

PeaceTalks

Geneva

To celebrate the International Day of Peace

Peace is Possible!

10 September 2025 – 15.00-17.00,
followed by a reception

#GVAPeaceTalks

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PeaceTalks

Geneva

Geneva PeaceTalks: Peace is Possible!

"What does it take to choose hope over fear? To rebuild trust where it has broken? To believe, again, that peace can take root even in the most fractured places?"

Join us for the 13th edition of the Geneva PeaceTalks, *Peace is Possible*, on 10th September at Palais des Nations (Room XVII), Geneva, or online between 15:00-17:00 (CEST) as we discover meaning in these questions and to honour the International Day of Peace.

Under the theme "Peace is Possible," this year's event brings together an extraordinary group of individuals from around the world, from diplomats, peacebuilders, community leaders, and artists, all united in the belief that **peace is possible**. By sharing personal lived experiences, they will illuminate that peace is not only necessary, but achievable through increasing understanding, respect, and justice in our daily lives.

About the Peace Talks

The PeaceTalks is a global platform that elevates storytelling as a powerful tool to foster dialogue and cultivate understanding.

The vision of the PeaceTalks is to expand the space for dialogue about building peace and resolving conflict. Building peace is not just the effort and responsibility of technical specialists and officials. In fact, at the PeaceTalks, we believe all members of society play incredibly important roles in shaping peace at home and in their communities.

The core objectives of the PeaceTalks are:

- **DEMONSTRATE** that peaceful solutions to conflict exist all over the world.
- **SHOWCASE** and **AMPLIFY** inspiring stories and what is working to build peace.
- **INSPIRE ACTION** and **EDUCATE** on the role that we each play in promoting peace.

Founded in 2013 by the United Nations Office at Geneva, the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, and Interpeace, with the support of the Swiss Government, the PeaceTalks has now had 26 editions, featuring over 200 speakers from 60 nationalities, and been present in 8 countries. Over 8,000 in-person and virtual attendees have witnessed the powerful stories of the PeaceTalks, ranging from elementary-school students to a former United Nations Secretary-General.



Storytelling for Peace

Storytelling is a powerful educational and peacebuilding tool. Through the telling of personal stories, topics usually addressed from a general angle in the news, come to life, taking human form. Through stories we see the individual instead of the abstract mass. This fosters empathy, understanding and dialogue.

Stories and their telling can create change. The best ones influence our beliefs, inspire us to make an impact, and illuminate what it means to be human.

Everyone has a story to tell through which we can learn.

IF...we expand the space for dialogue about peace beyond technical peacebuilding through storytelling, focusing on personal stories and what is working;

THEN...a greater audience of people will become more aware of their potential individual roles and contributions in building peace, and that their actions can have a meaningful and positive impact in sustaining peace;

BECAUSE...they will feel inspired, empowered, and encouraged to support relevant initiatives where they work or to take personal action of their own.

Programme

15:00-17:00 Geneva PeaceTalks

- Welcome Remarks by **Tatiana Valovaya**, 13th Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva
- **Her Excellency Lolwah Rashid bin Mohammed Al Khater** Minister of Education and Higher Education, the State of Qatar
- **Elizabeth Laskar** and **Miranda Shaw**, Vice President and Treasurer of Creators of Peace International
- **Frank Kayitare**, Interpeace Country Representative in Rwanda
- Introduction by **Dr Bożena Schmid-Adamczyk** to **Adrien Philipp**, Clarinetist from the Swiss Philharmonique Pro Pace
- **Jagan Chapagain**, Secretary General, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
- **Guila Clara Kessous**, UNESCO Artist for Peace
- **Caroline Vuillemin**, Director-General of Fondation Hironde
- **Her Excellency Hind Aboud Kabawat**, Minister of Social Affairs and Labour, Transitional Government in Syria, Governing Board Member, Interpeace.
- Special Address on the International Day of Peace from Ambassador **Julien Thöni** Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the Conference on Disarmament
- Closing remarks by the President and CEO of Interpeace, **Itonde Kakoma**
- Master of Ceremony, **Sarah Noble**, Curator and Co-Founder of PeaceTalks

Organisers

The Geneva PeaceTalks is co-organised by the United Nations Office at Geneva, Interpeace and the Geneva Peacebuilding Platform with support of the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the UN.

