Introduction

Interfaith matters and religious issues have always had a special place in PASSIA’s regular meeting program, and having realized the increasing need for better understanding between the various religious communities, in early 1998, PASSIA decided to establish a Religious Study Unit devoted to inter-religious dialogue and activities. The unit’s work focuses on the role and significance of religion for different people and tries to promote understanding of, and respect for, others in order to address this religious diversity. Subjects discussed include the causes and consequences of problems within and between the established religious communities and activities that contribute to the elimination of misconceptions and stereotypes.

The PASSIA Religious Studies Unit combines the following activities, some of which are held ‘off the record’ to allow for the frankest exchange and debates possible:

**Coordinating Meetings and Briefings**: Meetings and brainstorming sessions involving members of PASSIA’s Religious Studies Unit and local and foreign counterparts/project partners from the three monotheistic religions with the aim of fostering coordination of ongoing and future activities.

**Dialogue Sessions and Roundtables**: Meetings with representatives from one or more of the three monotheistic religions, which usually include a guest speaker presenting a certain topic related to inter- or intra-religious issues followed by a discussion.

**Seminars and Workshops**: Encounters on a specific topic, involving either members of the three monotheistic religions or only representatives of the Christian or Muslim community. These seminars and workshops are intended to help participants to find common ground and to allow different religions to work in harmony and on an equal footing.

**Conferences**: Participation in conferences, here and abroad, that deal with aspects of religion, belief and interfaith relations, or foster an open and free debate on religious issues and aspects as they concern the people in the Holy Land.

**Publication**: Documentation and publication of research studies or proceedings from meetings/seminars.

Activities of the Religious Studies Unit in 2004 were all attended by Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi, Head of PASSIA; they included the following (presented in the following order: date; place; topic; speaker; participants):
Coordinating Meetings and Briefings

15 January 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

**Topic**: The PLO & Hamas - Two Visions  
**Participant(s)**: Jeffrey Beals, Political Officer, US Consulate General, Jerusalem.

28 January 2004, Bishop Residence in St. George's Cathedral, Jerusalem

**Topic**: The Wall and the Israeli Separation Plan.  
**Participant(s)**: The Most Reverend & Right Honorable Dr. Rowan Williams, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury; the Right Reverend Riah Abu El-Assal, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem; ‘Azmi Bishara, Member of the Knesset; Isam Makhoul, Member of the Knesset; Simon McDonald, Ambassador, British Embassy, Tel Aviv; Dr. John Jenkins, Consul General, British Consulate, Jerusalem; Mahdi Abdul Hadi, PASSIA.

29 January 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

**Topic**: The PLO and Hamas - Two Visions  
**Participant(s)**: Hanlie Booysen, South African Representative Office, Ramallah.

12 February 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

**Topic**: The Political Agenda of the PLO and of Hamas  
**Participant(s)**: Jumana Jaouni, Political and Press Officer, British Consulate General, Jerusalem

17 March 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

**Topic**: World Council of Churches Statement on Israel’s Separation Barrier and Land Annexation in the Palestinian Territories  
**Participant(s)**: Salpy Eskidjian, WCC Executive Committee, Geneva

24 March 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

**Topic**: Implications of the Assassination of Sheikh Yassin  
**Participant(s)**: Keijo Ruokoranta, Head, Finland Representative Office; Jarno Syrjälä, Regional Manager, Unit for the Middle East and North Africa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Terhi Heinonen, Program Officer, Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

11 May 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

**Topic**: Muslim-Christian Relations in Palestine  
**Participant(s)**: A Delegation the Swedish Theological Institute (STI), Lund University, Sweden, Ann-Sofie Söderström, Student; Hanna Holender, Student; Aasulv Lande, Professor; Annette Oderwall, Student; Linda Foleback, Student; Anita Karlsson, Student; Sten Alsvall, Student; Anders Blomquist, Chaplain at STI; Magnus Persson, Student; Anna Ekstrom, Student; Jonathan Strömböck Sandsten, Student; Krell Jonasson, Jerusalem; Gunnel Arlin, Journalist; Jonna Hennig, Student.

