dr. Al-Issa attended a meeting on the Paris Peace and Solidarity Agreement and supported an action plan to promote peace and harmony among national societies. The practical discussion in Paris was a concrete step toward the goals laid out in the Charter of Makkah to avoid needless conflicts and cooperate and come together for global stability.

In November, the MWL hosted the first International Forum of the Charter of Makkah in Washington, which brought together Muslim and non-Muslim faith leaders from various

American states to reflect on the practical implementation of the Charter. Participants included the executive director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, Melissa Rogers, as well as religious, political and academic leaders from throughout the United States. The Forum delved into details of the executive plan for the Charter of Makkah and its alignment with sustainable development goals of the UN and global community. The Forum served to raise awareness of the spirit of true Islam in the United States and create an international consensus to continue living and working together in the spirit of the Charter of Makkah even as the world struggles with a pandemic and political instability in the Middle East.



Dr. Al-Issa was presented with the Bridge Builder Award at the Opera Hall in Oslo.

MWL honored with Interfaith Award

Last month, Dr. Al-Issa was presented with the Bridge Builder Award in a ceremony at the Opera Hall in Oslo. The award recognizes Muslim, Christian, and Jewish peacemakers for their outstanding contributions in building bridges across religions and leaders who stand together to make the world a better place. During the awards ceremony, Dr. Al-Issa was described as a leading global force in moderate Islam and a key figure in the fight against extremist ideology. He was also praised as a clear and distinct voice for peace

and reconciliation, for respect, equality and harmony between nations and religions.

“Every day, I strive to build bridges that connect nations, peoples and societies by demonstrating that there’s much more that unites us than divides us,” said Dr. Al-Issa. “I am deeply honored to receive this award alongside Pastor Sauca and Rabbi Melchior, whose actions represent this very ideal. The road may seem long and daunting, but we must never give in to those who seek to divide us. It is our duty



Dr. Al-Issa received the Norwegian Bridge Builder Award.

to work together to foster greater understanding, coexistence and harmony among all people of the world.”

The Bridge Builder Award also recognized Rev. Dr. Ioan Sauca, acting general secretary of the World Council of Churches, who leads a community of churches worldwide representing 500 million Christians in more than 110 countries. For decades, WCC has worked purposefully to build trust and respect for other faiths and to develop interfaith cooperation.

In accepting his award, Dr. Sauca said, “We are aware that almost all the world’s steepest challenges have an interreligious dimension. Whether we are addressing international affairs, the environment, global economic justice, the rights of women and children, racism,

the needs of refugees, and not least the task of theological education within our churches, in all these and other aspects of our work we seek to keep today’s interreligious realities in mind.”

Michael Melchior, chief rabbi and leader of the Religious Peace Initiative in Israel, former Deputy Foreign Minister of Israel and Deputy Minister of Education, Culture and Sports, was the third honoree. Today, he is a leading advocate of social justice in Israel, education for all, Jewish-Arab reconciliation and coexistence, protection of the environment and relations between Israel and the diaspora.

It was an honor for the Muslim World League and Dr. Al-Issa to receive an award that recognizes and encourages the important work of

strengthening tolerance for inequality, respect and love, values that are common and strongly rooted in the three religions. The awarding Committee believes that the three religious leaders are role models in building bridges between religions, people and nations.

Norway's former Prime Minister, Kjell Magne Bondevik, led the awards ceremony in the iconic Opera building in Oslo, and the president of the 14th August committee, Aamir Javed Sheikh, presented the awards.

During his welcoming remarks, Aamir Javed Sheikh said that this is not and has never been a battle of Jews against Christians, Christians against Muslims or Muslims against Jews. "But this has been a struggle between us who want to stand together and build bridges, and those who want to create divisions and hatred between us," said Sheikh. "It is our job to fight for a world that sees you for who you are and not just the God you worship."

Several hundred prominent guests attended the ceremony, and for the first time in Norway's history, the ambassadors to Norway from Israel, Palestine and Saudi Arabia were gathered under one roof. It was also the first time that high-ranking representatives of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim faith communities had gathered to mark respect and tolerance for each other and with a clear ambition for further interfaith cooperation.

