

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES UNIT

## INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Interfaith matters and religious issues have always had a special place in PASSIA's regular meeting program, and having realized the increasing need for better understanding between the various religious communities, in early 1998, PASSIA decided to establish a Religious Study Unit devoted to inter-religious dialogue and activities. The unit's work focuses on the role and significance of religion for different people and tries to promote understanding of, and respect for, others in order to address this religious diversity. Subjects discussed include the causes and consequences of problems within and between the established religious communities and activities that contribute to the elimination of misconceptions and stereotypes. The PASSIA Religious Studies Unit combines the following activities, some of which are held 'off the record' to allow for the frankest exchange and debates possible:

Workshops and seminars are encounters on a specific topic, involving either members of the three monotheistic religions or only representatives of the Christian or Muslim community. These workshops are intended to help participants to find common ground and to allow different religions to work in harmony and on an equal footing.

Participation in conferences, here and abroad, that deal with aspects of religion, belief and interfaith relations, or foster an open and free debate on religious issues and aspects as they concern the people in the Holy Land are also a fix part of PASSIA's Religious Studies Unit.

In addition, meetings and brainstorming sessions are organized, involving members of PASSIA's Religious Studies Unit and local and foreign counterparts/project partners from the three monotheistic religions with the aim of fostering coordination of ongoing and future activities. Some of the dialogues sessions take place with representatives from one or more of the three monotheistic religions, which usually include a guest speaker presenting a certain topic related to inter- or intra-religious issues followed by a discussion.

Documentation and publication of research studies or proceedings from meetings/seminars are also part of the Religious Studies Unit's activities.

## ■ **Conferences & Workshops**

**16 April 2013, PASSIA, Jerusalem**

**Topic: The Schools of Qur'anic Exegeses: "Between Mind and Simulation"**

**Participant(s): Khalil El Assali, Journalist; Sheikh Ekrima Sa'id Sabri, Chairman of the Supreme Islamic Council; Mustafa Abu Zahra; Abdul Rahman Abad; Mazen Ahram, Imam; Firas Kazaz; Hisham Khatib, Tour Guide; Scout Ratner, Student; M'aen 'Adeleh, School Teacher; Sawsan Safadi; Zaqaria El Qaq; Eiad Muhamad El Abbasi; Haj Abed Abu Diab; Ali Abu Sheikha, Advisor on Jerusalem Affairs; Hisham Hidmi.**



**24 April 2013, Best Eastern Hotel, Ramallah**

**Topic: 4<sup>th</sup> Conference on Islam in Contemporary Palestine: Repercussions from the Arab Spring**

**Organizer: PASSIA.**

**Speakers:** Dr. Ghassan Khatib, Vice-president for Advancement, BZU; Dr. Abdul Raheem Al-Shaikh, Professor at the Dep. of Philosophy and Cultural Studies, BZU; Dr. Raed Fathi, Professor of Islamic Jurisprudence, Islamic Sciences College, Umm Al-Fahm; Fr. Rafiq Khoury, Professor at the Latin Seminary, Beit Jala; Hani Al-Masri, Director of the Palestinian Center for Policy Research and Strategic Studies-Masarat; Saed Sharf, MA of Shari Judicial System and Lecturer at Ar-Rawda College, Nablus.

