

# DEFENDING INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: PARTNERSHIP AND ACTION

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*June 25, 2018  
10:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.  
Pontificia Università della Santa Croce*



**U.S. Embassy to the Holy See**



**SANT'EGIDIO**

# EVENT PROGRAM

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- 10:15 AM U.S. Commitment to International Religious Freedom  
**The Honorable Callista L. Gingrich**, U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See
- 10:25 AM Victim Impact Statement  
**Ms. Salwa Khalaf Rasho**, Yazidi Community Activist  
  
Panel Moderator: **Ms. Victoria Alvarado**, Senior Advisor for International Religious Freedom, U.S. Department of State
- 10:35 AM Panel I: Approaches to Protecting and Empowering Religious Minorities in the Middle East  
**His Eminence Cardinal Leonardo Sandri**, Prefect of the Congregation for Oriental Churches  
**Mr. Mark Riedemann**, Director of Public Affairs, Aid to the Church in Need
- 11:45 AM Coffee Break
- 12:10 PM Victim Impact Statement  
**Ziear Khan**, Rohingya Community Activist
- 12:20 PM Panel II: Promoting Religious Freedom through Dialogue and Sustainable Actions  
**His Excellency Cardinal-designate Joseph Coutts**, Archbishop of Karachi, Pakistan  
**Monsignor Khaled Akasheh**, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue  
**Professor Marco Impagliazzo**, President, Community of Sant'Egidio
- 1:20 PM Closing Remarks  
**His Eminence Pietro Cardinal Parolin**, Vatican Secretary of State
- 1:30 PM End of Symposium; Light Lunch Served

# SPEAKERS

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## AMBASSADOR CALLISTA L. GINGRICH

**U.S. Ambassador Callista L. Gingrich** is the former President and CEO of Gingrich Productions, a multimedia production and consulting company. She is the author of the “Ellis the Elephant” children’s American history series and co-author of “Rediscovering God in America.” Mrs. Gingrich is also the producer of several historical documentary films. She has sung for two decades with the Choir of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. Previously, Mrs. Gingrich served as a congressional aide in the U.S. House of Representatives and as the President of The Gingrich Foundation, which supports charitable causes. Ambassador Gingrich was recognized with an honorary doctorate from Ave Maria School of Law in Naples, Florida in 2018.



## MS. SALWA KHALAF RASHO

**Ms. Salwa Khalaf Rasho** is a twenty-year-old human rights activist and Yazidi genocide survivor from Sinjar, Iraq. In August 2014, ISIS attacked Sinjar, taking thousands of women captive, including Salwa. She was enslaved for five months, until she escaped to join her family in a refugee camp in Duhok. Salwa now lives in Germany, where she continues to advocate on behalf of victims of the Yazidi genocide, in order to bring justice against ISIS and raise awareness about the sufferings of ethnic and religious minorities in Iraq and Syria. In 2016, Salwa spoke to Parliament in United Kingdom and pleaded for help for the Yazidi people still under the domination of ISIS. Her requests include providing asylum to minorities, establishing a safety zone for minorities in her homeland of the Ninevah Plains, and supporting the women and children victims of ISIS violence.

# SPEAKERS

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## MS. VICTORIA ALVARADO

**Ms. Victoria Alvarado** is a senior adviser at the U.S. State Department's International Religious Freedom Office (IRF), located in the Bureau for Human Rights, Democracy and Labor (DRL). Previously, Ms. Alvarado was Deputy Chief of Mission to the U.S. Embassy to the Vatican. She has dedicated much of her diplomatic career to religion and foreign policy issues and civilian security. Ms. Alvarado's Washington assignments included IRF director, adviser for the Bureau of Conflict Stabilization Operations, director for Central America and Caribbean Affairs at the National Security Council, and Nicaragua desk officer. She has also served overseas in Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Iraq, Nicaragua, Venezuela, and Indonesia. Ms. Alvarado is the recipient of an award for heroism and a multiple recipient of State Department superior and meritorious honor awards. She is an experienced negotiator with cultural literacy in Latin America and parts of Asia and the Middle East. She has fluent Spanish, a working knowledge of Italian, and some knowledge of Indonesian and Dari. Ms. Alvarado is a graduate of Mills College and the University of Southern California. She holds a War College diploma and Master's degree in Strategic Security Studies from the National Defense University. Her thesis assessed partnerships between governments and religious leaders to counter violent extremism.



## H.E. CARDINAL LEONDARDO SANDRI

**His Eminence Cardinal Sandri** was ordained a priest in 1967 and holds a doctorate in canon law from the Pontifical Gregorian University. In 1971, he entered the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy and in 1974 he served at the nunciature in Madagascar. From 1977 to 1989, he worked at the Secretariat of State. In 1989, he was posted to the United States as counsellor at the nunciature and served as papal representative at the Organization of American States. In 1991, he became regent of the prefecture of the Pontifical Household and in 1992, assessor of the section for General Affairs of the Secretariat of State. He was appointed titular Archbishop of Cittanova and Apostolic Nuncio in Venezuela in 1997. He was ordained a bishop in 1997. In 2000, he was appointed Apostolic Nuncio in Mexico and later, on September 16, Substitute for General Affairs of the Secretariat of State. In 2007, he succeeded Cardinal Ignace Moussa I Daoud as prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches.

# SPEAKERS

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## MR. MARK RIEDEMANN

**Mr. Mark Riedemann** is the Director of Public Affairs and Religious Freedom for the international Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need, a Pontifical Foundation supporting the Catholic faithful and other Christians where they are persecuted, oppressed or in pastoral need. Concurrent to this, Mark is the Managing Director of Catholic Radio and Television Network (CRTN) a production facility specialized in the production of documentaries, as well as the host of a weekly TV and radio interview program called "Where God Weeps." Mark is also the founder of an international Catholic program distribution network CRTN.org, co-founder of SIPCATV (a distribution network of Catholic programming for continental Latin America), and co-founder of Blagovest Media (a production and distribution network of Catholic and Orthodox television programming for Russia).