"The time is right for sending a clear message of peace to the world, about the importance of working together with respect, love and tolerance for our differences, the way it is anchored in the three monotheistic religions," the jury stated while announcing the award.

The Bridge Builder Award has been presented to leaders who have made valuable contributions in relation to bridge building between people, religions, and cultures while simultaneously reducing the distance between people from different backgrounds in the world.

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director-general of the World Health Organization, praised the winners of the Bridge Builder Award and said during his closing, "COVID-19 has highlighted just how important it is that the global community works to promote peace and understanding." He continued, "The pandemic has exposed the fault lines in our world and deepened divisions. If there's one lesson we have learned, it's the lesson of interconnectedness."

Former recipients include Malala Yusufzai, H.M. King Harald of Norway, Angelina Jolie, Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau, former United States President Barack Obama, former President of Pakistan Muhammad Rafiq Tarar, and former Prime Minister of Norway Erna Solberg.



Dr. Al-Issa was described as a leading global force in moderate Islam and a key figure in the fight against extremist ideology. He was also praised as a clear and distinct voice for peace and reconciliation, for respect, equality and harmony between nations and religions. "



The MWL strives for the world to come together in order to face a common challenge, the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reflecting on COVID relief

Islam prescribes a specific role for the state in protecting an individual's health, based on the core principle stated directly in the Quran that the right to life applies to every human being: "If anyone slays a human being...it shall be as though he had slain all mankind; and if anyone saves a human life, it shall be as though he had saved all mankind." (5:23)

The Muslim World League strives to maintain this Islamic tradition of health as a human right by focusing its support toward the most vulnerable communities across the world. As COVID-19 continues to impact the globe, the MWL remains a crucial player in the fight against the pandemic.

The Muslim World League has focused relief efforts in over 20 countries worldwide and has partnered with multiple international relief

organizations working in scores of countries. As Dr. Al-Issa states, "We want Muslims and all other citizens to be aiding one another in this time of common challenge, without discrimination for religion, race, gender, or ethnicity."

This common challenge requires a common solution. This sort of transnational community is one that the MWL and its Charter of Makkah hold in high regard. Helping those in need, regardless of background and belief, brings out the best in us. As the Islamic faith believes, the best amongst us are those who help others. The more we help others, the better we all are.

Prophet Muhammad advised: "Second to faith, no one has ever been given a greater blessing than health."

The MWL has addressed this common challenge in a variety of ways. Multiple campaigns have been launched throughout the last year addressing key issues related to the global pandemic. Improving disinfectant services in countries where good hygiene is lacking has become a key weapon for preventing outbreaks. Providing access to aid such as food baskets, tests, vaccines, protective wear and hospital supplies, items that have been less available to many impoverished countries, has been crucial to managing outbreaks. Continued mutation of the virus itself has demanded more up-to-date research, which the MWL has continuously backed through sponsoring cutting-edge initiatives and research labs. Socially, the MWL has increasingly promoted awareness and education about the COVID-19 pandemic through multiple social platforms in a variety of languages.

The Muslim World League is actively combating the pandemic around the world, specifically in Africa, the Middle East, the Balkan region, and certain areas of western Europe. Alongside international organizations such as the World Health Organization, UNESCO and the International Committee of the Red Cross, the MWL has provided funding and support for people in need. Throughout Africa—in Egypt, Gambia, Malawi, South Africa, Djibouti, Nigeria, Sudan and Somalia—the MWL has donated financial support, medical supplies, and food aid to help local communities survive and combat the pandemic. For example, in March of 2021 the MWL provided the necessary funding to extend and improve the integral medical center in Thies, Senegal.

In the Middle East, the MWL has provided Jordan with millions of dollars in financial support aimed at improving technical and medical train-



The Muslim World League thanks all of its volunteers who have sacrificed their time and effort to help those in need combat the pandemic.

ing. And it has provided Afghanistan, Pakistan and other countries with much-needed educational materials, food aid and medical supplies.