29 July 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

**Topic**: Issues Related to Al-Aqsa Mosque  
**Participant(s)**: Adnan Husseini, Director, Islamic Waqf, Jerusalem

9 August 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

**Topic**: Holy Places in Jerusalem  
**Participant(s)**: Rabbi Edward Miller, Author, USA
24 August 2004, Ambassador Hotel, Jerusalem (Working Dinner)

**Topic:** Non-Violence Thesis

**Participant(s):** Dr. Arun Ghandi, M.K, Gandhi Institute for Non-Violence; Palestinian Campaign for Freedom and Peace.

6 September 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

**Topic:** Interfaith Dialogue

**Participant(s):** Imam Abduljalil Sajid, Muslim Council for Religious and Racial Harmony, Brighton Islamic Mission, UK.

9 September 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

**Topic:** Religious Dialogue in Jerusalem – Problems and Prospects

**Participant(s):** David Rosen, Rabbi; Rafiq Khoury, Priest; Mustafa Abu Sway, Professor, Al Quds University; John Bell, Visiting Researcher, University of Toronto, Canada; Michael Bell, Academic, Senior Scholar for Diplomacy, Canada; Michael Molloy, Visiting Researcher, University of Toronto, Canada.

October 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

**Topic:** Religious Issues

**Participant(s):** Rev. Julie Brenton Rowe, Communication Assistant to the Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jerusalem; Dennis Frado, Director, Lutheran Office for World Community, New York; Rev.Dr. James Vigen, International Relations and Human Rights, Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs, Washington DC

17 November 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

**Topic:** Dialogue on Holy Places

**Participant(s):** Bawa Gain, General Secretary, World Council of Religious Leaders, New York.
Dialogue Sessions and Roundtables

17 March 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: The Islamic View on the Issue of Weapons of Mass Destruction
Speaker: Sheikh Jamil Hamami, Lecturer, Al-Quds University
Participant(s): Jamal El-Aref, Deputy, ANERA; Walid Assali, Lawyer; Mohammed Nusseibeh, Islamic Higher Council; Jumana Jauni, Political Officer, British Consulate; Mufti Ekrima Sabri, Mufti of Jerusalem and Palestine; Mahdi Abdul Hadi, PASSIA.

13 April 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: Jesus in the Christian and Muslim Faiths
Speaker: Dr. Maroun Lahham; Dr. Abdul Rahman Abbad
Participant(s): Ibrahim Sha’aban, Lawyer; Sheikh Mohammed Hussein, Islamic Waqf; Mohammed Jadallah, Doctor; Abed Abu Diab, Member of Labor Union; Adnan Al-Husseini, Director, Islamic Waqf; Sheikh Jamil Hamami, Al-Quds University
28 April 2004, PASSIA, Ramallah

**Topic:** Aspects of Holiness & History in Islam

**Speaker:** Sheikh Bassam Jarrar, Head, Noon Center for Quranic Studies, Ramallah

**Participant(s):** Amer Arouri, Field Worker; Tareq Hamida, Noon Center; Basem Bassouma, Noon Center; Idrees Al-Hajjah, Trader; Shadad Said, Trader; Issa Wadi, Noon Center; Muhsen Sinokrot, Sinokrot Food Company; Imad Al-Qadi, Teacher; Majed Saqer, Imam (Mosque); Raed Saqer, Trader; Khaled Sawalha, Teacher; Jamil Hamami, Al-Quds University; Ahmad Nader, Diplomat; Mahdi Abdul Hadi, Sana' Shannak, PASSIA.