Partners

This edition is made possible with the support of the Swiss Confederation, the Canton and City of Geneva, Mirabaud Group, Caux Initiatives of Change Foundation, Guila Clara Kessous - UNESCO Artist for Peace and Hinduja Foundation.

Speakers

(in order of appearance)

— Welcome Remarks

Tatiana Valovaya
13th Director-General, United Nations Office at Geneva

Tatiana Valovaya is the 13th Director General of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UN Geneva) and the first woman to occupy this position. Ms. Valovaya has more than 35 years of experience in public service, diplomacy and journalism. She began her career in 1983 in the editorial office of the Economic Gazette in Moscow, first as a correspondent, then as deputy editor of the Department of World Economy. In 1989, Ms. Valovaya joined the Permanent Mission of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics



to the European union (EU), where she served as Third Secretary. She then became Second Secretary of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the EU, until 1994. During her diplomatic career, she was in charge of the financial and economic cooperation issues. From 1995 to 1997, Ms. Valovaya worked at the Presidential Administration of the Russian Federation, where she was responsible for relations with the statutory bodies of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). She then served as Head of the Monetary and Financial Policy Directorate at the Ministry for the CIS. From 1999 to 2012 Ms. Valovaya worked in the Government administration of the Russian Federation as Deputy Director and then Director of the Department of International Cooperation. Ms. Valovaya joined the Eurasian Economic Commission in 2012 as a Member of the Board (Minister) responsible for integration and macro-economic issues. In 1980, Ms. Valovaya graduated from the Faculty of International Economic Relations of the Moscow Finance Institute. She holds the scientific degree of Candidate of Economic Sciences (1st doctoral level scientific degree and the degree of Doctor of Economic Sciences from the Financial Academy under the Government of the Russian Federation).

Her Excellency Lolwah bint Rashid bin Mohammed Al Khater

Minister of Education and Higher Education, the State of Qatar.

Her Excellency Lolwah bint Rashid bin Mohammed Al Khater has held numerous leadership positions throughout her distinguished career. She was appointed as the official spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in 2018 and later as Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2019, concurrently serving as MOFA spokesperson. In 2023, she was named Minister of State for International Cooperation. Currently, she serves as the Minister of Education and Higher Education.



Before assuming her current position, Her Excellency held the role of Minister Plenipotentiary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She also served as Director of Planning and Quality at the Qatar Tourism Authority and Director of Research Projects at Qatar Foundation. Beyond her official duties, Her Excellency serves as Vice-Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD) and Vice-Chairperson of the Board of Media City. In addition, she served as Executive Director of the Doha Forum from 2018 to 2023.

Her Excellency actively contributes to the academic and cultural sectors through her membership on the Board of Trustees of Qatar University, the College of Islamic Studies at Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Georgetown University in Qatar, and Qatar Museums. In addition, she sits on the boards of Teach For Qatar and QatarDebate and co-chairs the Qatar Career Development Center. Her engagement with academia extends further – she has lectured at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, is a Research Associate at the Oxford Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies Forum at St. Antony's College, University of Oxford, and is a board member of the Institute for Palestine Studies. She also serves on the Advisory Board of the Centre for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies and is Vice-Chairperson of the Board of Qatar Academy Al Wakra. She is also the Chairperson of the Qatari National Commission for Education, Culture, and Science.

As an independent public policy analyst, Her Excellency co-edited *“Policy-Making in a Transformative State: The Case of Qatar”*, published by Palgrave Macmillan, and authored *“Educational Outputs and Labor Market Needs: A Study on Labor Market Issues and Methods of Addressing Them”*, published by the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Her Excellency holds two master's degrees – one in computer science and the other in public policy. Her research interests include Islam, modernity, and public policy development.

Elizabeth Laskar

Elizabeth is a consultant and facilitator for Creators of Peace for the last 15 years where her focus has been on developing and delivering the 'Peace Circle' methodology to work with women from all backgrounds, migrants, refugees, leaders, communities, religions and cultures in the UK and beyond. She is also a trainer for Creators of Peace International. She was employed part-time as a Programme Manager at Initiatives of Change UK from 2021 – 2025 where she focused on the expansion of Peace Circles in the UK. From 2024 to 2025 she took on an



additional role of Outreach Executive with IofC UK. She is currently serving as Vice-President of Creators of Peace International (based in Switzerland and active in 40 countries) in a voluntary capacity.

