

Peace in South Asia



**JIMMY AND ROSALYNN
CARTER SCHOOL FOR PEACE
AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION**
George Mason University®

Fall 2026 Peace Week
September 21 • 9:00–10:15 a.m. ET

Rajkumar 'Raju' Bhatt • Dr. Al B. Fuertes
Kosha Anja Joubert • Dr. Samir Ahmad

Courageous witness

Peacebuilding asks us to stay present to painful realities without turning away.

Today we bring together embodied awareness, lived Kashmiri experience, truth-and-reconciliation learning, and pathways toward justice.

Our purpose is not to prescribe Kashmir's future, but to create space for truth, dignity, participation, and healing.

Today's journey

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Meditation and Global Social Witnessing
3. Personal stories and Kashmiri perspectives
4. Audience reflections and feelings
5. Reconciliation lessons, closing music, and hope for Kashmir

Speaker biographies: Raju and Al

Rajkumar 'Raju' Suryakant Bhatt

Founder and CEO, Global Mediation Team; Alliance for Peacebuilding member. His work joins mediation, trauma awareness, legislative experience, international relationship-building, and AI for social good. He has developed the Kashmir Initiative since 2020.

Dr. Al B. Fuertes

Professor, George Mason University; Commissioner for Psychosocial Support and Trauma Healing, Philippine Truth and Reconciliation Commission. He brings practitioner experience in trauma healing and reconciliation.

Speaker biographies: Kosha and Samir

Kosha Anja Joubert

CEO, Pocket Project. She works with collective trauma, embodied awareness, and Global Social Witnessing. She leads the meditation, then returns after Samir for integration.

Dr. Samir Ahmad

U.S. Fulbright Scholar and Professor of Political Science, Gandhi Memorial College, Srinagar, India. He brings Kashmiri lived experience, scholarship, and regional perspective to the dialogue.

Why Kashmir lives in me

At eight years old, I sat at the feet of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. That moment connected public leadership with a deeply personal sense of India.

Kashmir later became a human question for me: How do we meet suffering without looking away?

How do we make room for Kashmiris to describe the future they envision?



With Prime Minister Indira Gandhi: my father at far left, my mother holding my sister Tanuja, my sister Seema, and me as a child.

My first mediation was within

After my father died in 2006, I began formal mediation training.

I discovered that mediation was also inner work: creating space between the parts of myself that were in conflict.

Learning later in life that I am autistic helped me understand my sensory sensitivity and lifelong search to 'fix' myself. Regulation, awareness, and self-acceptance opened a different path toward healing.

Global Social Witnessing creates space

We pause and notice what is happening within us, between us, and in the wider world.

We attend to the body as well as the story.

We resist denial, overwhelm, and premature solutions.

We listen so that pain can be acknowledged without becoming another instrument of division.

Professor Ather Zia: A Kashmiri witness

Prerecorded reflection • 3 minutes 20 seconds

Raju introduces the recording. Samir begins immediately afterward.



Kosha returns: Witnessing and integration

Kosha returns directly after Samir.

She helps the group stay present to what has been heard and felt.

The purpose is not to rush toward solutions, but to create enough space for experience to settle and relationship to deepen.

Audience reflections and feelings

AI offers a one-minute transition into audience sharing.

Up to seven people may share for two minutes each.

Listen without interruption, correction, or debate. The invitation is to share what you noticed, felt, or are carrying after witnessing these stories.

Philippines experience and SDG 16

AI shares lessons from the Philippine truth-and-reconciliation experience.

The lessons cannot simply be copied onto Kashmir. They can deepen questions about acknowledgment, repair, participation, and trustworthy institutions.

This connects the session to SDG 16: peace, justice, and accountable institutions.

Closing music and hope for Kashmir

Raju closes with gratitude, music, and hope for Kashmir.

May witnessing become relationship.

May truth and dignity open pathways toward reconciliation.

May this gathering become responsible action.

**For Undergraduate Programs
information reach out to:**

Mel Carousso
mcarouss@gmu.edu



**For Graduate Programs
information reach out to:**

Monique C. Norton
tcsinfo@gmu.edu