Additionally, in South Eastern Europe, the Muslim World League has bolstered the COVID-19 efforts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, and Croatia with funding and supplies. It is these efforts that highlight the MWL's mission to help all in need as it continues to mitigate the global pandemic.

History shows that Islam has always been at the center of the scientific world, and today is no different. BioTech executives and marital partners Dr. Özlem Türeci and Dr. Uğur Şahin are known for their innovations in m-RNA-based cancer vaccines, but when the pandemic struck, these two Muslim scientists felt the duty to focus their efforts into creating a COVID-19 vaccine, which they achieved.

Today their BioNTech-Pfizer vaccine is saving lives around the world. In line with promoting cross-cultural connections, the Saudi-based Jameel Clinic partnered with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to explore how artificial intelligence and machine learning can help stop the spread of COVID-19.

These efforts, along with others, have helped the world begin to get back to normal. The results are promising. Thanks to the efforts of the MWL and groups like it, Saudi Arabia was able to allow 60,000 people to attend the Hajj after the pilgrimage was reduced in scale in 2020. Additionally, as vaccinations increase and travel restrictions decrease, more foreigners will be able to perform Umrah. Successes such as these are only the beginning, and as long as the world faces challenges, the Muslim World League will continue to help battle them.



A Muslim woman receives the COVID vaccine. The MWL continues to provide COVID relief around the world to those in need.



HE Dr. Al-Issa speaks at the The Makkah Charter for Promoting Global Unity and Coexistence forum held on October 27th.

The Makkah Charter for Promoting Global Unity and Coexistence

A forum titled The Makkah Charter for Promoting Global Unity and Coexistence: Inter-faith Cooperation for Security, Health and Development was held in Washington on October 27, 2021. This was the first forum of the Charter of Makkah to promote the concept of one social family with common values, and was organized by major Islamic and non-Islamic religious institutions across the U.S.

The forum began with a discussion session that was followed by workshops. The work-

shops focused on religious freedom, cooperation between different religions, social issues for minorities, and the role of religious responses in times of crisis. The forum also included a discussion of the implementation of the Charter of Makkah in the context of the higher purposes of Islamic law and the United Nations' 17 sustainable development goals. There is much overlap between the principles of the Charter of Makkah and the 17 sustainable development goals, which cover justice, poverty, environmental stewardship,



Nayyera Haq, a Sirius XM host and television commentator, speaks at the The Makkah Charter for Promoting Global Unity and Coexistence forum held on October 27th.

mitigating violence, and promoting peace and coexistence.

Dr. Al-Issa, the secretary-general of the Muslim World League and chairman of the Muslim Scholars Association, spoke at the event. Dr. Al-Issa described the Charter as a significant step in the Islamic world. He stressed that the Charter is a historic document that represents the entire Muslim world, saying, "This charter does not represent one sect or school of thought. It is not just a Sunni document. It represents all of the Islamic world. This was the first time this took place in Islamic history."

Dr. Al-Issa further explained that the message behind the Charter of Makkah began to take root in Islamic awareness, referring to the session of the Islamic Council of Foreign Ministers in Niamey, Niger, in November 2020. He said, "The numerous signatures from the

various Islamic sects on the Charter of Makkah are proof of the great and exceptional impact it has and this is reflected by the unanimous decision of the Islamic countries at the aforementioned Niamey meeting."

Dr. Al-Issa also dealt in depth with the subject of diversity and acceptance of others. "This document talks about a very important topic: the acceptance of all others," he said. "We are different, but we have more in common. We must embrace diversity. It is a crucial aspect of humanity. The charter focuses on educating the global youth. Education must be focused on bringing people together by spreading our common values. This charter says that we must embrace diversity. Diversity must enrich our culture. This is what we should teach our children. But it must be more than just words. We need action. We need more than just initiatives. We must initiate."