**Participants:** Ahmad Haj Ali, PLC member; Antie Ralle, FES , Jerusalem; Sung-Jun Yeo, Head of Representative office of Korea, Ramallah; Dr. T. Jayasinghe, Representative of Sri-Lanka, Ramallah; Ayman Daraghmeh, PLC member, Ramallah; B.S. Mubarak, Head of Representative office of India; Allam Jarrar, PNGO; Dr. Nafeth Nazzal, Bethlehem University; Laia Nazzal, Bethlehem University; Dr. Saed Taha, Director, Al-Dawa Research Department, Ministry of Waqf & Religious Affairs, Ramallah; Tugba Arstan, Vice Consul, Turkish Consulate General, Jerusalem; Dr. Yasser Manasrah, Union of Health Work Committees, Ramallah; Yvonne Moynihcn; Salah Ghanem, Student, Birzeit University ; Qais Abdul Karim, General Secretary, Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP); Abdul Rahim Mallouh, Head, Arab Affairs Department, The Palestine Liberation Organization, Ahlam Samarah, Dalia Association; Jahir Shamali, Heyad News; Ahmad Musa, Student; Maisaa Salem, Student; Zainah Khilfeh, Student; Sabri Al-Zeer, Student; Helga Boughartin, Professor, Birzeit University; Rand Abed Rabbo; Student; Junya Matsuura, Head, Japan Representative Office, Ramallah; Dou'a Hantouli, Dalia Association, Ramallah; Daoud Abu Sir, PLC Member, Ramallah; Dr. Issam Muslat, Nawafeth Center for Studies and Research, Ramallah; Samer Irshaid, Researcher; Jorg Khocha, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS); Sawsan Safadi, Public Relation of Education; Adib Al-Atrash, Student; Maher Awawdeh, Ministry of Information; Ruba Asad, Student, Birzeit University; Manal Zeer, Student, Birzeit University; Fatina Wathaefi, Fatina Abdul Halim, Student, Birzeit University; Dr. Ibrahim Abu Salim, Madiha Abu Salim; Uraib Abdel Samad, Student, Birzeit University; Mahmoud Abu Omar, Student, Birzeit University; Awad Mashal, Nizar Ramadan, PLC member, Hebron; Awni Fares, Researcher; Nadim Al-Jamal, Dr. Mariem Saleh, PLC Member, Ramallah; Ghassan Abdullah, Center for Applied Researcher in Education, (CARE); Rami Mehdawi, Mabel Grossi; Lara Hourani; Programme Coordinator, Heinrich Boll Stiftung (hbs), Ramallah; Jumana Jaouni, Policy Officer, Netherland Representative, Ramallah; Omar Shehadeh, Al-Hadaf Magazine, Ramallah; Jihad Draid, Ueli Staeger, Intern, FES; Ethan Morton-Jerome; Ayat Omran, Coordinator, Dalia Association, Ramallah; Daoud Al-Ghoul, Muna Mansour, PLC Member, Nablus; Ahmad Abbas, Ministry of Planning & Administrative Development (MOPAD), Dr. Mahmoud Zeyad; Montaser Hamdan, Student, Birzeit University; Thaer Midhat, Student, Birzeit University; Husam Shuaiby; Fajer Harb, Carter Center, Ramallah; Adnan Sharawi, UN; Itedal Ashhab; Petr Tuma, Deputy, Czech Republic Office, Ramallah; Yasser Abu Ghazaleh, Shatha Abdul Samad, Program Manager, FES, Jerusalem; Sulaiman Abu Dayyeh, Programm Manager, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Liberty (FNF), Basia Nino, Development Policy Expert, Representative Office of Poland to the PA.



## PROGRAM

9.00-9.15

### **WELCOMING ADDRESSES**

Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi, *Head of PASSIA*

9.15-9.30

### **OPENING ADDRESS**

## **SESSION I: THE ARAB SPRING AND ISLAM**

9.30-10:00

### **The Arab Spring: More Democracy or Islamic Awakening?**

Dr. Ghassan Khatib, Vice-president for Advancement, BZU

10.00-10:30

### **The Knowledge of Revolution**

Dr. Abdul Raheem Al-Shaik, Professor at the Dep. of Philosophy and Cultural Studies, BZU

