

2013/2014

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# The Inter Faith Network for the UK

The Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN) was founded in 1987 to "advance public knowledge and mutual understanding of the teachings, traditions and practices of the different faith communities in Britain, including an awareness both of their distinctive features and their common ground and to promote good relations between persons of different faiths."

IFN's role is unique: linking national faith community representative bodies, local, regional and national inter faith bodies, academic and educational bodies with a focus on inter faith or multi-faith issues and working with them to deepen inter faith understanding and cooperation as part of working for the common good.

It carries out its work through raising awareness within wider society of the importance of inter faith issues, creating opportunities for linking and sharing of good practice, providing advice and information to help the development of new inter faith initiatives and the strengthening of existing ones.

A list of IFN's member bodies can be found at the back of the Review.

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**2013/2014** 

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### MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS



The Inter Faith Network for the UK serves Britain through building understanding and cohesion that furthers inter faith contribution to the common good.

This year saw many positive developments. Our programme of meetings and events was a broad one, encompassing topics from strengthening grassroots inter faith engagement, youth inter faith engagement and faith and social action to tackling 'difficult questions', such as extremism and the impact of overseas events.

The climate was at times, however, one where voices of intolerance were heard ever more loudly in many contexts. This was a dominant note in the summer months of 2014 when some overseas events were having a particularly strong impact on relationships between some communities in the UK. With the Vice-Chairs of IFN, we issued two special messages to member bodies in August: 'Overseas events and interfaith bonds of friendship and trust in the UK' and 'UK inter faith relations and impact of overseas events, particularly in Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East'. It is encouraging to note that the fundamentally healthy state of community relations has survived this challenge.

As reported in the 2012/13 Annual Review, the fruits of a Strategic Review were brought to last year's AGM for consideration by member bodies ahead of work to consider a response to its recommendations by the Executive Committee. The present year saw the Committee working through the 55 recommendations of the Strategic Review Working Group and a new Strategic Plan for 2015-17 was brought to the 2014 AGM in September. Ahead of that, in May, an EGM was held to agree a new Membership Admission Policy for IFN.

The development of a new Membership Admission Policy was a major piece of work during the year. Among other changes, it saw a widening of eligibility for membership beyond the nine faith traditions previously linked in the national faith community representative body category, and at the 2014 AGM a number of bodies from previously unlinked traditions were welcomed into membership.

IFN's member bodies have continued to carry out many excellent programmes of work throughout the year. Information about them and links to their websites can be found at www.interfaith.org.uk/members.

We thank IFN's member bodies, fellow trustees, particularly the Revd Bob Fyffe who served as Co-Chair for part of the year, and IFN's staff for their dedicated contribution to its work. We also thank faith groups, individual donors, trusts and the Department for Communities and Local Government who have helped, through their financial support, to enable IFN's work to promote and help strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK to continue effectively. Without your assistance this vital work could not continue.

**Bishop Richard Atkinson OBE** 

**Vivian Wineman** 

Co-Chairs, The Inter Faith Network for the UK

### STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2013–14

During 2013–2014, the strategic priorities around which the work plan was structured were:

- 1. Raise awareness about the importance of inter faith engagement, cooperation and dialogue and empower people of all ages to take forward interfaith work and to gain understanding and skills in this area.
- 2. Maximise opportunities for inter faith interaction and dialogue at every level within the UK.
- 3. Increase faith communities' engagement in public square discussion about issues such as citizenship and strengthen links with civil society.
- 4. Remain clearly focused on inter faith relations in the UK but enable sharing of good practice between the UK and other countries, particularly those in Europe and the Commonwealth (of both of which the UK is a part) on inter faith issues.
- 5. Consolidate and demarcate the Inter Faith Network's unique UK inter linking role and its role as 'voice' and 'advocate' on interfaith issues.
- 6. Give the Inter Faith Network a secure operational basis.

This Annual Review is for the period of 15 months between the July 2013 AGM and the September 2014 AGM.

# INFORMATION, SUPPORT AND ADVICE

Positive inter faith engagement is increasingly important in the UK today: from dialogue and learning to shared social action.

Through its meetings and its advice and information service, IFN, with its member bodies, helps increase awareness of the teachings, traditions and practices of the different faith communities in the UK. Through sharing of news and good practice, it helps strengthen the development of inter faith understanding and cooperation.

IFN provides a trusted source of information and contacts which adds value to the work of inter faith initiatives and helps enquirers find out more and make the connections they need to build an interfaith dimension into their activity. It does this through such routes as:

- producing resources to help people working on inter faith projects
- helping enquirers from the general public
- responding to specific requests from member bodies and other organisations for advice or engagement
- engaging people through its website and social media
- · keeping member bodies in touch on key issues and helping them share good practice with each other and more widely
- responding to requests to speak about IFN's work and other relevant issues such as the importance of the work of local interfaith organisations and initiatives

#### PROVIDING ADVICE AND INFORMATION

During the year, the IFN office has provided, in consultation with its member bodies and others, information and advice to members of the public and to a wide range of organisations, ranging from local inter faith organisations to universities, emergency service providers and Government departments.

Enquiries ranged from requests for information on developing inter faith groups to questions about different faith communities. Some enquirers contacted IFN with one-off queries; others, such as Holocaust Memorial Day, as part of working on longer term projects to extend and deepen their pattern of engagement with faith communities. In a few cases there was more extensive involvement, for example, the Near Neighbours

programme of the Church Urban Fund and Church of England; Equality and Diversity Forum; National Union of Students; One World Week and Mitzvah Day.

Some examples of queries this year:

- Are there any local inter faith initiatives near me?
- · Can you give us pointers on setting up a new local interfaith initiative?
- Is there anything we need to bear in mind when planning a new inter faith initiative for women?
- · How can we engage our local authority in plans for Inter Faith Week activities?
- Please could you advise on planning for a national multi faith event
- How can we involve more faith communities in the marking of the centenary of World War I?
- · How might we add a social action dimension to an inter faith programme?
- Can you offer advice on faith leaders to invite to a conference on mental health?
- · Can you suggest any faith speakers to come in and talk to Sixth Form students?
- We are a theatre company seeking possible inter faith partners for a theatre production - can you help?