Dr. Al-Issa also pointed out that this forum was proof that the Charter of Makkah focuses on partnerships inside and outside the Muslim World. "Today," he said, "we saw the presentation of four global programs based on the principles of the Charter of Makkah: Religious diplomacy and its common values among followers of different religions, youth engagement, women's legitimate empowerment, and capacity building."

Katherine Marshall, the Executive Director of World Faiths Development Dialogue, also spoke at the event. She stressed the importance of women's empowerment, stating "We need to explore areas of differences. One area is women's empowerment. Modernization is not about

happiness. It is a fundamental way people live. Women need to be at the table."

In his remarks, Rabbi David Saperstein said "Hate is just more than murders and arsons

and beatings. It's an attack on the fundamental principles of democracy, pluralism and diversity. If we are going to change this, it requires changing people. How do we teach about faith communities in other communities so that they are seen as our sisters and brothers? What makes this moment different is that there is more interfaith going on across the globe

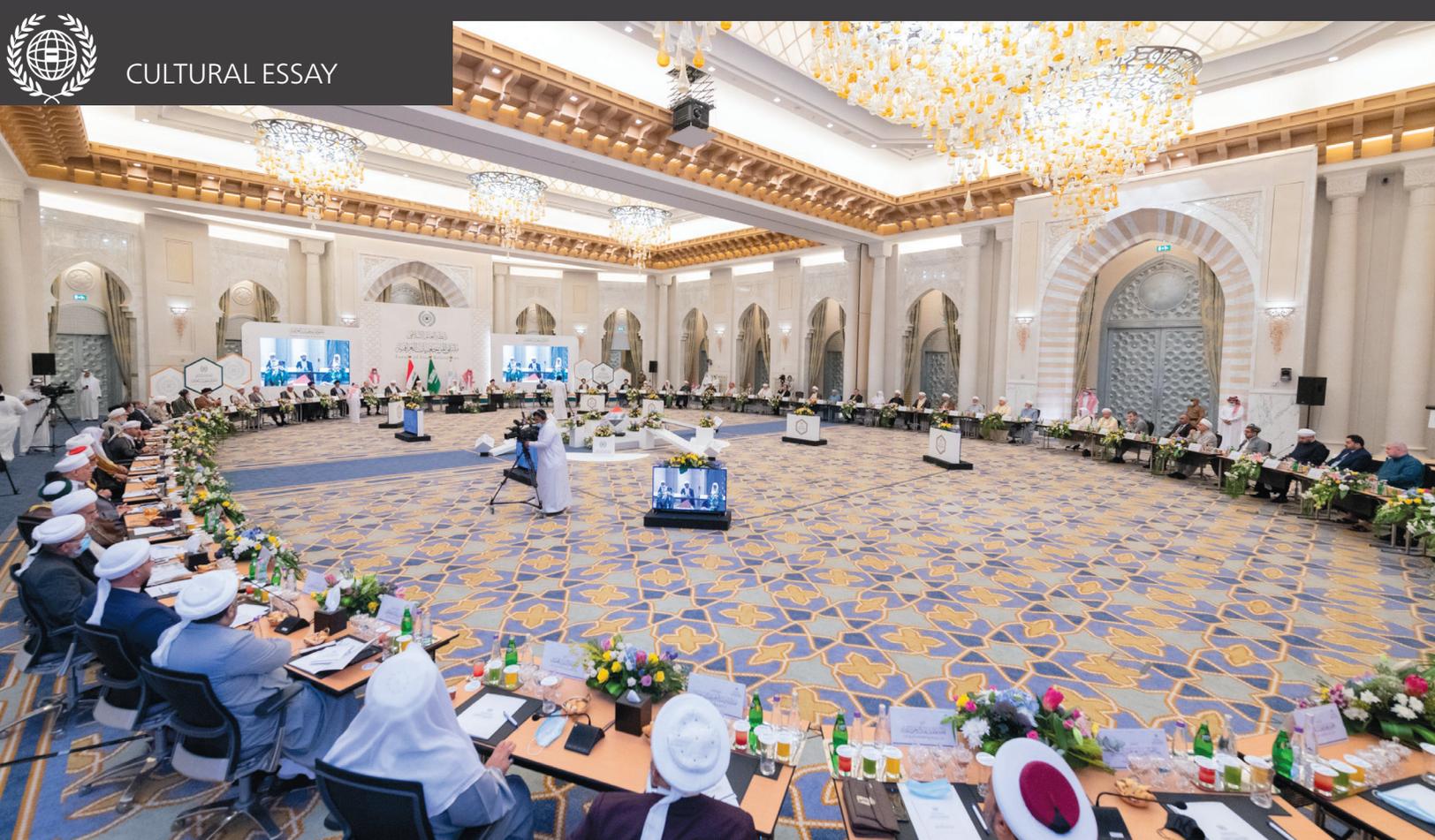
now than at any other point in history...This is what we are doing here and this is what the charter calls for."