26 May 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

**Topic:** “Ijtihad” In Islam

**Speaker:** Mohammed Sheikh Ali, Lecturer at the Faculty of Quranic and Islamic Studies, Al-Quds University

**Participant(s):** Musa Dweik, Dean, School of Law, Al-Quds University; Jamil Hamami, Lecturer, Al-Quds University; Ibrahim Sabri, member, Shari’a Appeal Court; Yousef Abu
Sneineh, Imam, Al-Aqsa Mosque; Mohammed Nusseibeh, Engineer; Adnan Husseini, Director, Islamic Waqf; Sael Sheikh Ali, Al-Furqan School; Ahmad Abu Lafi, Lecturer, Al-Quds University; Mohammed Jadallah, Physician; Mohammed Hussein, Islamic Waqf; Mahdi Abdul Hadi, Sana’ Shannak, PASSIA.

17 July 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

**Topic:** “Jesus Christ: The Second Coming” - An Islamic Perspective

**Speaker:** Sheikh Yusef Abu Sneineh; Dar Al-Hadith, Al-Aqsa Mosque

**Participant(s):** Engineer Adnan Husseini, General Director of the Jerusalem Islamic Waqf; Mohammed Abu Ghazaleh, Electric Company; Muezz Nashashibi, Engineer; Samer Nusseibeh, Engineer; Mohammed Saleem Ali, Teacher;
Ahmed Abu Lafi, Lecturer, Al-Quds University; Sayel Sheikh Ali, Al-Furqan Schools; Ibrahim Sabri, Appeal Court Member; Sheikh Ekrima Sabri, Mufti of Jerusalem & Palestine; Ishaq Al-Qutub, Professor, Al-Quds University.

22 July 2004, PASSIA, Ramallah

Topic: Islamic Culture and the Palestinian Society
Speaker: Jamal Bawatneh; Dar Al-Fatwa and Islamic Research Studies, Ramallah
Participant(s): Idrees Al-Hajeh, Retailer; Abdul Rahman Naser; Rima Merriman, Communications Specialist; Lily Habash, Advisor, Prime Minister’s Office, Ramallah; Orayb Najjar, Associate Professor, Communications; Rasem Kamal, Rule of Law Specialist, USAID; Faisal Awartani, CEO, Alpha International, Ramallah; Ahmad Bawatneh, Student; Hasan Fayyad, Head of Research and Translation, Negotiation Department, BirZeit University; Sheikh Mohammed Hasan Amro; Ismail Talahme, Engineer; Sheikh Jamil Hammami, Al-Quds University
30 November 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

**Topic:** **Euthanasia:**
**between Shari’a Law and Medical Perceptions**

**Speakers:** Dr. Hani Abdeen, Dean, Faculty of Medicine, Al-Quds University; Dr. Musa Al-Basit, Lecturer, Faculty of Da’wa and Principles of Religion, Al-Quds University

**Participant(s):** Mohammed Abu Ghazaleh, Services Director, Electric Company, Jerusalem; Bishop Munib Younan, Evangelical Lutheran Church, Jerusalem; Dr. Mustafa Abu Sway, Al-Quds University; Mohammed Salim Ali, Lecture, Faculty of Quranic and Islamic Studies, Al-Quds University; Dr. Musa Dweik, Dean, Faculty of Law, Al-Quds University; Sheikh Jamil Hamami, Lecturer, Al-Quds University; Elise Aghazarian, Hayat Alami, Sana Shannak, PASSIA.
28 December 2004, PASSIA, Ramallah

**Topic:** The Islamic Concept of Truce (Hudna) and Its Implications for the Palestinian Struggle

**Speaker:** Sheikh Hassan Yousef

**Participant(s):** Hazem Kawasmi, Economist; Jamil Hamami, Lecturer; Holger Tillmann, German Representative Office; Maysoon Ramahi, Al-Khansa Women Association; Rami Hussein, Hussein-Hussein; Samir Qirreish, Hussein-Hussein; Jamal Bawatneh, Mufti, Ramallah; Shaheer Ahmad, Teacher; Mohammed Turman, Deputy, Ramallah Waqf; Bassem Amriyeh, Ramallah Waqf; Shadid, Avocit.

