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Seeking to accomplish 'impossible dream' Photo: Sandy Livak



Kiev, Ukraine. First such meeting in country of former Soviet Union Photo: Yosef Jackson

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## Jewish, Muslim teens meet in Kiev

**More than 70 young leaders from 25 countries demonstrate that new generation of Muslims and Jews can overcome decades of mutual fear and build a brighter future for both communities, conference's organizers say**

Ynetnews

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The largest-ever gathering of Muslim and Jewish students and young professionals convened last week in Kiev, Ukraine.

According to organizers, more than 70 young Jewish and Muslim leaders from 25 countries met to demonstrate that a new generation of Muslims and Jews can overcome decades of mutual fear and demonization and build a brighter future for both communities.

The second annual Muslim-Jewish Conference is acting as the first such meeting in a country of the former Soviet Union. The event took place with the support of the Foundation for Ethnic

Understanding (FFEU) and the Ukrainian Jewish Committee, with the President and Chairman of FFEU, Rabbi Marc Schneier and Russell Simmons, serving as patrons of the event.

Participants hailed from diverse countries including Pakistan, India, [Lebanon](#), [Israel](#), Saudi Arabia, [Egypt](#), Nigeria, Austria, Germany, Poland, France, Canada and the United States.

The Kiev conference followed a series of Europe Day events that took place across the continent in May, under the aegis of FFEU and the World Jewish Congress, in which prominent Muslims and Jews in nine European countries vowed to stand together against the rise of Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and xenophobia.

According to Schneier, who also serves as vice president of the World Jewish Congress, "The Kiev conference, coming on the

### Special Visit

#### NY Catholic, Jewish, Muslim cops tour Holy Land / Reuters

Police officers go on first of what they hope will be annual visits to Israel, Palestinian territories to get to know each others' religions – and each other – better

[Full story](#)

heels of our successful efforts to build a Muslim-Jewish alliance in Europe, offers the opportunity to bring together some of the most outstanding Muslim and Jewish leaders in their 20s and 30s for five days of sustained dialogue.

"These young adults, future leaders and opinion shapers in their respective countries, are seeking to accomplish what many of their elders erroneously assume to be an impossible dream – stepping beyond non-communication and estrangement to connect with each other."

### **Building ties of friendship and trust**

Ilja Sichrovsky, a 29-year-old native of Vienna who serves as secretary-general of the Muslim-Jewish Conference, said from Kiev that "the young Muslims and Jews, who are traveling to Kiev from around the world to connect with each other, are committed to surmounting the barricades between our respective communities and building ties of friendship and trust.

"Together, we are living proof that, despite the conventional wisdom, it is not impossible to overcome borders and psychological barriers to connect with each other. We have only to reach out and begin working together for a better future."

Participants in  
the conference

took part in sessions touching on a variety of issues including confronting Islamophobia and anti-Semitism; principles for productive Muslim-Jewish dialogue; being loyal citizens while maintaining a proud religious identity; using social media in interfaith dialogue; and sharing collective memories and comparative identities.

The conference concluded by issuing a united call to action, urging young Muslims and Jews around the world to reject the siren calls of extremism and hatred and come together to build ties of friendship and trust.