



Zayed Award for Human Fraternity

Indonesia's Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah organizations recognized for their contributions to humanity and to international peace and security

“The largest Islamic organization in the world, Nahdlatul Ulama, plays a major role in spearheading global peace and diplomatic efforts”

~ Zayed Award for Human Fraternity

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates — On 5 February 2024, the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity — a joint initiative of the Holy See, Egypt's al-Azhar University, and the Government of Abu Dhabi — presented the 2024 Zayed Award for Human Fraternity to Indonesia's Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah organizations for their “respective roles in the humanitarian field, as well as their peacebuilding efforts at the national, regional, and international levels.”

The humanitarian award is named after Shaykh bin Sultan Al Nahyan, founder of the United Arab Emirates, and the [Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together](#). His Holiness Pope Francis and His Eminence Shaykh Ahmed al-Tayyeb of al-Azhar signed the *Document on Human Fraternity* on 4 February 2019 in Abu Dhabi, during the first-ever Papal visit to the Gulf region.

Prior recipients of the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity include Pope Francis and Shaykh Tayyeb; UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres; King Abdullah and Queen Rania of Jordan; and the Roman Catholic grassroots organization Sant'Egidio.

In addition to Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, recipients of the 2024 Zayed Award for Human Fraternity include Professor Sir Magdi Yacoub — a world-renowned cardiac surgeon and founder of the Magdi Yacoub Heart Foundation, which offers free-of-charge medical services to underprivileged and vulnerable peoples, particularly in Africa — and Sister Nelly Leon Correa — President and co-founder of Fundación Mujer Levántate, which provides care to women in prison and those recently released, supporting their reintegration back into their communities as productive members of society.

In his acceptance speech, Nahdlatul Ulama Chairman KH. Yahya Cholil Staquf said:

Ladies and gentlemen,

Five years ago today, here in Abu Dhabi, His Holiness Pope Francis and His Eminence Grand Shaykh Ahmed al-Tayyeb of al-Azhar made history by signing *A Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*.

This marvelous event — which many compared to the legendary meeting of Saint Francis of Assisi and Sultan al-Malik al-Kamil over 800 years ago — was met with great appreciation by Nahdlatul Ulama leaders and followers alike.

For us in Nahdlatul Ulama, the *Document on Human Fraternity* gave an international voice to the founding aspiration of our movement, immortalized by KH. Hasyim Asy'ari in his opening address to the inaugural meeting of Nahdlatul Ulama in 1926. Kyai Hasyim said, and I quote:

The unity of human hearts, and minds, as people help one another achieve a common goal, is the most important source of human happiness and the strongest factor inducing human beings to love one another.

Because of this principle, many nations have become prosperous. Slaves have become rulers, fostering widespread development. Nations have become advanced; the rule of law enforced; transportation networks constructed, enabling economic and cultural exchange to flourish. Countless other benefits arise from social unity, for social unity is the highest virtue and most powerful instrument for promoting the common good.

Two decades after KH. Hasyim Asy'ari's inaugural address, his noble aspiration for human fraternity was articulated in the national creed of the newly independent Republic of Indonesia: *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, which means Unity Amid Diversity.

At the 27th Nahdlatul Ulama National Congress held in Situbondo, East Java, in 1984 Kyai Haji Achmad Shiddiq, Chairman of the Nahdlatul Ulama Supreme Council, further developed these aspirations into a theological framework now called the “Trilogy of Fraternity”: the fraternity of Muslims (*ukhuwwah islamiyyah*); the fraternity of those who dwell within a single nation (*ukhuwwah wataniyyah*); and universal human fraternity (*ukhuwwah basyariyyah*).

The theological and conceptual framework of the *Document on Human Fraternity* thus reflects the aspirations both of Indonesia's founders and Nahdlatul Ulama leaders over the past century. Just three weeks after its signing in Abu Dhabi, the *Document on Human Fraternity* was officially adopted by Nahdlatul Ulama at its 2019 National Conference of Religious Scholars.

Nahdlatul Ulama is therefore honored to receive the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity 2024, and, as General Chairman, I pledge that we will continue to champion human fraternity worldwide. I would thus like to take this opportunity to invite people of goodwill of every faith and nation to join us in building a global movement to foster the emergence of a truly just and harmonious world order founded upon respect for the equal rights and dignity of every human being.

The International Day of Human Fraternity was established by the United Nations General Assembly on 21 December 2020, with resolution 75/200, as a way to promote greater cultural and religious tolerance. With this resolution, which was co-facilitated by Egypt and the United Arab

Emirates, the United Nations invited all its member states and other international organizations to observe the International Day of Human Fraternity annually on 4 February.

His Holiness Pope Francis, who met with the Zayed Award recipients at the Vatican in January 2024, sent a message with “heartfelt greetings and sentiments of warm friendship to all present for this year’s presentation of the Zayed Award.” Read by the Prefect of the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue, His Eminence Cardinal Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot, the message from Pope Francis said:

In a special way, I extend congratulations to the three joint recipients of this year’s Award: the Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah Organizations from Indonesia, Dr. Magdi Yacoub from Egypt and Sister Nelly Leon from Chile. That these honourees have been selected from a great number of other candidates is yet another sign that the values celebrated and promoted on this day are resonating throughout our human family.

At the same time, however, we cannot fail to recognize the effects of an absence of fraternal solidarity being felt all too intensely by men and women everywhere and by our natural world. The negative impact of environmental destruction and social degradation continues to cause immense suffering for a vast number of our brothers and sisters around the globe.

How timely, then, to draw attention to the principles that can guide humanity through the dark shadows of injustice, hatred and war into the brightness of a world community marked by those values that we see manifest in the varied efforts of this year’s awardees. These include tolerant love for those who are different, a genuine care for the poor and sick, especially children, and a desire to assist the rehabilitation of prisoners and their reintegration into society. All of the joint recipients, in their own distinctive ways, cast important light on the path to greater social solidarity and fraternal love.

Yet no individual or human effort alone can advance progress on this journey. Indeed, the Zayed Award itself stands as a reminder that “without an openness to the Father of all, there will be no solid and stable reasons for an appeal to fraternity... For ‘reason, by itself, is capable of grasping the equality between men and of giving stability to their civic coexistence, but it cannot establish fraternity’” (*Fratelli Tutti*, 272). It is my prayer, then, that all who participate in the International Day [of Human Fraternity] may be encouraged not only by the example of the awardees’ good works but also by the religious insights and beliefs that inspired in them such generosity of heart.

Finally, in addressing those associated with the Zayed Award, I likewise extend my greeting and prayerful good wishes to each and every one of our brothers and sisters, especially those who are suffering in any way. May they know the closeness and concern of people of faith around the world. With these sentiments and with great affection, I willingly invoke upon all an abundance of divine blessings.

From the Vatican, 4 February 2024

The 2024 Zayed Award ceremony closed with a song performed by Tokio Myers and the Abu Dhabi Youth Choir, which may be viewed by [clicking this link](#).

[View the entire Zayed Award ceremony.](#)