

Lecture on Overcoming Global Crises

Ban Ki-moon elected to the Nelson Mandela Fellowship

SG Ban Ki-moon, 8th Secretary-General of the United Nations, has been elected as the Centre's Nelson Mandela Fellow. This distinguished visiting fellowship is awarded to senior figures from academia and international life who uphold President Mandela's legacy through their work to address issues of global importance. Ban Ki-moon's dedication to promoting international dialogue and solidarity is closely aligned with the values both of President Mandela and of the Centre itself.

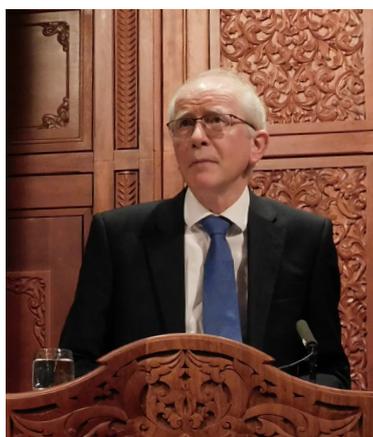
Ban Ki-moon visited the Centre on 11 March, where he took part in a ceremony marking the conferral of his fellowship and delivered a public lecture entitled 'How to Overcome Global Crises: Climate Change and Pandemics'. He spoke about how the Covid-19 pandemic and the climate crisis have shone a light on our fundamental interconnectedness: these global crises can only be addressed effectively through global partnership and cooperation. A breakdown of multilateral systems risks hindering our capacity to develop the requisite global solutions. Meanwhile, a lack of political will risks



Ban Ki-moon with the Director during the fellowship ceremony wasting the resources already available to mitigate the harm done by the pandemic and by climate change – be it in relation to administering vaccines or to reducing carbon emissions. Ban Ki-moon also emphasised that the empowerment of women and young people is vital to achieving our collective goals concerning sustainable development and international peacekeeping.

(continued on page 2)

President of the UK Supreme Court lectures on Commerce and the Law



Lord Reed during his lecture

On 21 January the Rt Hon Lord Reed of Allmuir, President of the UK Supreme Court, gave a lecture on the subject of 'Commerce and the Law'. Having served as a justice in courts in the UK and abroad, Lord Reed gave a survey of the significance of the law

to international commercial life. He noted the UK's status both as one of the world's major financial centres and as a leading global centre for legal services – thanks to a high level of international confidence in the quality

and independence of the judiciary.

Lord Reed foregrounded how trust is vital to commerce. Within geographically concentrated and socially homogeneous groups, trust is often established through informal mechanisms such as social pressures and reputation. But in a world in which markets have become increasingly diversified, such mechanisms are an inadequate basis of trust: in this globalised context, the legal systems become the cornerstone for the functioning of commerce. Furthermore, the ever-modernising world in which international commerce operates means that the law itself must be flexible and responsive to change. He concluded by stressing that the rule of law in the UK, and the respect in which it is held globally, should not be taken for granted. The lecture was chaired by the Rt Hon Baroness Hale of Richmond, who is the Sultan Azlan Shah Fellow at the Centre.

Mandela Fellow delivers lecture

(continued from page 1)

...Quality education for all is the first step to ensuring that younger generations are equipped to deal with the world's most pressing challenges. Invoking the powerful concept of global citizenship, he concluded by imploring the many young people present to raise their voices and to 'prioritise cooperation, empathy and action in defence of our planet'. These sentiments were reaffirmed in the vote of thanks delivered by the Rt Hon Lord Wood of Anfield, Chair of the UK United Nations Association.

The lecture attracted an audience of more than 400 people, including senior academics, representatives from several diplomatic missions, and many students – filling the Auditorium, as well as two additional lecture spaces to which it was live-streamed.

Interfaith Relations

The exploration of themes concerning the relations between different faiths and traditions remains an important focus for the Centre. On 9 February, Dr Edward Kessler, Founder Director of the Woolf Institute in Cambridge, spoke on 'Abrahamic Interpretations of the Sacrifice of Abraham's Son'. Dr Kessler has published widely on interfaith relations, and has contributed to several public policy reports concerning diversity and religion in the UK.

