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Church of Scientology Pasadena Hosts Forum
Terrorism and Civil Liberties in the Post 9/11 World

Government, civic and religious leaders met on Human Rights Day 2011 to discuss the role of government, civil society and the individual in preserving civil liberties and freedom in today's world.

The Church of Scientology of Pasadena hosted a human rights forum on December 10, 2011, "Terrorism and Civil Liberties, Defining Freedom in a Post 9/11 World." Sponsored by Youth for Human Rights International (YHRI), the event was held on Human Rights Day, 2011, the 63rd anniversary of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to draw attention to pressing human rights issues.

With a wide spectrum of perspectives on security vs. privacy, religion, and free speech debate, guest speakers included Mr. Joe Grieboski, founder of Washington-based Institute for Religion and Public Policy; Pasadena Chief of Police Phillip Sanchez; Ms. Ameena Mirza Qazi, Esq., Deputy Executive Director for the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR); and Officer Oman Ricci of the LAPD's Anti-Terror Unit.

Forum moderator, Mr. Tim Bowles, Human Rights Director of the Church of Scientology of Pasadena and YHRI's Director for International Development, set the tone of the event with his presentation.

"In 1949, George Orwell foretold a future society marked by perpetual war, where individuality and reason were decried as 'thoughtcrimes,'" said Bowles. "We all trust and hope that we do not live in an Orwellian 1984 world—at least not yet. But how would we know unless we were really able to look, really able to know? That is our aim this morning."

The audience viewed *The Story of Human Rights,* a documentary on the origin and meaning of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the role of individual responsibility in ensuring such rights are upheld.

Pasadena Chief of Police Phillip Sanchez spoke of the "Occupy" movement, pointing out three distinct groups involved: those with an earnest mission to improve social and human rights conditions; those who have no idea why they are there; and those who are using important issues to create turmoil and chaos. He urged protesters to "be the example of change that they want to see."

Ms. Qazi spoke of the human rights challenges to the American Islamic community, likening the atmosphere since 9/11 to post-Pearl Harbor America. She described how suspicion and fear resulted in the internment of tens of thousands of Japanese Americans.

"When a group or an individual is dehumanized, anything can happen," she said. "At its root, that gross injustice rose from failure in leadership, racism and war hysteria. The unwarranted recrimination and suspicion too often leveled at Islamic Americans at present also arises from these three factors. Currently, the constitutional rights of religious free exercise, free speech, assembly, due process and freedom from cruel and unusual punishment are all on life support."

Los Angeles County Sheriff Baca focused on the Universal Declaration's Article 29, "Responsibility." He emphasized that leaders, including elected officials, must use their abilities to speak and act constructively in spite of the temptation to resort to force.

Reserve Officer Oman Ricci stated that the authority of the police should never be abused to act out prejudices and fixed ideas. He emphasized the vital role law enforcement plays in protecting the public and their responsibility—they must balance the concern for security with the protection of civil rights.

Mr. Joe Grieboski pointed out more emphasis was placed on the importance of inter-religious understanding immediately after 9/11 than today.

This forum was the fourth in a series of human rights events hosted by the Church of Scientology of Pasadena and sponsored by Youth for Human Rights International to increase awareness and cooperation on human rights issues.

The Church of Scientology of Pasadena, at 35 South Raymond Avenue in Pasadena's Old Town, is open form 9"30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Its chapel and meeting rooms are available to community groups and serve as a common meeting ground for persons of all denominations.

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Youth for Human Rights International (YHRI) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to making education on the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights broadly available. For more information visit www.youthforhumanrights.org.

Terrorism and Civil Liberties in the Post 9/11 World, hosted at the church of Scientology Pasadena on December 10, 2011