Over the last two decades her life has been dedicated to the environmental and humanitarian sector. From 2005 she spent many years working in the sustainable fashion sector where she advocated for climate consciousnesses, justice and equality in the manufacturing supply chain. From 2019 to 2021 she was the lead for the Oxford Human Rights Festival at Oxford Brookes University at the Centre of Development and Emergency Practice (CENDEP) where she gained a first-class MA in Shelter and Disaster. Previous voluntary roles have included Treasurer of the Oxford Fair Trade Coalition. Elizabeth has a keen interest in countryside walking, enjoys history and cooking for friends and family.

Miranda Shaw

Miranda is a consultant, facilitator and trainer who has been involved with Creators of Peace since 2011 and has been the UK National Coordinator since 2016. Her focus has been on developing and delivering the 'Peace Circle' methodology to work with women from all backgrounds including migrants, refugees, leaders, communities, religions and cultures in the UK and beyond. She was employed part-time as a Programme Manager at Initiatives of Change UK from 2021 – 2025 where she focused on the expansion of Peace Circles in the UK. She is also serving her first 3-year term as Treasurer of Creators of Peace

International (based in Switzerland and active in 40 countries) in a voluntary capacity.

She graduated with a degree in Conflict Resolution from the University of Bradford in 2009 and since then has been involved in climate and housing activism, personal development work, catering large community events, and supporting activists fighting illegal deportations from the UK. She previously managed a community café in Oxford. She has taught the violin, loves to dance and spends as much time as possible reading and gardening.



Frank Kayitare

A human rights lawyer by training, with more than twenty years' experience in peacebuilding, Mr. Frank Kayitare has worked on a variety of thematic areas including parliamentary democracy, governance, dialogue and the nexus between mental health and peace. He has actively participated in dialogue facilitation processes in socio-political conflict contexts including Haiti, Myanmar, the Philippines (Bangsamoro Autonomous region) and several other countries in East and Southern Africa. Focusing mainly on political institutions and CSOs, Frank has contributed to institutional capacity building and partnerships management in more than 12 countries in Africa, South East Asia, the Caribbean and Europe over the past two decades. Currently, he is the Country Representative of Interpeace in Rwanda, where he oversees a programme on societal healing and resilience, tackling issues such as rehabilitation and reintegration of genocide perpetrators, community reconciliation, and management of intergenerational legacies of the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. He speaks Kinyarwanda, Swahili, English & French languages.



— Musical Interlude

Dr Bożena Schmid-Adamczyk

Dr Bożena Schmid-Adamczyk, an internationally renowned pianist and musicologist, is also widely recognised for her outstanding commitment to peace and culture. After advanced musical studies in Paris and Strasbourg, and earning a PhD in musicology under the direction of Professor Marc Honegger, she made significant discoveries in the interpretation of the works of Frédéric Chopin.



As founder of the non-profit organisation Musica Pro Pace, she has been organising peace concerts for many years, including events at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. Among the most notable events are the Hommage à Green Cross concert held in 2013 at the prestigious Victoria Hall in Geneva with the participation and presence of President Mikhail Gorbachev, and the Concert for Peace held in the Human Rights and Alliance of Civilizations Room of the United Nations on 22 November 2022, under the patronage of Tatiana Valovaya, Director-General of the UN Office at Geneva.

Dr Schmid-Adamczyk uniquely combines her work for peace with a pro-environmental approach, using classical music as a means of restoring harmony among peoples and nations. She is currently President of the Cercle des Amitiés Internationales (International Friendship Circle), founded in Geneva in 1920. She is also a member of the Fondation pour Genève.

Among her numerous distinctions, she has received:

- Gold Medal Gloria Artis, awarded by the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (2021), in recognition of her exceptional contributions to culture and the arts
- The Knight's Cross of the Order of the Rebirth of Poland (2014), for her significant role in promoting Polish cultural heritage, particularly in the field of Chopin research.

Her work combines scholarly rigor, musical excellence, and a deep humanitarian commitment, making her a key figure in international cultural dialogue.