#### VISITS AND TALKS

Just a few examples of visits and talks during the year were the Interfaith Scotland Interfaith Service for the Commonwealth Games at Glasgow University Memorial Chapel; a Hindu-Zoroastrian event at the Sri Venkateswara Balaji Temple in Sandwell; the launch of 3FF's Urban Dialogues programme; an Ahimsa Day event at the House of Commons organised by the Institute of Jainology; and a range of Inter Faith Week events in different areas such as Bolton, Bradford, Huddersfield, Slough and Torbay.

#### **WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

IFN's website at www.interfaith.org.uk provides information about its work and publications, carries freeto-download resources and provides links to the web pages of its member bodies and other projects with which IFN has been involved.

The website was re-launched in January 2014 after redesign during the preceding months to increase its current effectiveness and future potential. As well as carrying listings for local inter faith groups around the UK, the website contains contact forms for IFN member bodies and a general contact form for information requests to IFN. IFN also setup Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) accounts as part of a listening exercise ahead of greater engagement.

IFN runs a separate website for national Inter Faith Week which carries information and resources for Week event organisers and event listings: www.interfaithweek.org. It also runs separate Twitter and Facebook accounts for the Week www.facebook.com/IFWeek and www.twitter.com/IFWeek.

"The work of the Inter Faith Network has been instrumental in fostering not only dialogue but active cooperation on social projects between people of different faith backgrounds, locally, regionally and nationally... [it] has helped to break down barriers between faith groups around Britain..."

RT HON DAVID CAMERON MP, PRIME MINISTER



### SHARING GOOD PRACTICE

The Inter Faith Network helps faith and inter faith organisations to share information, and to learn from each other's expertise and good practice. It does so through meetings for practitioners, publications and special focus meetings as well as through support and encouragement to other organisations to produce resources and develop programmes to increase inter faith understanding.

#### **SHARING INFORMATION**

During the period covered by this Review, 30 Circulars were sent to member bodies about matters connected to the work of IFN and developments relevant to interfaith engagement in areas such as public policy. Information was also shared more widely through the regular IFN e-bulletin which carries information about inter faith projects and resources, relevant national faith and public life issues, research projects, funding and work opportunities, and upcoming interfaith events.



#### **FACE TO FACE MEETINGS**

Face to face meetings of the different categories of IFN's member bodies are a vital part of sharing good practice and the year saw 10 such meetings.

### **National faith community** representative bodies

Among the member bodies of IFN are national faith community representative bodies from the major faiths and from a wide range of smaller communities. These include both cross-community or ecumenical bodies as well as bodies of particular denominations or strands within communities.

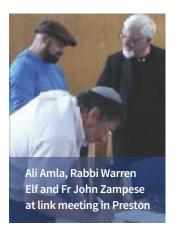
Meetings of IFN's Faith Communities Forum, which all national faith community representative bodies in IFN membership are invited to attend, took place in September 2013, and in April and July 2014. Further information is included in the section on Faith and Public Life (pg 11).

### **Local Inter Faith Organisations**

IFN's membership includes many local inter faith groups, forums and councils. Local interfaith initiatives draw together people from different faith traditions in a particular area. They play a very important role in creating opportunities for learning and cooperation in their local communities.

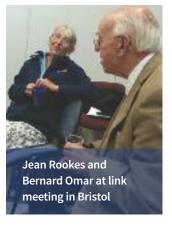


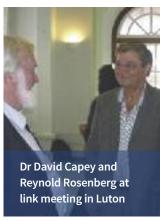
















governance matters. These meetings took place at a time when there was considerable anxiety about the impact of events in the Middle East and they provided a place for discussion about the impact of that in local communities and the ways in which local inter faith organisations were

The meetings included sharing of news; discussion of topical issues and concerns including youth and intergenerational interfaith activity, resourcing local

inter faith work, Inter Faith Week; as well as IFN



"There was plenty to share and getting together on a local basis in a closed group enabled us to see our strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and challenges as well as to meet others and link up."

(FR PETER SLOCOMBE, CHELTENHAM INTERFAITH)

"Listening to each other and learning about each other's work was extremely helpful."

(MOHAMMED ALI AMLA, PRESTON FAITH FORUM)

"It was inspiring to learn what happens in other areas and to sow the seeds of new friendships."

(MARK COSENS, YORK INTERFAITH)

engaging with it.



### **National Inter Faith Linking Bodies**

Among IFN's member bodies are the interfaith linking bodies of the devolved nations of the UK - Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum, Interfaith Scotland, and Interfaith Council for Wales - with which it works in close partnership. Each body plays an important part within the interfaith life of its own nation.

The annual meeting of these with IFN is a key opportunity for sharing of expertise, learning and good practice, as well as to discuss challenges and issues of concern.

This year's meeting took place at Stranmillis College in Belfast in June with involvement of staff and trustees. It was organised by the IFN office and hosted by the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum.

Organisations shared news of their work. They also considered IFN's Mission, Vision and Values in the context of different patterns of inter faith engagement, and the needs and wishes of different nations.

### **National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations and Educational** and Academic Bodies

#### NATIONAL AND REGIONAL INTER FAITH **ORGANISATIONS**

Among IFN's member bodies are interfaith organisations and programmes whose work is carried out at UK or national level or which, while mainly regionally focused, are used by people across the country. A number work primarily with particular religious traditions - although in some cases using their bilateral and trilateral expertise to work more broadly. Others work with people of any religion or belief. Some have a particular area of focus for their work, such as reconciliation or young people or 'Scriptural Reasoning'. A few are initiatives which are run by particular faith traditions and have a focus on the

engagement of these with wider society but seek also to increase understanding between and about faiths beyond their tradition.

#### **EDUCATIONAL AND ACADEMIC BODIES**

IFN's member bodies include a number of educational and academic organisations which, in different ways, promote understanding between and about different religions in the UK. Some are specialist centres or units within academic institutions or faith communities, and others are national bodies with a focus on a particular area such as Religious Education in schools.

