

Media Coordinator's Office
Jamia Millia Islamia

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Press Release

**Nelson Mandela Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution organizes a
National Conference on *Religious Identity, Pluralism and Peaceful Coexistence in India***

Jamia Millia Islamia's Nelson Mandela Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution, in collaboration with the *Interfaith Foundation India* organized a national conference on *Religious Identity, Pluralism and Peaceful Coexistence in India* on 15th February 2018 at the Conference Hall of Fakhruddin T. Khorakiwala Centre for Information Technology to deliberate on the complex relationship between religiosity, identity and politics in historical and contemporary times; and to analyze the various pluralist traditions in different religions.

Prof. S. M. Sajid, former Pro Vice-Chancellor JMI, reminded the audience that the University was born out of the freedom movement of India and is a site that celebrates its legacy and incessantly strives to preserve the same.

The theme of the first session was “Philosophy, Religion and Peace” and was chaired by Prof. M.M. Verma, President of the Interfaith Foundation of India, New Delhi. Shri John Dayal, the Secretary-General of All India Christian Council stressed upon the contextual examination of religious identity. In presenting his study of heterodox Buddhist philosophy, Dr Ajay Verma analyzed the Buddhist notion of the rejection of metaphysical basis of objective identities for creating cultures of dialogue. Dr Tanweer Fazal's thoroughly analytical paper entitled “*Does Islam Preach Terrorism?*” sought a purposeful analysis that seeks to construct a prognosis cognizant of the temporal aspects of the problem and does not de-historicize Islam and terror like their prevailing conceptualizations. Shri Arif Mohammad Khan concluded the first session by underlining the concept of the universal dignity of mankind in the light of Quran and Sunnah.

The second session was chaired by the eminent legal scholar and author Prof. Tahir Mahmood and its theme was “Pluralism within Indian Democracy.” Prof. Zoya Hasan analyzed the change in the meaning of secularism in the light of contemporary electoral politics in India and its repercussions in the domain of pluralist practices and minority rights. Prof. Meenakshi Gopinath highlighted the efforts of women in peacebuilding and their marginalization. Furthermore, she sought to foreground the role of socialization of women in bringing a different sensibility to the peace table that offers the possibility of moving from “dialogue to ‘multi-logue’ and sustainable campaigning for constructing structural peace. The second session was concluded by Prof. Anand Kumar who emphasized on the relevance of studying Gandhi as a ‘pragmatic-idealistic’ manual for positive and sustainable nation-building.

The Student's Symposium, the last session of the conference, was chaired by Prof. Tasneem Meenai, Director of the Nelson Mandela Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution JMI, during which students from several departments and centres of the University presented their research

papers to an engaging audience. Prof. Meenai expressed the hope that India's rich and diverse cultural and religious heritage could be harnessed towards promoting peaceful coexistence.

The conference concluded with the resolve of both the organizers and the participants towards a long-term and sustained discourse in the direction to bring about meaningful and sustainable change.

Prof. Saima Saeed
Media Coordinator, JMI



ZOYA HASAN

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MEENAKSHI GOPINATH

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Nelson Mandela Centre for Peace and Conflict
Resolution, JMI
AND
INTERFAITH FOUNDATION INDIA, NEW DELHI
NATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON
RELIGIOUS IDENTITY, PLURALISM AND PEACEFUL
COEXISTENCE IN INDIA
(15 February 2018)


JOHN DAYAL


M. JYOTI


RAJ VERMA


[Speaker's Name]


[Photographer]

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Speaker at podium