Adrien Philipp

Born in Geneva, Adrien Philipp is the only Swiss clarinetist to have been selected for the prestigious international competitions in Geneva, ARD Munich, and Tchaikovsky in Saint Petersburg. He has performed under the baton of renowned conductors such as Simon Rattle, Daniel Harding, Antonio Pappano, Santtu-Matias Rouvali, Vassili Petrenko, Esa-Pekka Salonen, and Gianandrea Noseda.

Adrien has shared the stage with prominent artists including Leonidas Kavakos, Daniil Trifonov, Yuja Wang, Jan Lisiecki, Jean-Efflam Bavouzet, Sergey Khachatryan, and Jonas Kaufmann. He regularly performs in both orchestral and chamber music settings.



Among the orchestras he has played with are the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne, Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, Montpellier National Orchestra, Strasbourg Philharmonic Orchestra, Gstaad Festival Orchestra, and the Pacific Music Festival Orchestra in Japan in 2019. He was a member of the Verbier Festival Orchestra in 2017 and 2018. Since 2021, he has been principal clarinetist of the Nordic Wind Ensemble (Sweden) and since 2024, bass clarinetist at the Giuseppe Verdi Opera Orchestra in Trieste.

In 2014, he won second prize at the National Musical Performance Competition in Riddes.

Trained at the Haute École de Musique in Geneva under Romain Guyot and Antoine Marguier, he earned both a Bachelor's and Master's degree, each awarded with a special prize. He further refined his skills with Bjørn Nyman at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo.

Jagan Chapagain

Jagan Chapagain is the Chief Executive Officer and Secretary General of the IFRC. He was appointed by the IFRC Governing Board in February 2020 and is based in Geneva, Switzerland.

Jagan has extensive experience in leading effective and principled humanitarian response around the world and has dedicated his life to helping empower local communities.

He brings decades of experience in building and leading inclusive teams and forging trustful partnerships to address global challenges, ranging from climate to health, and from migration to protection, gender, and inclusion. He has also championed policies and programmes that promote youth engagement and volunteering, and that strengthen localisation and accountability in humanitarian action.

He began his humanitarian journey as a youth volunteer with the Nepal Red Cross and has extensive experience in, and broad knowledge of, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Prior to being appointed Secretary General, he served as Under Secretary General for Programmes and Operations at the IFRC. He was also previously Chief of Staff and Regional Director for Asia Pacific, where he provided leadership during large-scale humanitarian crises and built resilient communities alongside National Societies and other partners.

An engineer by training, Jagan holds certificates in Leadership and Turnaround Management, Emerging Social Sector Leadership, and High-Performance Boards.

A national of Nepal, he is fluent in Nepalese, English and Hindi and has basic knowledge of Urdu and Russian.



Guila Clara Kessous

Recipient of a doctorate under Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Elie Wiesel's direction and an MBA of ESSEC Business School, Dr. Guila Clara Kessous (France) is a UNESCO Artist for Peace, Peace Ambassador and executive coach. She combines performing art and activism working as an "artist" helping population victims of post traumatic syndroms. She has worked with displaced population in Bangladesh (Rohingyas), in Rwanda (survivors of genocides) as well as in Congo with Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Dr. Mukwege. As a teacher at the Harvard Carr Center for Human Rights Policies at Harvard Kennedy School, she created the course "Theatre and Human Rights" and received the Derek Bok Center Award for excellence in teaching. As an executive coach, she developed specific training using role games and Harvard negotiation techniques to enhance executive inner empowerment. She became "Rising Talent" for the Women's Forum for the Economy and the Society helping thousands of executives for a more assertive and positive leadership. She is running the International Day of Women's Rights and World Art Day at UNESCO. Dr Kessous has been knighted by the French government.



Caroline Vuillemin

Caroline Vuillemin is the CEO of Fondation Hirondelle since January 1st, 2017. Her career reflects a commitment to international development, particularly in Africa. She joined Fondation Hirondelle in December 2003. She was in charge of the Radio Okapi project (the United Nations radio in the DRC created in partnership with Fondation Hirondelle), and then became Head of Operations in 2008. Before Fondation Hirondelle, she worked for the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) where she participated in numerous election observation missions in the DRC, Rwanda, Burundi, South



Africa, Nigeria and Congo-Brazzaville. Caroline Vuillemin holds a BA from the Institute of Political Studies in Lyon, completed by a degree in International Relations from the Georgetown University in Washington, DC.