#### **COMBINED MEETING**

A joint meeting for National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations and Educational and Academic Bodies took place in August 2014.

This combined meeting was arranged because of a focus on developing interfaith activity and education for and with young people and there was discussion of plans for a special event on these issues to be held in Autumn 2014. The meeting also included round table updates on member bodies' current projects.

"It was tremendously encouraging to hear about the wide range of inter faith initiatives and activities taking place in so many different contexts."

(DR SARAH SMALLEY, RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COUNCIL OF **ENGLAND AND WALES)** 





### **FAITH COMMUNITIES AND PUBLIC LIFE**

Good inter faith relations and co-operation across faiths are more likely where people of different faiths feel valued as active members of society.

IFN has an ongoing 'Faith and Public Life' programme. This includes work with its member bodies to engage with Government and other agencies on relevant areas of their work.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK provides a uniquely important forum in which religious communities and inter faith groups can both meet together and engage with wider society."

THE MOST REVD JUSTIN WELBY, ARCHBISHOP **OF CANTERBURY** 

#### **FAITH COMMUNITIES FORUM**

National faith community representative body member organisations of IFN take part in the Faith Communities Forum (FCF) at which issues of common interest and concern are discussed. FCF is also a forum where these bodies can be consulted multi-laterally by Government and other agencies on a wide range of relevant issues.

During 2013–14, issues considered by the Forum included: the religious and cultural implications of dress; the Transparency of Lobbying Bill; the Together in Service faith and social action project supported by DCLG and run by Faith Action; principles and practicalities of responding jointly to issues of concern; faith communities and support of local interfaith dialogue and practical cooperation – present challenges and opportunities; Government and faith communities in the integration context; the Government's position on 'caste' in equalities legislation; the Centenary of the First World War; and the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Call for evidence on religion or belief in the workplace and service delivery.

The Forum is a consultative one which does not make decisions or issue statements on behalf of IFN.

#### **BROAD PATTERN OF ENGAGEMENT**

The IFN office worked during 2013-14 to keep its member bodies in touch on relevant public life issues. Just some topics covered in member briefings and e-bulletins were:

· Government response to Riots, Communities and Victims Panel final report;

- New Ministerial Appointments
- New faith community All Party Parliamentary Groups
- · All Party Parliamentary Group for RE
- · OFSTED report on RE in schools
- Religious Education Subject Review
- Report on the review of the Public Sector Equality Duty
- Planning permission close to religious buildings
- New Charity Commission guides on public benefit
- Beyond 2011 Census consultation
- · Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill
- Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life
- · Law Commission report on hate crime
- · Consultation on Marriages by Non-Religious Belief Organisations
- · FGM, forced marriage and 'Girl Summit'
- Some relevant developments in case law
- Northern Ireland inter faith response to anti-Islamic remarks
- a range of other issues covered in discussion by the Faith Communities Forum.

IFN maintains relationships with Government departments and other public bodies. Its main link with the Government continued, during the year, to be with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and, in particular, with its Faith Engagement Team. It also had contact with other Government departments, including the Cabinet Office, the Department for Education, the Home Office, and the Government Equalities Office within the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

IFN also looked to keep abreast of developments between the inter faith linking bodies of the devolved nations and their devolved governments/administrations. The inter faith linking bodies of the devolved nations engage with their governments/administrations over public life issues and there is sharing of information on some of these.

Engagement with a range of public bodies was also part of the year's work, particularly the Equality and Human Rights Commission, as well as engagement with other organisations through forums such as the Equality and Diversity Forum.

Inter faith understanding and cooperation is not just a concern or possibility for the few. It matters for all within our society and IFN and its member bodies are committed to widening involvement - and to doing so in ways which enable informed and positive participation.

In addition to the day to day advocacy and information sharing, a key way in which IFN takes this work forward is Inter Faith Week.



#### THE STORY OF INTER FAITH WEEK

Inter Faith Week was launched six years ago, in partnership with the Government for the first year. Its aims are to:

- · Strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels
- · Increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- · Increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs

It was inspired in part by the highly successful Scottish Interfaith Week.

#### WHY IS THE WEEK SO IMPORTANT?

Some organisations, of course, carry out faith-based social action and interfaith activity year round but there are many thousands of groups and millions of individuals in our society who do not focus on these issues or necessarily see their significance. This Week is a key way to highlight the contribution faith communities make to society and the importance of interfaith - and belief understanding and cooperation.







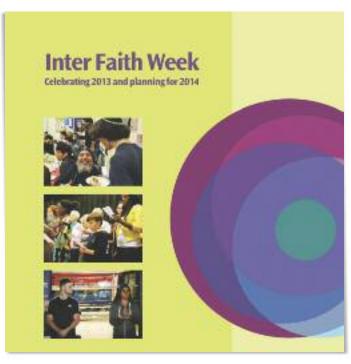












#### **THE 2013 WEEK**

The 2013 Week took place from 17-23 November in England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

A wide range of different kinds of organisations held events: faith community bodies; inter faith organisations; nonreligious belief bodies; schools and Standing Advisory



Councils on Religious Education (SACREs); universities and colleges; local authorities; Police and Fire and Rescue Services; hospitals; businesses; voluntary organisations; chaplaincies; museums, libraries and galleries; and others. In 2013 the number of local faith community groups and local authorities listed as marking the Week more than doubled compared to 2012.



409 events are known to have taken place across England, Northern Ireland and Wales to mark Inter Faith Week 2013: an increase of 29% on the 2012 Week. A full list of these can be found at:

#### www.interfaithweek.org/resources-16/reports

469 organisations are known to have taken part in the Week – many working in partnership, often across different sectors. A number of events were held to mark both Inter Faith Week and Mitzvah Day, and were badged as 'inter faith Mitzvah Day' events.

Events took place in a wide variety of places: from local places of worship to schools, campuses, libraries, museums, civic centres, shopping malls, and the Houses of Parliament. In a number of towns and cities a whole week of events of different kinds took place. These ambitious programmes drew in many organisations and took place in a range of locations.

Preparation for, and support of, the Week was a major part of IFN's work during 2013-14. This included reporting on the Week and further development of the IFW website (www.interfaithweek.org).