10.30-11.00

### **Palestinian Youth between Socioeconomic Transformations, Social Media and Muslim Traditions**

Panel Discussion

11.00-11.30

Open Discussion

<b>SESSION II: ISLAM IN CONTEMPORARY PALESTINE</b>	
11.30-12.30	<p><b>Christian-Muslim Relations in Palestine</b>            Dr. Raed Fathi, Professor of Islamic Jurisprudence, Islamic Sciences College, Umm Al-Fahm            Fr. Rafiq Khoury, Professor at the Latin Seminary, Beit Jala</p>
12.30-13.00	<p><b>The Hamas Elections and Prospects for Unity and Reconciliation</b>            Hani Al-Masri, Director of the Palestinian Center for Policy Research and Strategic Studies- Masarat</p>
13.00-13.30	<p><b>The Role and Position of Women in the Arab Spring</b>            Panel Discussion</p>
13.30-14.00	Open Discussion
14.00-15.00	Lunch
<b>SESSION III: ISLAMIC DISCOURSE IN WAKE OF THE ARAB SPRING</b>	
15.00-15.30	<p><b>The Elections Victory of the Islamists in Egypt and Tunisia and its Implications for the Palestinian Case</b>            Dr. Basem Zibidi, Professor of Political Science, BZU</p>
15.30-16.00	<p><b>The Issue of Jerusalem on the Agendas of Arab/Islamic States</b>            Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi, Head of PASSIA</p>
16.00-16.30	<p><b>Religious Discourse and Youth Political Activism: Incitement or Deterrent?</b>            Saed Sharf, MA of Shari Judicial System and Lecturer at Ar-Rawda College, Nablus</p>
16.30-17.30	Open Discussion

**26 April 2013, Al-Quds University-Hind Al-Husseini Women College**

**Topic:** Dawning Souls, A Performance of Islamic and Christian religious songs, by Ud Al-Nad Choir, Conductor Katy Jarjoura, followed by an Islamic-Christian dialogue with Muslim and Christian clergies  
**Organizer:** PASSIA

**Participant(s):** Hanan Khamis, Samih Sliman, Ulrich Nitschke, Director, GTZ; Steve Hudson; Danae Hudson; Maen Adila, Teacher; Mary Haddad; Nisreen Al-Aref, FES; Jamal Al-Aref, Director, ANERA; Odette Azar Shomar, Head of Public Relations, Holy Family Hospital, Nazareth; Ghada Bolus, Tourist Guide; Qassem Khatib, Journalist; Diana Safieh, Travel Agent; Wolfgang Schmidtm, Lutheran Church of the Redeemer; Maysoon Maslohi; Abdallah Zu'bi; Ayman Abu Rawz, Cameraman; Muhammed Abu Khdair; Al-Quds newspaper; Hatem Khweis, Press/Public Relations; Abdel Karim Silawi, Hadeel Zumut; Ratib Abudallah.



**13 May 2013, PASSIA, Ramallah**

**Topic: Arab Women in the Islamic Movement**

**Speaker:** Dr. Islah Jad, Director, Institute of Women's Studies Center, Birzeit University

**Participant(s):** Shojaa Ayaseh, Lawyer, Young Palestinian Lawyer Association ; Nida' Ibrahim, Journalist; Maisaa Salem, Student, Birzeit University ; Awni Fares, Student, Birzeit University; Omar Rahal, Director, Human Rights and Democratic Participation Centre – SHAMS; Abir Misleh, Welfare Association; Rose Shomali, Researcher; Mahmoud Qura'an, Engineering; Muna Mansour, Palestinian Legislative Council, Nablus; Khuloud Masri, Former Municipal Council Member, Nablus; Issa Samandar, Popular Development Center, Ramallah; Heyam Mattar, International Relations Commission, FATEH Movement, Ramallah.



**14 May 2013, Beit Ibrahim (Lutheran Church of the Redeemer), Beit Jala**

**Topic: Interfaith Dialogue**

**Speaker:** Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi, Chairman of PASSIA; Dr. Mitri Raheb, Director of The International Center of Bethlehem (Dar Annadwa Addawliyya); Bishop Munib Younan, President of the Lutheran World Federation.