## MR. ZIEAR KHAN

**Mr. Ziear Khan** has been working in the charity sector for over a decade now. During this time he has been on a number of field visits including disaster zones like Pakistan (South Asian Earthquake) Philliphines (Typhoon Haiyaan) as well as ground-breaking work supporting victims of Acid Violence im south east asia. He has delivered aid in Jordan, Turkey and India as well as long term sustainable development projects in Tanzania. Some of Ziear's proudest moments include working in regions of religious conflict during visits to Bangladesh, Myanmar, Central Africa Republic and Cameroon. His passion for this work recently included hosting an event in partnership with Birmingham City Council, the second largest local authority in Europe, to raise awareness of the various genocides and atrocities have taken place across the globe; where survivor stories were shared to bring to life the traumatic impact of dehumanizing a race(s). As Director of Fundraising and Communciation for a number of charities and a free lance consultant Ziear has led teams/campaigns Which have resulted in raising millions of pounds each year for charitable causes.

## SPEAKERS

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# H.E. CARDINAL- DESIGNATE JOSEPH COUTTS

**His Excellency Cardinal-Designate Joseph Coutts** was born in Amritsar, in what is now northwestern India, in 1945. He attended seminary in Karachi, Pakistan, and was ordained in 1971. He completed his studies in Rome and then served as professor of philosophy and sociology at Christ the King Regional Seminary, Karachi. In 1988 he was appointed bishop of Hyderabad, eventually moving on to the bishopric of Faisalbad before being appointed Archbishop of Karachi in 2012. Cardinal-Designate Coutts is the longtime chairman of Caritas Pakistan, directing relief efforts after the 2005 earthquake. He served as president of the Pakistan Catholic Bishops' Conference from 2011 to 2017. In 2018, Pope Francis announced he would make Archbishop Coutts a Cardinal on June 28.



# MONSIGNOR KHALED AKASHEH

**Monsignor Khaled Akasheh** was born in Karak, Jordan. After studying in the elementary school of the parish in his native city, he entered the Seminary of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem at Beit Jala, Palestine, in 1966, where he continued his preparatory and secondary studies. After finishing the required philosophical and theological studies, he was ordained a priest in 1978 in Amman, Jordan. From 1978 until 1982 he served as vicar in the Latin parish of Madaba, Jordan. He was then appointed to the Latin Patriarchal Seminary, where he worked until 1993. From 1993 to 1994 he prepared his doctoral thesis in Rome, obtaining a Ph.D. in Biblical Studies from the Pontifical Lateran University. He also obtained a Licentiate from the Pontifical Institute for Arabic and Islamic Studies, where he later taught for some years. In 1994 Msgr. Akasheh was asked to join the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (Vatican City) to work in the section for dialogue with Muslims, later becoming "Bureau Chief for Islam." He is Secretary of the "Commission for Religious Relations with Muslims," at the Pontifical Council. Additionally, he coordinates the permanent dialogue committees with the Muslim partners of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.

# SPEAKERS

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## PROFESSOR MARCO IMPAGLIAZZO

**Professor Marco Impagliazzo** is Professor of Contemporary History at the University for Foreigners Perugia. He has been Chairman of the University Board since 2014 and President of the Community of Sant'Egidio since 2003. In 2003 he was awarded the National Minturnae Prize for essays, and his book on the Armenian massacre. In 2011 he received the Hrant Dink Journalistic Award for freedom of information. In 2012 he was conferred the Ducci Peace Prize for the promotion of dialogue among religions and cultures. Since 1987 he has been among the organizers of the International Meetings of Prayer for Peace of the Community of Sant'Egidio. From 2012 to 2013 he was advisor for religious affairs for the Italian Minister of International Cooperation and Integration Policies. His specialization is the Catholic Church in the 19th and 20th centuries and, more generally, religion in Europe and the relations between Christians, Jews and Muslims in the Mediterranean area in contemporary times. He has devoted particular attention to the events of Algeria from the end of the French colonization to the time of independence. In the framework of his studies on the history of the Mediterranean, he focused on the "Armenian issue" in the Ottoman Empire during World War I. His recent studies have focused on the contemporary history of Rome, from a religious and civil perspective, and the Pontificate of John Paul II. His studies have also focused on issues connected to immigration and integration.



## H.E. CARDINAL PIETRO PAROLIN

**His Eminence Cardinal Pietro Parolin** was ordained a priest in 1980. In 1983 he entered the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy and entered the diplomatic service of the Holy See in 1986. In 1986 he obtained a degree in canon law at the Pontifical Gregorian University. In 2002 he was appointed Undersecretary of the Section of the Secretariat of State for Relations with States. He is an expert in matters concerning the Middle East and has worked specifically to build up and reinforce relations between the Holy See and Vietnam. In 2008 he led the delegation that took part in the work of the Permanent Bilateral Commission between the Holy See and the State of Israel. On several occasions he has acted as spokesman for the Apostolic See expressing its wish to work with international organizations to safeguard the basic rights of the person, including religious freedom. In 2009 he was appointed Apostolic Nuncio to Venezuela and was elevated to dignity of Archbishop with the titular Episcopal See of Acquapendente. He received his episcopal ordination in 2009. In 2013 Pope Francis appointed him Secretary of State. Member of the Council of cardinals established to advise Pope Francis in the government of the universal Church and to study a plan for revising the Apostolic Constitution on the Roman Curia, 'Pastor Bonus'. He was created and proclaimed Cardinal by Pope Francis in 2014.

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