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Seminars and Workshops

16 August 2004, PASSIA, Ramallah

**Topic:** The Friday Sermon (Khutba) between Religious Narrative and Social Issues

**Speakers:** Dr. Ibrahim Abu Salem, Dr. Ismail Nawahdah, Aziz Kayed

**Participant(s):** Sheikh Ikrima Sabri, Mufti of Jerusalem and Palestine; Issa Wadi, Imam, Abu Obaida Mosque; Nasser Ed-Din Sayyed Ahmed; Imam, Al Rahman Mosque; Assem Sayyed Ahmed, Imam,

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29 September 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

**Topic:** Religious Teachings

**Speaker(s):** Dr. Ahmed Fahim Jabir, Dean of Faculty of Arts, Al-Quds University; Dr. Mohammed Abdeen, Assistant Prof., Al-Quds University

**Participants:** Hasan Baraghiti, Al-Aqsa Secondary Religious School for Boys; Imad Abu Libdeh, Islamic Waqf, Jerusalem; Ahmed Al-Kurd, Islamic Waqf, Jerusalem; Dr. Sheikh Ekrima Sabri, Mufti of Jerusalem and Palestine; Sheikh Ibrahim Sabri, Appeal Court, Jerusalem; Riyad Khwais, Al-Iman Secondary School for Boys; Yusef Al-Ozbaki, Al-Iman Secondary School for Boys; Sayel Sheikh Ali, Al-Furqan Islamic School; Hasan Al-Qiq, Engineer, Head of Industrial Secondary School- Al-Yateem Al-Arabi Committee; Walid Salem, Director, Panorama Center; Samia Khoury, Sabeel; Walid Assali, Lawyer; Mohammed Sheikh Ali, Teacher; Sheikh Mohammed Hussein, Al-Aqsa Mosque; Dr. Mohammed Ghosheh, Head Islamic Research and Heritage Revival Instaution, Jerusalem; Ula Hab Rumman, Al-Iman Secondary School for Girls.
26 October 2004, PASSIA, Jerusalem

**Topic:** Zakat in Islam between Theory & Practice

**Speakers:** Imad Abu Libdeh, Head of Zakat Department, Islamic Waqf; Sheikh Mohammad Hussain, Khatib & Director of Al-Aqsa Mosque, Jerusalem

**Participants:** Mohammad Salim Ali, Teacher, Al-Quds University; Abdul Majid Nassar, Dir, Dar Al Fatwa, Jerusalem; Sheikh Ishaq Taha, Manager, Al Fatwa Council; Maher Daoudi, Program Manager, Swedish Consulate, Jerusalem; Mats Svensson, Consul, Swedish Consulate, Jerusalem; Nora Carmi, Coordinator, Sabeel; Mitzi Naddeci, Student; Nuzia Medive, Spanish Cooperation; Renata Capella Soler, Humanitarian Coordinator, EC; Sayel Mohammed Ali, Al Furqan School; Elena Mancusi, UNRWA; Valentina De Bernard, UNRWA; Dr. Mustafa Abu Sway, Al-Quds University; Hayat Alami, PASSIA.
Conferences

12-15 January 2004, Knight’s Palace, Old City, Jerusalem
**Topic:** The Universal Church in Solidarity with the Church of the Holy Land.
Bishops’ Conference Presidents with Assembly of Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land.

19 April 2004, YWCA, Jerusalem
**Topic:** Palestinians and the Current Situation
**Lecture by:** Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi, Head of PASSIA.
**Organized by:** Sabeel, as Part of its Annual Conference on Challenging Christian Zionism, Political, Theology and the Israel-Palestine Conflict.