During the Autumn, IFN benefitted from the assistance of a volunteer, Areeba Wajid, who carried on as a part-time Project Assistant in early 2014 to help report on Inter Faith Week. The report on the 2013 Week was funded by a project grant from the Department for Communities and Local Government. It included a section on planning for the 2014 Week with tips and ideas for events and getting media coverage.

IFN maintains an Inter Faith Week website with resources and listings for known events. During this period the online listing process was further enhanced to improve the searchable map; and categories and listing process.

The IFN office worked to draw in and check, so far as possible, details on several hundred events and to bring examples of these to the attention of the media as part of raising the profile of the Week.

#### SCOTTISH INTERFAITH WEEK

A separate Scottish Interfaith Week has run since 2004. Information about its events is carried on the Interfaith Scotland website www.interfaithscotland.org/scottishinterfaith-week The 2013 IFN report carried, by agreement with Interfaith Scotland, a special page about Scottish Interfaith Week.





### **Scottish Interfaith Week**



The theme for Scottish Interfaith Week in 2013 was Values and Visions for Scotland'. With the Scottish Referendum approaching in 2014, it was designed to provide an opportunity for interfaith groups across Scotland to think about the kind of Scotland that they would like to see now and in the future regardless of the political outco

60 events took place across Scotland, including events in Shetland and Skye. Further information about events in Scotland can be found on the Interfaith Scotland website at www.interfaithscotland.org/ouractivities/scottish-interfaith-week

November, on the theme 'Journeys', looking at journeys of faith, for example stories of pilgrimage or inner journeys. Further information can be found at the link above or by emailing Frances Hume on frances@interfaithscotland.org.



### **TACKLING TOUGH ISSUES**

An ongoing strand of IFN's work is "Living Well Together". Part of living together well is being able to engage over difficult issues.

The 2014 National Meeting in Birmingham on 29 September, chaired by IFN's Co-Chairs Bishop Richard Atkinson and Vivian Wineman, took as its theme 'Tough to talk?' The 125 participants from many different faith backgrounds and organisations focused on issues which can be difficult to tackle in inter faith contexts, reflecting on how these are being approached around the UK in different settings.

Themes addressed included: contexts in which it can be 'tough to talk' and ways of approaching difficult issues; maintaining bonds of trust and cooperation when times are tough; charities and due diligence, including in relation to concerns about extremism; addressing difficult issues sensitively in local contexts; conflict resilience skills; motivations and agendas in interfaith contexts; questions of identity and inclusion; inter faith engagement and extremism; learning from dealing with difficult issues in the classroom and in youth inter faith work; and learning from faith communities' engagement with social challenges.

- · Ramesh Pattni, General Secretary, Hindu Forum of Britain and Co-Chair, Hindu Christian Forum, opened the day with reflections on some of the contexts in which it can be 'tough to talk' and ways of approaching difficult issues.
- · The Revd Alan Bayes, Chair, Inter-faith Council for Wales, reflected on polarisation within society and responding to this to mitigate its dangers, drawing on experience in the Welsh context.
- · Moulana M Shahid Raza OBE, British Muslim Forum and Vice-Chair, Inter Faith Network for the UK considered the challenges of being in good relationship and discussing issues of concern, particularly in the context of impacts of overseas events.
- · Michelle Russell, Head of Investigations and Enforcement, the Charity Commission, considered, in an environment where there is concern about extremism globally and also within the UK, how charities can best exercise due diligence and how the Commission, which registers and regulates charities in England and Wales, can support them in this.
- · Hilary Patel, Faith Engagement Team Leader, Integration and Faith, Department for Communities and Local Government, and Ravinder Kaur Nijjar,

Religions for Peace (UK) and Scottish Sikh Community, offered reflections on the themes of the day, with the former also noting the Government's interest in faith and social action and the latter work for peace and social wellbeing, including by women.

Participants took part in one of seven workshops:

- Addressing difficult issues sensitively in local inter faith contexts, facilitated by Acharya Modgala Duguid, Network of Buddhist Organisations and Islington Faiths Forum, with an opening presentation by Fakhara Rehman, Community Faiths Coordinator, Kirklees Faiths Forum and the Rt Revd Tony Robinson, Bishop of Wakefield, Chair, Kirklees Faiths Forum.
- 'Conflict resilience': skills for engagement with challenging issues, facilitated by Smita Shah, Leicester Council of Faiths and Jain Samaj Europe, with opening presentations by Angharad Thain, Programme Coordinator, St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace in London and Jon Dal Din, Director, Westminster Interfaith.
- Motivations and agendas in interfaith contexts, facilitated by Jimmy Suratia, Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe and Birmingham Council of Faiths, with opening presentations from the Revd Daniel Otieno-Ndale, Baptist Union GB, Minority Ethnic Christian Affairs Reference Group of Churches Together in England and Hillingdon Inter Faith Network (read on his behalf by Duncan Struthers of Hillingdon Inter Faith Network) and Jay Anderson, Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship.
- 'Include me in, include me out', facilitated by Derek McAuley, International Association for Religious Freedom and Chief Officer, General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, with opening presentations by Satish Sharma, General Secretary, National Council of Hindu Temples (UK) and Bev Smerdon, Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity Inter Faith Dialogue Group.
- Inter faith engagement and extremism, facilitated by Catriona Robertson, Wandsworth Multi-Faith Network and London Boroughs Faiths Network, with opening presentations by Peter Adams, Churches Together in Luton and Luton Council of Faiths and Anjum Anwar, Christian Muslim Forum and Dialogue Development Officer, Blackburn Cathedral and Chair, Woman's Voice.

- Engaging well with difficult issues: learning from schools and youth inter faith work, facilitated by Dr Norman Richardson MBE, Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum, with opening presentations by Dr Joyce Miller, Chair, Religious Education Council of England and Wales and Tamanda Walker, Training & Partnerships Manager, 3FF.
- · Difficult issues: faith communities responding on social challenges, facilitated by Padideh Sabeti, Director, Office of Public Affairs, Baha'i Community of the UK, with opening presentations by Philip Rosenberg, Director of Public Affairs, Board of Deputies of British Jews and Ranveer Singh, Khalsa Aid.















