

[PRESS RELEASE]

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Islam and democracy can mix peacefully

RISING Women Ulama, Thursday 15 March 2018, Westminster

The unique role of Muslim women in Indonesia in helping to build peaceful and democratic communities will be celebrated this week at an event hosted by RISING Global Peace Forum at Westminster, London.

RISING Women Ulama: Women Leadership for Peace, Prosperity and Pluralism, will take place on Thursday 15 March 2018 at the House of Lords, welcoming a range of international speakers who will discuss key experiences of women building peace in pluralist societies.

As one of six speakers at the discussion, Professor Azyumardi Azra CBE will show how the recent emergence of women ulama (Islamic scholars) in Indonesia is allowing peace to flourish in Indonesia, the world's 4th largest country. The women ulama embrace Wasatiyah Islam, a middle path Islam that is inclusive, accommodating and tolerant, so providing space for peace, democracy and the independence of women in a pluralist society.

RISING is an internationally-recognised peace forum based at the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations at the university in Coventry, which is world famous as a city of peace and reconciliation.

Professor Azra was awarded the CBE in 2010 in recognition of his extraordinary work in interfaith and intercivilisation dialogue, one of the few non-Commonwealth citizens to hold this title. At the event he will say that Indonesian Islam can be a mediating force in the creation of peace in the Muslim world, particularly in the Middle East.

Amongst others speaking at the event will be Karmal Chandrakirana, who founded Musawah the global movement for equality and justice in the Muslim family, and Professor Nistri Mitra vom Berg the celebrated socio-cultural anthropologist from the TATA Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai.

"The only response to some of the perceived extremes of Islam is often portrayed by commentators and politicians as being western secularism," says Professor Mike Hardy, Executive Director at the Centre in Coventry, "so it's a huge privilege to welcome Professor Azra and our other speakers to London. We'll hear how the emergence of contemporary women ulama is having such a positive impact in the world's largest Muslim-majority nation."

The event in Westminster takes place less than one week after the death from cancer of Saba Mahmood, one of the world's leading female Muslim academics. Professor Mahmood, 55, was most famous as the author of '[The Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject](#)', whilst her other works on anthropology and political theory, focused on Muslim majority societies in the Middle East and South Asia.

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Notes for Editors:

The discussion will take place in Committee Room A in the House of Lords on Thursday 15th March 11:00am – 1:00pm. To obtain an invitation to the event or for more press information, including interviews with the speakers and with Professor Hardy, please contact Richard Dickson, Development Manager, RISING Global Peace Forum, on 0771 359 4506 or email richard.dickson@coventry.ac.uk