

UPF Ireland Forum Recalls Struggles but Commits to Peace

Colm O Cionnaith
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Dublin, Ireland – UPF-Ireland marked the UN International Day of Peace 2025 with its annual Peace Road Walk on September 21, 2025. Heavenly fortune smiled from above, as forecasts of rain did not materialize. Instead, the day was balmy and the short walk was very pleasant, from Unity House Peace Embassy in North Great Georges Street to the Great Famine memorial at Custom House Quays.



Prayers were offered by representatives of the Church of Ireland, Catholic, Hindu and Evangelical Christian faiths, to commemorate those who died due to the Great Famine of 1845-1852, and reflect on the legacy of those who escaped this fate through emigration, especially to the Americas, Britain, Australia and New Zealand.

After the walk a sumptuous lunch was provided, with Indian food donated by Mini India proprietor and veteran peace ambassador **Mr. Sudhansh Verma**, along with other dishes lovingly prepared by peace ambassadors and volunteers.

The afternoon forum began with uplifting and poignant music from **Mr. Bernard Naughton**, followed by a speech by **Mr. Sylvain Mangoni Kezir** from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Mr. Kezir is a scholar and artist who uses dance therapy to support mental health and foster cultural exchanges between asylum seekers and host communities. He shared his experiences and vision for the world with a message of forgiveness, especially to those who hail from lands ravished by war and famine, invoking the example of Nelson Mandela's peaceful embrace of his oppressors which brought healing to his nation. He concluded with a call to action.

The next speaker was **Rev. Adza Mould** from River South FFWPU Community Church in London. Rev. Mould described his experiences growing up as the son of Ghanaian and Irish parents, and the effect this had on him spiritually and culturally. Rev. Mould said that famine, population displacement and emigration need to be addressed and expressed the hope that Africa, for example, might one day be a place people migrate to instead of from.

Following this was an insightful presentation by **Mr. Gleann Doherty**, a tour guide and historian from Derry City in Northern Ireland. His tours of the city include sites where protesters were killed on Bloody Sunday in 1972, including his father, Patrick Doherty, who died when he was just 7 months old. He also described the situation of those who perished, survived and emigrated during the worst years of the famine, as well as putting it into a European and political context.



After a short break for refreshments and a further musical interlude from Mr. Naughton, the audience heard from Mr. Sudhansh Verma about the recent attacks on Indian people in Ireland. He said it is a tiny minority engaging in racist violence, and called for better policing to prevent such attacks. On a lighter note, Mr. Verma talked about the kinship between India and Ireland, including the similarities between their tricolor national flags.



Ms. Marisa Goldstone then spoke, delighting the assembly with her *joie de vivre* and her plea that we all respect one another regardless of skin color or national origin, seeing each other as brothers and sisters.



Next, **Mr. Stanley Nwaneri** spoke about his work in advocating for migrant rights and empowering newcomers to aspire to stability and happiness. He said he had never experienced racism since arriving in Ireland from Nigeria; on the contrary he was offered work and a place where he could raise his family, pursue his life and career goals, and find happiness. He stressed the importance of a positive attitude as the key to success.



The program was brought to a close by **Mr. Colm Ó Cionnaith**, secretary general of UPF-Ireland. He thanked all participants, and encouraged everyone to work more closely with fellow peace ambassadors to expand the reach of the work started by co-founders Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon.

Mr. Ó Cionnaith called on UPF-Ireland President **Pastor Youngil Ely Loew** to say a few words about the plight of UPF's 82-year-old co-founder Dr. Moon, who has been unjustly detained along with other religious leaders by the authorities in South Korea, as part of a politically motivated investigation by the special prosecutor there, following on from the crisis that continues after martial law was declared in December, 2024 due to leftist activists' obstruction of government functions.

Pastor Loew called on all assembled to sign a public petition and put the weight of UPF-Ireland and its peace ambassadors behind the campaign to end religious persecution in Korea, Japan and worldwide. Mr. Ó Cionnaith then closed the forum.