### THE UK AND THE WIDER WORLD

A number of IFN's member bodies, such as UK branches of international interfaith organisations, have a particular focus on inter faith activity and cross-faith work globally. The focus of IFN's own work is the UK. However, its work – and inter faith work in the UK more generally – is increasingly of interest to practitioners in other countries who contact it as part of sharing and exploring good practice around the world. The year saw enquires from within Europe as well as from other countries such as the United States.

During 2014 a number of overseas events had a challenging impact on interfaith relations in the UK. This was true of developments in a number of countries but it was perhaps particularly the case with the impact of events in the Middle East.

IFN's policy on making statements limits comment on overseas events to contexts where there is, or is a strong likelihood of, impact on inter faith relations within the UK. IFN's Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs issued two special messages in August: Overseas events and inter faith bonds of friendship and trust in the UK and UK inter faith relations and impact of overseas events, particularly in Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East. These have an ongoing relevance to inter faith engagement and are reproduced below and overleaf.

It was not just the Abrahamic communities which were affected or were disturbed by global events. Some Sikhs and Hindus, for example, commented on the impact on their own community of harassment linked to mistaken identity. For Sikhs, a UK aspect to the UK Government and Operation Bluestar was also experienced as a matter of concern in 2014.

A message from the Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs to member bodies of the Inter Faith Network for the UK www.interfaith.org.uk/message4aug

#### 4 August 2014

The work of most of your organisations, like that of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, focuses on this country. There are, however, times when events in other countries with which we have links or about which we have concern have an impact on our relationships here.

These may be events, past or present, about which a community or communities have strong feelings: particular attacks or periods of persecution or even genocide; 'one off' but deeply disturbing episodes; or ongoing actions – military or civilian – affecting the lives of many, within and across borders. The roll call of such actions in recent times is long and the impact reverberates.

Today our thoughts and our prayers are with all those affected by the present crisis in Gaza and Israel, and in other countries in the Middle East and elsewhere where communities are under sometimes terrifying pressures.

Such situations give rise to strong differences of view about what is just and right and they bring with them anxiety, pain – and anger. At these times, our bonds of friendship and trust – long in the making – are tested. It is hard to keep communication open and to continue to be willing to be in dialogue but it is vital to do so and to continue to support each other's right to differ in opinion and to be willing to make our case with courtesy and respect for the other.

Likewise, continued care for the safety and security of our different faith communities in the UK must surely be a concern for all of us. We acknowledge fears of those in the Jewish community with the recent sharp rise in anti-Semitic attacks, mirroring fears in the Muslim community following the increase in attacks on Muslims after the murder of Lee Rigby in Woolwich last year.

We note also the helpful statements from a range of faith community leaders and organisations.

Vital work is happening at local and national level to keep channels of communication open and relationships strong. Our thoughts and prayers are also with all seeking to encourage and support this.

The Rt Revd Richard Atkinson OBE, Co-Chair Mr Vivian Wineman, Co-Chair Mr Mohinder Singh Chana, Vice-Chair

Dr Kishan Manocha, Vice-Chair Maulana M Shahid Raza OBE, Vice-Chair Dr Jagdish Sharma, Vice-Chair

A message from the Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs to member bodies of the Inter Faith Network for the UK www.interfaith.org.uk/12aug-message

#### 12 August 2014

#### Dear member bodies,

We wrote to you just over a week ago in the context of the potential impact on inter faith relations in the UK of events overseas at this time, and particularly in the Middle East.

Communities in this country continue to feel and voice tremendous pain about unfolding events. On the hearts and minds of people of different faiths are the sufferings of Christians, Yazidis and others in Iraq – as well as of those in Gaza and Israel, Syria, Libya and a number of other countries and territories.

Some of your organisations have issued statements about the situations there; others are expressing their desire for justice, security, and religious freedom through prayers, vigils, donations to provide badly needed relief, or through other routes.

Extreme actions taken by groupings overseas, such as ISIL, claiming to be in the name of a religion, can sometimes be taken to represent the true face of that religion, fanning flames of prejudice here as well as elsewhere. There is evidence that this is happening. Images of brutal deaths become fused in the minds of some not just with the perpetrators but with the religion in whose name they claim to operate. The work of continued explanation and correction of misrepresentation and misunderstanding through the media and in personal encounter is critically important.

As we said in our message of last Monday, at these times, our bonds of friendship and trust – long in the making - are tested. It is hard but vital to keep communication open and to continue to be willing to be in dialogue. It is likewise vital to stand up for the safety and security of each other's faith communities; to offer, side by side, humanitarian succour to the vulnerable and needy; and to seek ways, whenever this is possible, to find a common voice on human rights and on issues of justice and compassion.

The policy of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, supported and reaffirmed at various points over the years, remains that statements are not made by its Officers directly about overseas events, but only in the context of their impact on inter faith relations in the UK. This is also a policy of some of IFN's member bodies. The National Meeting, 'Tough to Talk?', on handling difficult issues in an inter faith context will provide an opportunity to hear reflections in the light of members' experience in responding here in the UK to overseas issues.

The Rt Revd Richard Atkinson OBE, Co-Chair Mr Vivian Wineman, Co-Chair Mr Mohinder Singh Chana, Vice-Chair

Dr Kishan Manocha, Vice-Chair Maulana M Shahid Raza OBE, Vice-Chair Dr Jagdish Sharma, Vice-Chair

These messages can also be found on the IFN website in the statements and messages subsection of 'Resources': www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/statements-andmessages where IFN's policy on making of statements can also be found.

### STRATEGIC REVIEW AND LOOKING AHEAD

During 2012–13, a Strategic Review was carried out for IFN by a Strategic Review Working Group (SRWG). As noted in the 2012–13 Annual Review, this presented its report and recommendations to the Executive Committee in May 2013 which then brought these to the 2013 AGM and National Meeting in July for comment by member bodies.