Her Excellency Hind Aboud Kabawat

Minister of Social Affairs and Labour, Syrian Transitional Government. Governing Board Member for Interpeace. Former Adjunct Professor, Director of Interfaith, Peacebuilding, and Conflict Resolution, CRDC, George Mason University. Former President and Founder of Tastakel Women Organization (www.tastakel.org). Former Deputy Head, Syrian Negotiations Commission Office, Geneva Mission, Switzerland. Former visiting scholar, Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School.



— Special Address on the International Day of Peace

Ambassador Julien Thöni

Since 1 August 2023, Mr. Julien Thöni has been Deputy Permanent representative of Switzerland to the United Nations and the other international organisations in Geneva and Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the Conference on Disarmament. Until July 2023, he was Consul General of Switzerland in Istanbul. He joined the diplomatic service in 1998 and made his diplomatic traineeship both in Bern at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and in Moscow at the Embassy of Switzerland. In 2000, Mr. Thöni served as desk officer for the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States at the FDFA, covering the bilateral relations with Russia, Belarus, Moldova as well as the countries of the Caucasus and



Central Asia. Between 2003 and 2007 he was Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Switzerland in Saudi Arabia. In 2007 he was appointed deputy head of section and covered euro-Atlantic and European security in the International Security Division at the FDFA. In 2010, he served as head of section on issues related to disarmament and peace promotion also in Bern. Between 2013 and 2023 he was successively posted in Moscow as counsellor for economic and financial affairs, in Ramallah as Head of Mission and Representative of Switzerland to the Palestinian Authority and in Istanbul as Consul General. Mr. Thöni has a degree in International Relations from the Geneva Graduate Institute and a Masters' degree in international conflict analysis from the University of Kent (Canterbury).

— Closing Remarks

Itonde Kakoma

President of Interpeace, he most recently served as the Permanent Representative of the International Federation of the Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to the African Union and International Organizations (2021-2023). In this capacity, Kakoma advanced continental wide humanitarian diplomacy initiatives with the African Union in public health security; climate change; disaster risk management; food security; and humanitarian affairs.

Mr. Kakoma served in various leadership capacities on matters of international peace mediation, including as Director for Global Strategy and member of the leadership team at CMI Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation. Over a period of eight years at CMI, he steered mediation support teams for both official and informal peace processes, and advanced high-level peace mediation and dialogue undertakings in the Great Lakes, the Horn, and wider Red Sea region.

Previously, Mr. Kakoma was the Assistant Director for the Conflict Resolution Program at The Carter Center, managing a portfolio of the Center's peace initiatives and supporting former President Carter's backchannel diplomatic efforts. He was an international observer for The National Referendum on the Right to Self Determination for the People of South Sudan; and served as an advisor and report writer for the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission.



Mr. Kakoma was an Executive-in-Residence and subsequently Global Fellow at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP). He holds an Executive Master in International Law in Armed Conflict from the Geneva Academy for International Humanitarian Law & Human Rights and the Graduate Institute of International & Development Studies.

Moderator

Sarah Noble

Sarah Noble is a Canadian-born peace advocate and storyteller based in Geneva, Switzerland. She is the Curator and co-founder of the PeaceTalks at Interpeace, a global platform dedicated to amplifying diverse voices for peace. Since its creation, she has played a key role in shaping and accompanying PeaceTalks events worldwide, bringing stories of peace to diverse audiences. She also serves as Head of Global Engagement at the Caux Initiatives of Change Foundation, working on partnerships, inner development, and the intersection of arts and peace through the Caux Forums and Caux Arts and Peace Encounters.



With more than 20 years of experience in strategic communications, fundraising, and partnerships in peacebuilding, humanitarian action, and non-profit media, Sarah is passionate about the power of storytelling as a tool for healing and social transformation. In her TEDx talk, *Storytelling is Our Real-Life Superpower*, she highlights how narratives can inspire change and shape a more hopeful future.

She was selected as part of the inaugural cohort of the Youth for Peace: UNESCO Intercultural Leadership Programme, recognising her commitment to intercultural dialogue and peacebuilding. She is also the proud mother of two young children and is deeply motivated by a desire to be a good ancestor.

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