**Organizer:** Lutheran Church of the Redeemer.





**15 May 2013, PASSIA, Jerusalem**

**Topic: Religion, Conflict and Dialogue**

**Participant(s): Students of Intercultural Relations, Stockholm School of Theology, Lars Lingirs, Director, Stockholm School of Theology; Mats Palmborg; Margareta Palmborg; Ulrika Lindskog, Maria O'Donnell; Helena Dahlin Kasse; Inger Gillerstrand; Amalia Kristohersson; Sven Halvardsson; Kjell-Ake Nordqvist; Anders Gezelius Hagglund; Kristin Hagegard.**



**9 September 2013, Notre Dame, Jerusalem**

**Topic: Introduction to the thesis of the Sephardim Chapter of Neturei Karta**

**Participant(s): Haron Ben-Baruch**



**19 November 2013, Best Eastern Hotel, Ramallah**

**Topic: Political Islam at the Crossroads**

**Participant(s):** Amelie Phillipson, Student; Omar Shihadeh, Al Hadaf Magazine; Saji Khalil, Refugee Affairs Department; Maria Hoenig, Student; Meike Behrends, Student; Andelica Fulkeling, Student; Dr. Ali Sabri Alloush, Al Quds Open University; Nadim Al Jamal, Media; Samia Hilelh, Birzeit University; Marian Abdel Baky, FES-Cairo; Mustafa Kemal Sahin, Vice Consul, Turkish Consulate; Fayzeh Zalatimo, Medical Tech; Emmanuel Seitelbach, Student; Britt Ziolkowski; Erlene Hess Johnsen, Student; Rihab Bsiso, In'ash Al-Usra Society; Mohammad Khalifeh; Haitham Arar, Member of Fatah Revolutionary Council; Naser Hidmi, Activist; Awni Fares, School Teacher; Hiam Mattar, International Relation Dept.; Marieke Gathesmann, GIZ; Fouz Rihan, Researcher; Majida Masri, D.D.L.P; Oud 'Asi, Holy Land Trade and Investment; Issa Samandar; Fadel Hamdan; Fida Shihadeh; Fajr Harb; Mohammad Kurtaz, TIKa; Mazen Jabari, YDD; Lubna Abdul Hadi, Birzeit University; Ziad Abu Zayyad, PIJ; Judith Welf, Researcher; Rami Mehelawi; Abdullah Abdullah, Foreign Affairs; Shifa Jayousi, Program Officer, UN; Dot Powillard Nicolas, Researcher, French Institute; Mohammad Jihad; Omran Shuiti; Mivan Lay Exeler, Coordinator Civil Peace Services; Le. Goelles, Civil Peace Worker; Shatha Abu Samad, Program Manager FES; Philaipy Salzmänn; Ali Sheeha; Ayman Daragmeh, Legislative Council; Jorig Knocha, KAS; Anas Salous, Project Coordinator GIZ; Murad Bustami, Human Rights Officer; Maysoun Kaddoumi, PLO International Relation Department; Dr. Yousef Shihadeh, An-Najah University, Nablus; Dr. Hafez Shaheen, An-Najah University, Nablus; Wafa Saadeh, MA student; Elsa Grugeon, PhD Candidate; Nehaya Mohammad, Head, Palestinian Women Development Society, An-Najda; Richard Asteel; Adnan Al-Sharawi, UNSCO; Fahmi Abed; Aseel Sabbah, Graphic Designer; Loay Fares; Olaf Boehnke, Director, European Council on Foreign Relations, Berlin; Sameer Abu Aisheh, An-Najah University; PASSIA Team.