International Contacts

Brunei Darussalam

In February, the Centre welcomed HE The High Commissioner for Brunei Darussalam, First Admiral (Rtd) Pengiran Dato Seri Pahlawan Norazmi bin Pengiran Haji Muhammad. The Centre has longstanding links with



HE The High Commissioner for Brunei Darussalam

Brunei, including the administration of the Sultan of Brunei International Prize. This visit provided the opportunity to discuss and further strengthen this close relationship.

ICESCO

A visit in November by Dr Salim M. AlMalik, Director-General of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, served to build upon the close relationship between ICESCO and the Centre. A Memorandum of Understanding signed by the two parties outlined further opportunities



Dr Salim M. AlMalik with the Director

for partnership that will uphold a mutual commitment to meeting the educational needs of future generations, and to promoting a nuanced understanding of Islamic civilisation.

Qatar

The Centre hosted a visit in December by HE Dr Khalid Al-Khater, Director of the Policy and Planning Department in Qatar, accompanied by a delegation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The visitors were introduced to the Centre's varied activities and research, and discussions took place regarding possible areas for academic exchange and collaboration.



HE Dr Khalid Al-Khater with the Director and Dr Basil Mustafa

Uzbekistan

Academic connections in Uzbekistan were reinforced by a visit to the Centre in December by the Deputy Foreign Minister, Mr Gayrat Fazilov. Additionally, the Centre has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Imam Maturidi International Scientific Research Centre, which ratifies the two centres' shared dedication to cooperation and exchange, with a focus on research in the sciences. Two new visiting academic members from Uzbekistan have also recently arrived at the Centre: Dr Shukurillo Umarov and Mr Barot Amonov.



Mr Gayrat Fazilov

New initiatives on Islamic Law and Human Development

The Centre has strengthened its relationships with several academic institutions in Saudi Arabia – enabling further scholarly exchange, with particular focus on two areas of interest to the Centre: Islamic Finance and Islamic Law.

In November, the Centre hosted a visit by Dr Mohammed Nasseef, Dean of the Islamic Economics Institute at the King Abdulaziz University. This provided an opportunity to discuss possible collaboration in research on Islamic Finance and economic development.

The Centre carries out a wide range of academic activities in this area, including regular seminars, lectures and conferences on relevant subjects.

In April, the Director met with representatives from the Prince Mohammad bin Fahd University. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed, attesting to a mutual interest in cross-cultural dialogue. Discussion took place concerning opportunities for cooperation on academic activities relating to Islamic Law – an area of growing interest to the Centre.

Chief of the Air Staff discusses Diversity and Inclusivity in the RAF

On 1 March the Centre hosted a visit by the head of the Royal Air Force, Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Wigston. Centre members were joined by a delegation from the RAF to welcome the Chief of the Air Staff. Sir Michael led an interactive session with an audience of Centre scholars, university students and other young people from the local community. He spoke about the ways in which the RAF aims to create an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere for people

of all religions and cultural backgrounds. He also received a tour of the Centre and learned about its work in promoting dialogue and understanding across cultural boundaries.



Sir Michael and Lady Wigston with the Director

Project on Public Health, Science and Technology Lectures on Science and Society

In Hilary Term, a series of public lectures and seminars were held as part of the Centre's multi-disciplinary research project on 'Public Health, Science and Technology in Muslim Societies', led by Professor Sir David Clary and Professor Shahid Jameel.

On 10 February, the Director of Science at the Science Museum Group, Dr Roger Highfield, lectured on 'How to Engage with Millions of People'. Reflecting on his current role, and on his career as an author and journalist, Dr Highfield foregrounded the importance of rendering science accessible and engaging to a wide and diverse audience. Public engagement sees considerable growth when there is a shared spirit of inquiry – as has been observed during the distinctly collective experience of the Covid-19 pandemic. He noted the public's 'insatiable appetite to understand' key scientific questions concerning the coronavirus and vaccine development. This pertinent focus on critical issues within public health was also developed during a seminar on 2 March by Professor Sanjoy Bhattacharya, Co-Director of the Centre for Global Health Histories at the University of York. Professor Bhattacharya delivered a talk on the subject of 'Smallpox, Polio, and Muslim "Resistance": Reconsidering Trust in Global Health'.