The numerous signatures from the various Islamic sects on the Charter of Makkah are proof of the great and exceptional impact it has and this is reflected by the unanimous decision of the Islamic countries at the aforementioned Niamey meeting."

— Dr. Mohammad al-Issa





The Muslim World League hosted the Forum of Iraqi References which brought together 80 prominent Iraqi Sunni and Shiite religious leaders and scholars.

A Year of Promoting Tolerance and Harmony

The principles of tolerance and understanding have been at the core of the Muslim World League's mission since its establishment. During a time when differences often result in disagreements, misunderstandings, and conflict, there is an urgency to promote and instill the practice of tolerance. This is the goal of the Muslim World League's interfaith work, and it has relied to a great extent on events and conferences to bring together Muslims of varying sects and philosophies, as well as followers of other religions, for open dialogue.

As our God Almighty encourages, all faithful followers must treat their brothers and sisters in humanity with respect and love, even when differences surface. Just this year, the Muslim World League has made great strides in promoting these holy practices with the goal of inspiring coexistence, peace, and cooperation.

As stated in the Charter of Makkah, "civilized cultural dialogue is the most effective way to achieve tolerance and understanding, deepen community ties, and overcome obstacles to coexistence." It is the belief of the Muslim



Dr. Al-Issa held a lecture with muftis and imams from different schools of Islamic thought to review and promote the message of moderate Islam.

World League and the Secretary-General, Dr. Al-Issa, that tolerance can be established among people with inherent differences through dialogue, understanding and communion. With this belief at the forefront of the Muslim World League's interfaith work, many events were organized this year to progress towards this goal.

A notable success of such an event was the Forum of Iraqi References hosted by the Muslim World League in Makkah in August of this year. The forum brought together 80 prominent Iraqi Sunni and Shiite religious leaders and scholars, and members of other prominent Iraqi factions, including the Kurds, to discuss proposals to promote unity and reconciliation among the groups. Members of every bloc had the opportunity to voice their concerns, share their perspectives and offer their proposals to create a more peaceful Iraq. The forum resulted in the establishment of a new coordination committee, which now serves as a direct platform for resolving disagreements

among the different groups within Iraq. In addition, the groups created a high-level permanent commission to bolster cooperation on all Iraqi Islamic affairs.

The work did not stop there. This year, Dr. Al-Issa hosted many additional meetings with leaders and scholars representing various schools of Islamic thought. Of note, the Muslim World League organized a roundtable conversation with imams and muftis representing different sects of the American Islamic community and hosted a lecture with more than 1,200 muftis and 4,500 Islamic scholars and leaders to emphasize the guiding principles of moderate Islam.

Another example which highlights the diversity of Dr. Al-Issa's interfaith work is when he met with the Chairperson of the Islamic Commission of Spain, Dr. Ayman Idlibi, to agree upon and sign a memorandum of understanding with the Muslim World League to establish an Islamic youth center which



The Muslim World League made great strides in solidifying interfaith relationships this year with other religions.

will promote the principles of tolerance and coexistence. This acts as a perfect example of the organization's youth-based interfaith work and programming, an important population on which to focus as they are the future of Islam.