As agreed at that AGM the Executive Committee began, at is first meeting of the Autumn, to take forward work on draft strategic priorities for the next three year period, responding to the recommendations in the SRWG's report, and also bearing in mind points offered by member bodies at the National Meeting and AGM. In the light of the Strategic Review and other considerations, the Committee developed a Strategic Plan for 2015 to 2017. This was endorsed by the 2014 AGM.

Ahead of development of the Strategic Plan for the coming period, the Executive Committee prioritised work on a new Membership Admissions Policy (MAP) for IFN.

The Executive Committee established a 'temporary working group on membership' to lead on development of this, drawing on the model which the SRWG had commended for consideration, as well as responses to its report and recommendations at the 2013 AGM. (See under 'network membership' overleaf.)

In the coming year, the Inter Faith Network will be structuring its work around its current strategic priorities, which are to:

- 1. Raise awareness of the importance of interfaith engagement, cooperation and dialogue and be a trusted source of information about this
- 2. Help strengthen and increase opportunities for inter faith learning, dialogue and engagement at every level and help widen participation in these
- 3. Continue to develop IFN's unique linking role and work towards new ways of engaging, including across the nations and regions
- 4. Support faith communities' engagement on relevant matters on a multi faith basis, both with each other and in the public square, and develop opportunities for engagement with issues of living well together in a multi faith society including with contentious and challenging issues
- 5. Help raise awareness about the different faith communities in the UK, including their contribution to society
- 6. Ensure that IFN is sustainable, effective, and able to respond quickly to challenges and change

### NETWORK MEMBERSHIP

A new Membership Admission Policy was developed during 2013-14 which harmonised some of the criteria between the different categories of membership; introduced a new voting mechanism which took greater account of the stake member bodies have in their own category of membership; removed the provisions which had limited eligibility to apply for membership within the national faith community representative body category to organisations drawn from nine world religions; set out a clear process by which applications for membership will be considered, including the establishment of a Membership Subcommittee; and introduced a system by which all bodies are first admitted to 'provisional' membership for a period of 2-3 years before membership is either affirmed or revoked by member bodies in general meeting.

The new Membership Admission Policy was adopted, following discussion, by IFN member bodies at the 2014 EGM and was the basis for the application recommendations considered at the 2014 AGM.

The 2014 AGM, in Birmingham on 29 September, accepted into membership the following organisations under the new Membership Admission Policy:

- · Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Great Britain)
- Druid Network
- North Lincolnshire Multi Faith Partnership
- Pagan Federation
- Spiritualists' National Union
- · Stratford-on-Avon Interfaith Forum.

The AGM noted the withdrawal from IFN membership of the following organisations, which had ceased to operate: Cardiff Interfaith Association; Churches' Agency for Inter Faith Relations in Scotland; Faithnetsouthwest; Liverpool Faith Network; and Minorities of Europe Inter Faith Action Programme; and the withdrawal of Moseley Inter Faith Group in accordance with Article 10 of IFN's Articles of Association.

Following the AGM, IFN had 186 bodies in membership.



### **TRUSTEES**

At the 2014 AGM the Rt Revd Richard Atkinson OBE and Mr Vivian Wineman were elected as Co-Chairs, Mr Mohinder Singh Chana and Maulana Shahid Raza OBE were re-elected as Vice-Chairs for the coming year. Dr Girdari Lal Bhan was elected as Vice-Chair from the Hindu community in succession to Dr Jagdish Sharma; and Ven Bogoda Seelawimala of the Buddhist community was elected as Vice-Chair in succession to Dr Kishan Manocha of the Baha'i community (in pursuance of the relevant requirement for a Vice-Chair appointment to be drawn in rotation from the smaller communities represented within IFN).

The following Committee members retired at the 2014 AGM and did not seek re-election: Dr Manazir Ahsan MBE; Mr Alistair Beattie; Mr John Keast OBE; Mr Derek McAuley; Dr Jagdish Sharma; and Sister Isabel Smyth OBE. In the course of 2013-14 the Revd Bob Fyffe had resigned as Co-Chair and the following Trustees as ordinary members of the Committee: the Revd Peter Colwell; the Revd David Gifford; and Ms Katharina Smith-Müller. All were thanked for their contribution to the work of IFN.

Among those elected as ordinary members of the Committee for 2014-15 were a number of people who were newly elected to the Committee: Imam Sheikh Muhammad Ismail Al-Rashid; Dr Joy Barrow; the Revd James Breslin; Dr Jane Clements; the Revd Prudence Jones; Dr Joyce Miller; Ms Padideh Sabeti; and Dr Maureen Sier.

### **Trustees for 2014-15**

#### **CO-CHAIRS**

The Rt Revd Richard Atkinson OBE Mr Vivian Wineman

#### **VICE-CHAIRS**

Dr Girdari Lal Bhan Mr Mohinder Singh Chana Maulana M Shahid Raza OBE The Venerable Bogoda Seelawimala

#### **HON TREASURER**

Mr Dorab Mistry OBE

Ms Neelam Aggarwal Singh MBE Ms Sughra Ahmed Dr Joy Barrow

The Revd Alan Bayes The Revd James Breslin Dr Jane Clements Ms Varsha Dodhia Acharya Modgala Duguid Rabbi Dr Moshe Freedman The Rt Revd Dr Toby Howarth Imam Sheikh Mohammad Ismail Ms Prudence Jones Mr Ayub Laher Mr Shabbir Lakha Dr Kishan Manocha Rabbi Maurice Michaels Dr Joyce Miller Ms Ravinder Kaur Nijjar The Revd Daniel Otieno-Ndale Mr Nitin Palan Mr Ramesh Pattni Dr Norman Richardson MBE Ms Padideh Sabeti Mr Resham Singh Sandhu MBE Dr Natubhai Shah MBE Dr Maureen Sier **Bessie White** 

#### **Staff**

Dr Harriet Crabtree OBE, Director

Lord Singh of Wimbledon CBE

Mr Ashley Beck, Inter Faith Development Officer

Mrs Hannah Cassidy, PA/Administrator p/t

Ms Salina Hoang, Clerical Assistant (p/t from July to September 2013)

Ms Juwayriyah Badrudin, Clerical Assistant (p/t from May 2014)