On 3 March, Professor Peter Edwards, Emeritus Professor of Inorganic Chemistry at the University of Oxford, lectured on the

decarbonisation of fossil fuels. Professor Edwards reflected on his work as Co-Director of the KACST-Oxford Petrochemicals Research Centre (KOPRC), a joint initiative by the University of Oxford and the King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology in Saudi Arabia. He gave an expert survey of the challenges and advances involved in this project's ambition to develop a circular carbon economy, whereby CO₂ is utilised as a carbon source. He emphasised that whilst the continued shift towards renewable energy is undoubtedly crucial, the application of CO₂-mitigation technology to the continued use of fossil fuels could also play a transformative role in our ongoing energy transition.

It is such discussions of scientific issues of critical importance to societies around the world that are at the heart of the Centre's research project. A particularly vital focus is that of the relationship between science and society. Another seminar that paid particular attention to this theme was delivered on 16 February by Mr Ehsan Masood, a senior editor at science journal *Nature*, where he oversees coverage of science news from Africa and the Middle East. His seminar was entitled 'Science, Governments, Nationalism and the Search for Equity'. The Centre will host more lectures in Trinity Term: on subjects ranging from the science of nanopores, to the use of artificial intelligence in healthcare, to the role of epidemics as a catalyst for social change.

Trinity Term 2022 Seminars

The following seminars will take place at the Centre during Trinity Term:

Professor Mohammad Talib (OCIS), 'Islam and the Strategic Global Rivalry over Energy: Illustrations from Afghanistan'.

Justice Imman Ali (Supreme Court of Bangladesh), 'Islam and Child Rights: The Role of Religion in the Development of the Law'.

Professor Wael Hallaq (Columbia University), 'Truth, Knowledge and Power in Islam before the Nineteenth Century: A Heuristic Perspective on the Separation of Powers and the Rule of Law'.

Dr Aymen Shihadeh (SOAS), 'Caliph, Sultan and Scholar: The Political Career of Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d. 1210)'.

Mr Simon Collis (former British Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, 2015–20), title TBC.

Professor Kabiru Chafe (Ahmadu Bello University), 'The Quest for Reform of Islamic Systems of Education in Nigeria'.

Professor Salma Damluji (American University of Beirut), 'The Reconstruction of the Awliya Domes in Hadramut, Yemen (2019–21)'.

Book Seminar

Professor Wael Hallaq (Columbia), 'Orientalism and the Philology of the New Human'.

Seminars on Power dynamics in the Middle East

Several recent Centre seminars have explored pertinent themes relating to changes in the political landscape of the Middle East. Professor Adeel Malik, Globe Fellow in the Economies of Muslim Societies at the Centre, gave a seminar entitled 'Crony Capitalism in the Middle East: What Do We Know and Why Does It Matter?'. Eminent historian and political scientist Dr Thomas Hegghammer (Norwegian Defence Research Establishment, Oslo) spoke on the subject of 'Islamic State's Curious Disinterest in Jihad'.

Focus on the Middle East The Arab Spring Ten Years On

On 23 February Sir Geoffrey Adams, former British Ambassador to Egypt (2018–21), delivered an engaging and interactive seminar entitled 'Reflections on the Arab Spring Ten Years On'.

Speaking from his 42 years' experience in the Diplomatic Service – including a number of roles in the Middle East – he offered a range of insights into the lasting impacts in the region a decade after the protests. He affirmed that an understanding of the issues contributing to and arising from the Arab Spring is essential to attaining a deeper understanding of the Arab world more broadly. It is also imperative that our discussion of these issues remains mindful of the history of Western intervention in the region. Looking to the future, Sir Geoffrey foregrounded the importance of human and social development as a means to gain and

maintain lasting stability in the region – with a particular focus on respecting human rights and freedoms, consolidating the rights of women, and supporting access to

education. The introduction and vote of thanks were given by the Centre's Registrar, Mr Richard Makepeace, who also served in HM Diplomatic Service.

This examination of themes relating to the Middle East will continue next term, with a seminar by Mr Simon Collis (former British Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, 2015–20).



Sir Geoffrey Adams

If you wish to unsubscribe from this Newsletter, please email: ocisnews@oxcis.ac.uk

OXFORD CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC STUDIES

Marston Road, Oxford, OX3 0EE, UK

Tel: +44 1865 278730 Fax: +44 1865 248942 Email: islamic.studies@oxcis.ac.uk

www.oxcis.ac.uk