### PROGRAM

**9:30-10:00 Welcoming Address**

*Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi, Chairman of PASSIA*

*Ingrid Ross, Director of FES, Jerusalem*



**10:00-11:15**

**SESSION I: Global and Local Manifestations of Moderate and Radical Islam**

**Chair: Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi, Chairman of PASSIA**

**Islam’s Ideological Divide between Orthodoxy/Tradition and Reform/Modernity**

Dr. Abdel Rahman Abbad, Secretary General for the Muslim Scholars and Ulama in Palestine



**Formation of Political Islam (the Turkish “Model”, Muslim Brotherhood, Salafism, Shia, Hizbullah, Hamas, Al-Qaeda)**

Dr. Khaled Hroub, Coordinator of the Cambridge Arab Media Project, University of Cambridge and Professor of Middle Eastern Studies at Northwestern University in Qatar



**11.30-12.45**

**SESSION II: Islamist Political Parties & the Dimensions of Transition in the Post-Arab Spring Era**

Chair. Dr. Abdel Rahman Abbad, Secretary General for the Muslim Scholars & Ulama in Palestine

**Islamism and the Arab Spring: Dilemmas of Transition & Structure**

Dr. Khaled Hroub, Coordinator of the Cambridge Arab Media Project, University of Cambridge and Professor of Middle Eastern Studies at Northwestern University in Qatar

**The Role of the Media in Influencing Arab Public Opinion**

Hani Al-Masri, Director of the Palestinian Center for Policy Research and Strategic Studies - Masarat



**14:00-15.30**

**SESSION III: The Arab Spring: Islamist Forces vs. ‘Others’**

Chair: Dr. Khaled Hroub, Coordinator of the Cambridge Arab Media Project, University of Cambridge

Fr. Dr. Peter Madrous, Professor of Theology, Latin Patriarchate, Jerusalem

Dr. Raed Fathi, Professor of Islamic Jurisprudence, Islamic Science College, Umm Al-Fahm

Dr. Nabil Sha’ath, General Commissioner, Fateh Commission of International Affairs





**14:00-15.30**

**SESSION IV: Middle East Stability and the Role of External Forces'**

Chair: Ingrid Ross, Director of FES, Jerusalem

**Regional Powers (Iran, Turkey, and Israel)**

Dr. Asad Ghanem, Professor of Political Science, School of Political Science, University of Haifa



**The International Community (USA, EU, and Russia)**

Olaf Boehnke, Head of Berlin Office, European Council on Foreign Relations

■ **Meetings**

**9 February 2013, PASSIA, Jerusalem**

Topic: **The Case for the Aqsa Mosque Today**

Participant(s): Sheikh Azzam Al-Khatib, General Director of the Islamic Waqf



**6 March 2013, PASSIA, Jerusalem**

Topic: **The Pope's Resignation**

Participant(s): Latin Patriarch, Jerusalem

**11 March 2013, PASSIA, Jerusalem**

Topic: **A Study on Al-Aqsa Mosque**

Participant(s): Kursad Mahmat, Chief Representative; Rami Sublaban, Assistant Project Manager, Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency.



**16 April 2013, PASSIA, Jerusalem**

**Topic: The Schools of Qur'anic Exegeses: "Between Mind and Simulation"**

**Participant(s):** Khalil El Assali, Journalist; Sheikh Ekrima Sa'id Sabri, Chairman of the Supreme Islamic Council; Mustafa Abu Zahra; Abdul Rahman Abad; Mazen Ahram, Imam; Firas Kazaz; Hisham Khatib, Tour Guide; Scout Ratner, Student; M'aen 'Adeleh, School Teacher; Sawsan Safadi; Zaqaria El QaQ; Eiad Muhamad El Abbasi; Haj Abed Abu Diab; Ali Abu Sheikha, Advisor on Jerusalem Affairs; Hisham Hidmi.



**2 August 2013, Jerusalem**

**Topic: Promoting Mutual Respect through Education**

His Holiness Pope Francis' Message on the occasion of the Holy Month of Ramadan

**9 November 2013, PASSIA, Jerusalem**

**Topic: Islamic Waqf and the Challenges Laying Ahead**

**Participant(s):** Sheikh Azzam Al-Khatib, Director, Islamic Waqf Offices