Ms Areeba Wajid, (Volunteer from October to December and Project Assistant p/t from December to April)

Mr Ziya Adilov, Bookkeeper and Administrative Assistant (until November 2013)

Part time bookkeeping assistance was provided through a personnel agency (from December 2013)

# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Restricted	Unrestricted	2013 Total	2012 Total
	£	£	£	£
Incoming Resources				
Incoming Resources from generated funds				
Voluntary Income	12,350	287,979	300,329	355,126
Investment Income	_	734	734	1,815
Incoming resources from charitable activities		7,823	7,823	9,699
Total incoming resources	12,350	296,536	308,886	366,640
Resources expended				
Cost of Generating Voluntary Income	505	14,074	14,579	21,173
Charitable Activities				
Consultation, Information and Advice	3,829	83,668	87,497	132,892
Meetings and Conferences	2,519	70,260	72,779	93,821
Publications	741	20,667	21,408	28,423
Research	1,144	31,899	33,043	38,913
Governance Costs	3,612	100,745	104,357	117,968
Total resources expended	12,350	321,313	333,663	433,190
Net outgoing resources				
being net loss for the year	_	(24,777)	(24,777)	(66,550)
Funds brought forward		84,327	150,877	130,802
Total funds carried forward		<u>59,550</u>	59,550	84,327

All the charitable company's operations are classed as continuing. All the charitable company's recognised gains and losses are shown above. The movement on reserves is shown above.

#### **BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2013**

	2013		2012	
	£	£	£	£
Tangible Fixed Assets		6,880		9,715
Current Assets				
Debtors and prepayments	2,376		22,099	
Cash at bank	114,829		140,299	
	117,205		162,398	
Creditors: amounts due within one year	64,535		87,786	
Net Current Assets		52,670		74,612
Net Assets		59,550		84,327
Funds				
Restricted Funds		_		_
Unrestricted Funds		59,550		84,327
Total Funds		59,550		84,327

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to Small Companies. They were approved by the Executive Committee on 2 July 2014 and signed on their behalf by Mr Dorab Mistry OBE, Honorary Treasurer.

Note: The full Statutory Accounts and Trustees Report for 2013 can be accessed on the Charity Commission website.

# MEMBER ORGANISATIONS OF THE INTER FAITH **NETWORK FOR THE UK 2014-15**

#### **FAITH COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE BODIES**

Baha'i Community of the UK

BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha

Board of Deputies of British Jews

British Muslim Forum

**Buddhist Society** 

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

Churches Together in England

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

Council of African and Afro-Caribbean Churches (UK)

**Druid Network** 

General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian

Churches

Hindu Council (UK)

Hindu Forum of Britain

Islamic Cultural Centre

Jain Network

Jain Samaj Europe

Jamiat-e-Ulama Britain (Association of Muslim Scholars)

Methodist Church in Britain

Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board

Muslim Council of Britain

National Council of Hindu Temples (UK)

Network of Buddhist Organisations (UK)

Network of Sikh Organisations (UK)

Pagan Federation

Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations

Spiritualists' National Union

Sri Lankan Sangha Sabha of GB

Vishwa Hindu Parishad (UK)

World Ahlul-Bayt Islamic League

World Islamic Mission (UK)

Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe

#### **EDUCATIONAL AND ACADEMIC BODIES**

Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme

Community Religions Project, University of Leeds

Institute of Jainology

Islamic Foundation

National Association of SACREs

Religious Education Council of England and Wales

Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education

Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter

Wales Association of SACREs

Woolf Institute

#### NATIONAL AND REGIONAL INTER FAITH **ORGANISATIONS**

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum

Interfaith Scotland

Inter-faith Council for Wales/Cyngor Cyd-Ffydd Cymru

Faiths Forum for London

North East Regional Faiths Network

Northwest Forum of Faiths

South East England Faith Forum

West Midlands Faiths Forum

Children of Abraham (Imams and Rabbis Council of the

United Kingdom)

Christian Muslim Forum

Christians Aware Interfaith Programme

**Coexist Foundation** 

Council of Christians and Jews

Council of Dharmic Faiths

East of England Faiths Agency

Hindu Christian Forum

Interfaith Action (INTERACT)

Interfaith Alliance UK

International Association for Religious Freedom

(British Chapter)

International Interfaith Centre

Joseph Interfaith Foundation

Lokahi Foundation

London Society of Jews and Christians

Maimonides Interfaith Foundation

Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby

Religions for Peace (UK)

Scriptural Reasoning

Society for Dialogue and Action

St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace

St Philip's Centre for Study and Engagement in a Multi

**Faith Society** 

Three Faiths Forum

Tony Blair Faith Foundation

United Religions Initiative (UK)

Westminster Interfaith

Women's Interfaith Network

World Congress of Faiths

#### LOCAL INTER FAITH GROUPS

Altrincham Inter Faith Group

Learning Together, Living in Harmony (Aylesbury)

Barking and Dagenham Faith Forum

Barnet Multi-Faith Forum **Bedford Council of Faiths** Birmingham Council of Faiths Blackpool Faith Forum **Bolton Interfaith Council** 

**Bradford Concord Interfaith Society** 

**Brent Interfaith** 

Brent Multi-Faith Forum

Brighton and Hove Inter-Faith Contact Group

Bristol Inter Faith Group Bristol Multi-Faith Forum **Building Bridges in Burnley** Muslim-Christian Forum (Bury) Calderdale Interfaith Council Cambridge Inter-Faith Group

Canterbury and District Inter Faith Action

Cheltenham Inter Faith

Cleveland and Tees Valley Inter Faith Group

Coventry Multi-Faith Forum Crawley Interfaith Network Faiths Together in Croydon Cumbria Interfaith Forum Forum of Faiths for Derby Devon Faith and Belief Forum

**Doncaster Interfaith** 

**Dudley Borough Interfaith Network** 

Eastbourne Faiths Forum Elmbridge Multi-Faith Forum Exeter Faith and Belief Group Gateshead Inter Faith Forum Hampshire Interfaith Network Harrow Inter Faith Council