3-6 July 2004, Cairo, Egypt
**Topic:** Muslim-Christian Dialogue: from Covenant to Commitment
**Organized by:** Arab Group for Christian-Muslim Dialogue

18-21 July 2004, Aachen, Germany
**Topic:** 2004 Annual Conference - Changing Borders
**Organized by:** The International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ), Aachen, Germany
21-22 September 2004, Best Eastern Hotel, Ramallah

**Topic:** Islam in Contemporary Palestine

**Organized by:** Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA), Jerusalem
Day One: Tuesday, 21 September 2004

9:00-9:30  Registration
9:30-10:00 Opening Speech
           Sheikh Dr. Ekrima Sabri, Mufti of Jerusalem and Palestine

Session I: Worldviews and Challenges
Chair: Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi, Chairman of PASSIA, Jerusalem

10:00-11:30 The Islamic Movements
Speaker: Sheikh Jamil Hamami, Al-Quds University, Jerusalem
Discussant: Dr. Nasser Al-Din Al-Sha’ir, An-Najah National University, Nablus
Open Discussion

11:30-1:30 The Islamic Movements, the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Occupation
Speaker: Dr. Abd Al-Sattar Qassim, An-Najah National University, Nablus
Discussants: Abdul Malek Dahamsheh, Member, Israeli Knesset
Open Discussion

1:30-2:30 LUNCH BREAK

Session II: Issues of Coexistence and Interfaith Dialogue
Chair: Sheikh Muhammad Hussein, Director of Al-Aqsa Mosque, Jerusalem

2:30-4:00 Jerusalem, Holy Places and Conflict Resolutions
Speaker: Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi, Chairman of PASSIA, Jerusalem
Discussants: Fr. Dr. Maroun Laham, Latin Theological Seminary, Beit Jala
            Ibrahim Shaban, Faculty of Law, Al-Quds University, Jerusalem
Open Discussion

4:00-5:30 Islamic-Christian Relations: Convivencia and Interfaith Dialogue
Speaker: Dr. Mustafa Abu Sway, Al-Quds University, Jerusalem
Open Discussion
**Day Two: Wednesday, 22 September 2004**

### Session III: Religious and National Identities

**10:00-12:00**

**Religious and Women Issues in Palestine**

**Speakers:**
- Iffat Al-Ja`bari, Dir., Young Women’s Muslim Association, Hebron (Women Organizations)
- Maysoon Al-Ramahi, Head, Al-Khansa’ Women’s Association, Ramallah (Woman’s Rights)
- Ghazalah `Arar, General Union of Palestinian Teachers, Ramallah (Globalization & Women Issues)

Open Discussion

#### 12:30-1:30

**Islam and the Palestinian Constitution**

**Chair:** Ali Safarini, Lawyer

**Speakers:**
- Dr. Isma`il Nawahdah, Al-Quds University, Jerusalem (The Position of Majlis Al-Fatwa)
- Dr. Ahmad Al-Khalidi, An-Njah National University, Nablus (The View of the PLC Constitution Committee)
- Dr. Ali Al-Khashshan, Gen. Sec. of the Palestinian Constitutional Committee, Jerusalem (Islam and the Constitution-Women Issues)

Open Discussion

### Session IV: Islamic Movements and Institutions

**1:30-2:30**

**LUNCH BREAK**

**Session IV: Islamic Movements and Institutions**

**Chair:** Sheikh Jamal Bawatneh, Mufti of Ramallah, Ramallah

**2:30-4:00**

**The Islamic Movement within the Green Line**

**Speakers:**
- Ibrahim Sarsour, President, The Islamic Movement (South)
- Abdul Malek Dahamsheh, Member, Israeli Knesset
- Mohanad Mustafa, Researcher, UMM Al-Fahm Center for Contemporary Studies, UMM Al-Fahm

Open Discussion

**4:00-5:30**

**Muslims in Europe and the Palestinian Issue**

**Speaker:** Andrew Rigby, Prof. of Peace Studies, Dir. of the Centre for the Study of Forgiveness and Reconciliation, Coventry University, UK

**The Image of Islam in the US Media and the Palestine Question**

**Speaker:** ‘Ayshah Wazwaz, Researcher in the Islamic Studies, Jerusalem

Open Discussion
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by various contributors

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