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Press Release

### **JMI organises Online Lecture on The UN @ 75: Challenges of Sustaining Peace**

The MMAJ Academy of International Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) organised an Online Lecture on the topic “The UN @ 75: Challenges of Sustaining Peace” on 23rd October 2020. Prof. Priyankar Upadhyaya, UNESCO Chair Professor, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) who is known for his work in the field of Peace Research and Peace-building delivered the lecture. He has several publications to his credit including the famous book titled Long Walk of Peace: Towards a Culture of Prevention. This lecture was organized to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee of the establishment of the United Nations Organization (UNO).

Prof. Ajay Darshan Behera, Officiating Director, MMAJ AIS in his introductory remarks welcomed the speaker and underlined the importance of the role of the UN as the world is passing through a great disruption in the midst of a global health crisis. He observed that over a period of time the influence of the UN had diminished, yet it remains a reflection of a commitment to multilateralism.

Prof. Behera recalled the founding principles of the UN – the maintenance of international peace and security and how the UN has played an important role in bringing nations and people together to preserve peace and security and improve lives everywhere. It has not always succeeded. But it has been instrumental in significantly contributing to innovative narratives and discourses on security, sustainability, rights and development in the public domain.

Prof. Priyankar Upadhyaya in his lecture elaborated the context in which the UN came into being. The experience of the functioning of the League of Nations, the predecessor of the UN, provided useful lessons in the formation of the UN. According to Prof. Upadhyaya, the Eurocentric vision of peace dominated in the earlier period of the UN. Its main concerns in the beginning were collective security and prevention of wars. In the Cold War period the UN played a major role in mediating between the super powers and was involved in a big way in armed conflicts occurring in many parts of the world. The involvement of the UN in protracted conflicts evolved into the practice of peacekeeping and the formation of multi-national peacekeeping forces under the overall control of the UN. In this manner the UN contributed significantly in the maintenance of peace in the Cold War as well as in the post-Cold War period.

In the course of his lecture, Prof. Upadhyaya observed that in the context of the collapse of the bipolar world order and the proliferation of conflicts and civil wars, the UN radically redefined the notion of peace as an inclusive process and culture involving civil society. The concept of positive peace emerged as a result of this and put forth the idea that peace-building starts even before the beginning of the conflict. As a step further, the UN proposed that the international community must create the conditions for a peaceful, just and inclusive society free from

violence. It is important to understand that peace-building is not a linear process and it involves many ups and downs. Also the quality of peace certainly matters in which the dignity of people must be respected at all costs.

Prof. Upadhyaya explained the concept of “sustaining peace” at length in his lecture. This notion actually liberated the process of peace-building from the earlier Eurocentric ideas of peace. The linkages between culture and peace-building are taken into consideration very seriously in “sustaining peace”. It accepts the fact that cultures and religions can play significant roles in making and sustaining peace. For that, the awareness and knowledge of the international community regarding cultures and religions must be improved. This will lead to a clear shift from the Eurocentric notions of peace-making. This shift definitely will allow the local/indigenous communities to take ownership of peace processes and evolve new forms of peace-building mechanisms.

Prof. Upadhyaya concluded his lecture on a positive note that the UN is still very young at its platinum jubilee and it has many important roles to play in the future.

Dr. Shahid Tasleem, Associate Professor, MMAJ AIS, proposed a vote of thanks to the speaker and the participants.

**Ahmad Azeem**  
PRO-Media Coordinator