Hastings and District Interfaith Forum

Hillingdon Inter Faith Network Horsham Interfaith Forum Hounslow Friends of Faith **Huddersfield Inter Faith Council** 

Inter Faith Isle of Man

Inter-faith North/West (Northern Ireland)

Islington Faiths Forum Keighley Interfaith Group Kingston Inter Faith Forum Kirklees Faiths Forum Faiths Together in Lambeth Lancashire Forum of Faiths

Faith in Lancaster

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship

Leeds Faiths Forum Leicester Council of Faiths

Interfaith Forum for Leicestershire Loughborough Council of Faiths

Luton Council of Faiths

Faith Network for Manchester Medway Inter Faith Action Forum Merseyside Council of Faiths Interfaith MK (Milton Keynes) Milton Keynes Council of Faiths Newcastle Council of Faiths Newham Association of Faiths North Herts Faith Forum

North Kirklees Inter-Faith Council

North Lincolnshire Multi Faith Partnership North Staffordshire Forum of Faiths Northampton Inter Faith Forum

Norwich InterFaith Link

Nottingham Inter Faith Council Oldham Inter Faith Forum Oxford Round Table of Religions

Building Bridges Pendle - Interfaith Community Project

Peterborough Inter-Faith Council

Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity

Portsmouth Inter Faith Forum

Preston Faith Forum Redbridge Faith Forum

Rochdale Multi Faith Partnership

Rugby Inter Faith Forum Sandwell Multi-Faith Network

Sheffield Inter Faith

South London Inter Faith Group South Shropshire Interfaith Forum Southampton Council of Faiths Southwark Multi Faith Forum Stafford and District Friends of Faith Stratford-on-Avon Interfaith Forum

Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource Faiths United (Tameside)

Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Group

Torbay Interfaith Forum

Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum

Valleys Faith Forum

Waltham Forest Faith Communities Forum

Wandsworth Multi-Faith Network Warrington Council of Faiths Warwick District Faiths Forum Watford Inter Faith Association Wellingborough Inter Faith Group Welwyn Hatfield Interfaith Group Westminster Faith Exchange

William Campbell-Taylor (City of London Interfaith) Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum

Wisbech Interfaith Forum

Wolverhampton Inter Faith and Regeneration Network

Worcestershire Inter-Faith Forum Wycombe Sharing of Faiths York Interfaith Group

List as at the close of the 2014 AGM

### **SUPPORTERS IN 2013**

The Inter Faith Network for the UK's programme of building good relations between the different faith communities in the UK is funded through support from faith communities, Government, trusts and individuals supportive of its work, as well as through the subscription fees of its member bodies.

A number of the donations made during 2013 were made in response to a special Appeal.

The Trustees of IFN thank most warmly all those who have given financial support during the calendar year 2013 and also those who have given the gifts of time and skills.

#### TRUSTS, FOUNDATIONS AND COMPANIES

Archbishop of Canterbury's Foundation **Bhaarat Welfare Trust** Sternberg Charitable Foundation Mr and Mrs V Wineman Charitable Trust Westminster Foundation

#### **GOVERNMENT FUNDING**

The Inter Faith Network received strategic funding support from the Department for Communities and Local Government and a



Department for Communities and Local Government

project grant towards the 2013 Inter Faith Week report.

#### **FAITH COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS**

Archbishops' Council of the Church of England Baha'i Community of the UK Board of Deputies of British Jews

Golden Tours Foundation (on behalf of the Hindu community)

Hindu Forum of Britain

Institute of Jainology

Islamic Welfare Trust

Jain Samaj Europe

Network of Buddhist Organisations (UK)

Network of Sikh Organisations (UK)

Salvation Army

Scottish Episcopal Church

Sri Lankan Sangha Sabha of GB

**United Reformed Church** 

World Ahlul Bayt Islamic League

World Islamic Mission

Yorkshire Jain Foundation

Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe

#### **OTHER DONORS**

Al-Jamiatul Islamiyah Darul Uloom (Institute of Higher Islamic Education)

Altrincham Interfaith Group

Dean and Canons of Windsor

Hackney Community College

Joseph Interfaith Foundation

Thames Valley Family Group of the Iona Community

Tividale Tirupathi Balaji Temple

Wisbech Interfaith Forum

Zaiwalla & Co Solicitors

The Most Revd Father Olu Abiola OBE

Ms Madeline Clayton

Mr J A Ewan

Mr Sean Finlay

Miss Mehru Fitter MBE

Mr and Mrs Vernon and Margaret Griffiths

Mr William Hopkinson

Dr Ramin Khadem

Dr Kishan Manocha

Mr Dorab Mistry OBE

Mrs Jenny Nicholson

Ms Mehri Niknam MBE

Mr Maurice Ostro OBE Mr Brian Pearce OBE

Mrs Rosalind Preston OBE

Maulana M Shahid Raza OBE

Mr Reynold Rosenberg

Mr Jehangir Sarosh OBE

Mr Ramesh Shah

Dr Nadim Sheikh

Mr Rashid Siddiqui

Ms Clare Salters

Mr David Stevens

The Revd Richard Tetlow

The Revd Canon Michael Wolfe

As well as those who have given but prefer to remain anonymous

Note: IFN's accounts are on a calendar year basis and the support of those who have kindly given in 2014 will be noted in the 2014–15 Annual Review.

# **HELP SUPPORT WORK TO BUILD GOOD INTER FAITH RELATIONS**

The Inter Faith Network for the UK is a registered charity. Its work is funded through support from faith communities, trusts, Government and through donations from donors who can see the significance of its work to promote good inter faith relations in this country.

Donations at all levels are much appreciated and are used carefully and with maximum impact.

If you would like to make a donation to support the work of IFN to develop good inter faith relations in the UK, you can do this by sending a cheque, payable to The Inter Faith Network for the UK, to:

**The Inter Faith Network 2 Grosvenor Gardens** London SW1W ODH

Donations can also be made online at www.interfaith.org.uk/donations or by contacting the IFN office via ifnet@interfaith.org.uk or on 020 7730 0410.

Thank you for your support.

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www.interfaith.org.uk www.twitter.com/IFNetUK www.facebook.com/IFNetUK

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