As the Muslim World League has worked to promote tolerance within Islam, similar work has been completed with leaders from different faiths. In an effort to build bridges and relationships between Islam and other religions, Dr. Al-Issa has conducted dialogue and hosted events with numerous Jewish and Christian scholars and organizations. He met with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, alongside the President of the World Jewish Congress, Ronald Lauder, to detail the important interfaith work being done by the two organizations and their plans to fight intolerance and discrimination through partnership.

The Muslim World League hosted an event with representatives of various faiths to

educate the public on the importance of the Charter of Makkah. Also, the Reject Hate Campaign was launched by the Muslim World League to combat online hate speech and discrimination targeting members of all religions, resulting in support from prominent religious organizations throughout the faith world.

It is important to carry on with the mission to promote tolerance in a world that is rife with injustice and hate. The Muslim World League is proud of its mission and efforts to make the world a more peaceful and harmonious place. When Dr. Al-Issa received the Norwegian Bridge Builders Award and was given an honorary doctorate by the United Nations' University for Peace, it was clear that the MWL's dedication to encouraging cooperation and coexistence is helping to build a world that is far more accepting and tolerant than the one we have known. The Muslim World League looks forward to 2022 and the strides to be made in achieving this important goal.



MWL Humanitarian Assistance: Year in Review

“The Muslim World League must do good for all of humanity – all religions and races – and provide humanitarian services to everyone, regardless of religion, ethnicity, gender or nationality.”

-Dr. Muhammad Al-Issa, Secretary General of the MWL

The Charter of Makkah, endorsed by leading Muslim scholars in 2019, outlines this guiding principle of doing good for all of humanity without reservations. Charitable and humanitarian work has been at the heart of the Muslim World League’s mission since its establishment in 1962. The MWL provides assistance to the less fortunate through a variety of initiatives, from distributing food baskets to supporting orphanages, to developing basic infrastructure in rural communities and to providing emergency relief.

The MWL’s ever-expanding humanitarian missions and partnerships have broadened its international contributions to communities in need. This highlights MWL’s vision to spread peace and security, promote the values of solidarity and harmony, and build a culture of dialogue and mutual respect, all key pillars of true moderate Islam.

The MWL Supports 50K+ Orphaned Children Worldwide.

The Charter of Makkah states that governments are responsible for the health, education and welfare of children. The MWL continues to support over 50,000 orphaned children around the world.

Ramadan Food Basket Program

During Ramadan in April, the MWL distributed Ramadan Iftar coupons for Syrian refugees in Jordan. In May, the MWL distributed food baskets to people in Benin as part of the annual Ramadan Food Basket Program, which provides essential food items to communities in need around the world. These baskets include rice, sugar, oil and other cooking essentials. In the last three years, the MWL has distributed more than 500,000 Ramadan food baskets in more than 30 countries.

These are just a few of the many charitable projects undertaken by the Muslim World League during the holy month of Ramadan. Every year during the sacred month, the MWL delivers food aid, medical tools, and other essential items to vulnerable communities in the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Europe.

Relief for Refugees from Central Africa

Since 2018, the Muslim World League has provided assistance to the displaced people of Central Africa in the refugee camps on the borders of the Republic of Chad. Through its Global Relief, Care and Development Authority, the MWL’s urgent relief campaign initially distributed food baskets to 40,000 refugees.



HE Dr. Al-Issa delivering food aid in Senegal.

The MWL pledged to implement regular programs in the region, focusing on health. It is running one of the best health centers in the capital, as well as multi-purpose medical campaigns and camps. The assistance also includes development programs such as urban centers, construction of mosques, digging of wells and care for orphans.

Sponsoring Refugees in Africa

The Muslim World League is a sponsor of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees project, "Live, Learn and Participate," which provides for improved education and healthcare for young refugees in Africa. Earlier this year, the MWL signed an agreement with the UNHCR in a commitment that demonstrates the MWL's ongoing efforts to provide humanitarian aid, particularly as it affects young people.

The agreement outlines a three-year project that will operate in a number of African countries with a total budget of \$14 million USD. The project will focus on young refugees and asylum seekers between 15 and 24

years old, as well as children who have been separated from their families. The project aims to promote sustainable solutions to the refugee crisis by providing safe and adequate housing for refugees and by strengthening educational and development activities, including both elementary-level education and vocational training.

One of the core missions of the MWL is to build bridges of cooperation and understanding among communities around the world. At the heart of this partnership with the UNHCR is the desire to support initiatives that help build a better world, one that is more just and more equitable for all.

COVID-19 Volunteers

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to ravage the world, volunteers have been at the forefront of medical, community and societal responses. We are grateful for the many Muslim World League volunteers around the world who continue to deliver humanitarian aid to communities in need.



The Pavilion of the Muslim World League.

Fighting the Forces of Hatred and Stemming the Tide of Violent Extremism

The Muslim World League plays a critical role in countering extremist ideology, hatred and discrimination. Through its initiatives in 2021, the Muslim World League has aimed to fight the forces of hatred and stem the tide of violent extremism.

At the beginning of the year, the MWL was proud to host the Declaration of Peace in Afghanistan Conference. Dr. Al-Issa brought to-

gether scholars from Afghanistan and Pakistan to agree on a pathway toward enduring peace in Afghanistan. Through this meeting, nations were able to partner closely to respond to threats to international peace and security and help the Afghan people chart their future.

This spring, the MWL also signed a memorandum of understanding with the Banjul (Gambia)-based Fatoumatta Bah Barrow (FaBB)

Charitable Foundation to implement a package of comprehensive relief and development projects. The MOU widens of the scope of cooperation regarding the management of Al Salam Health Center in the village of Nema Kunku, just outside the city of Serekunda, and opens possibilities for more cooperation in the future. Most recently, The FaBB Foundation in collaboration with the Muslim World League Food Basket Project recently distributed food items to over 600 families across the country. These commitments reaffirmed the MWL's support for peace and the organization's willingness to help bring about an end to conflict.

Additionally, the MWL formed a partnership with the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change in July to deliver an educational agenda to 100,000 teenagers (ages 13 to 17 years) across 18 countries, including the United States, France, India, Ukraine, and the UK with the skills of critical thinking and dialogue in a bid to empower them to navigate the challenges and opportunities of the future. The plan was designed to bring together a collective idea of a future generation of educated, empowered and unprejudiced universal nations.

This summer, Dr. Al-Issa and the Muslim World League were awarded an honorary doctorate by the United Nations in recognition for his groundbreaking work as a global peacemaker. In honoring Dr. Al-Issa, the U.N.'s University for Peace cited the MWL secretary general's "outstanding efforts in supporting international diplomacy, promoting friendship and cooperation among people, and effective endeavors in combating hate."

With the goal of preventing extremism through cooperation and compromise, the Muslim World League hosted a forum of civil discourse with representatives from the major religious and cultural sects of Iraq. The forum acted as an example of how interfaith dialogue



The Muslim World League has launched an exhibition on the lives of the prophets at its Expo 2020 Dubai pavilion. This new exhibit sheds light on the MWL's messages of peace, love, affection, tolerance, coexistence, and humanity. "

can both combat extremism and promote moderate Islam as processes were established at the conclusion of the forum to resolve disagreements among the sects, ultimately preventing differences in beliefs from evolving into dangerous ideologies.

To end a year dedicated to combatting hatred, the Muslim World League has launched an exhibition on the lives of the prophets at its Expo 2020 Dubai pavilion. This new exhibit sheds light on the MWL's messages of peace, love, affection, tolerance, coexistence, and humanity. "The Prophets as if You See Them" uses the latest technology to present the biographies of Islam's prophets and messengers. It also highlights the ethics of Prophet Muhammad and Islam's traditional embrace of inclusiveness.

During a recent trip to Italy, the Secretary General of Muslim Council of Elders, Dr. Sultan Al Remeith, said, "The Muslim World League is an important strategic pillar in establishing peace and stability as well as countering extremism." Over the past twelve months, the MWL has engaged in selective efforts to combat instability and foster peaceful, self-reliant communities across the globe.

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