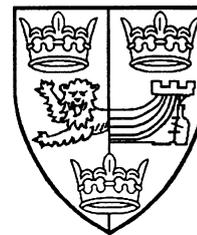


St Edmundsbury Cathedral

Following in the footsteps of Edmund, King and Martyr



PRESS RELEASE

Monday 17 September 2012

For immediate release

'Drawing on lessons of the past'

On Tuesday 11 September, Dr Mukesh Kapila, Special representative to the Aegis Trust, gave an poignant and thought-provoking talk to an enthralled audience at St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds. Arranged in conjunction with The Anne Frank Trust UK, and linking with the exhibition 'Anne Frank [+you]', which is running in the Cathedral until 26 September, Dr Kapila spoke of his return to Rwanda, 18 years after he witnessed the immediate aftermath of the genocide. Due to what he had seen in 1994, Dr Kapila had felt unable to return to Rwanda until recently. He vividly described his experience in Rwanda and other areas of the world where he has experienced first hand the atrocities of genocide and human rights violations.

His talk, however, focussed on the future as is borne out by a number of comments received from members of the Cathedral's Christian Learning Group, who attended the talk. Richard Bentley commented, 'Despite the chilling power of Dr Kapila's descriptions of the many sites of genocide he had visited, the effect of his words on members of his audience was to encourage hope. He insisted we should keep in mind that each death in a genocide is the death of an individual person, not just one of a group. That insistence corresponded with his further assertion that, to prevent genocide, we must address individuals, as well as institutions and governments, and that this is a responsibility which none of us can be allowed to shirk.' Fellow Christian Learning group member, Margaret Steavenson, added, 'Dr Kapila's talk left me saddened, but nevertheless with the feeling that there IS something we can do and there IS hope!'

Sarah Friswell, Public Relations Manager
The Cathedral Office, Angel Hill, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 1LS
Telephone: 01284 748726 Fax: 01284 768655 Email: pr.manager@stedscathedral.org
www.stedscathedral.co.uk

Special Representative to the Aegis Trust, Dr Mukesh Kapila is an international diplomat with an extensive humanitarian career. He has spent the last two decades working in situations where the worst crimes of humanity have occurred and was the most senior UN official in Sudan when he brought the crisis in Darfur to the world's attention. Dr Kapila has a deeply personal connection with working to prevent genocide and crimes against humanity and actively works to give a voice to those experiencing protection crises.

*****ENDS*****

Notes:

The Aegis Trust campaigns against crimes against humanity and genocide. Aegis activities include: research, policy, education, remembrance, media work, campaigns and humanitarian support for victims.

<http://www.aegistrust.org> 02074811000

The Anne Frank Trust UK is the British partner organisation of the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam. It runs travelling exhibitions and educational projects throughout the UK and educates over 70,000 young people a year.

www.annefrank.org.uk 02072845858

Biography: Dr Kapila

Special Representative to the Aegis Trust, Dr. Mukesh Kapila is an international diplomat with an extensive humanitarian career. Having spent the last two decades working in situations where the worst crimes of humanity have occurred, Dr Kapila has a deeply personal connection with working to prevent genocide and crimes against humanity and to give a voice to those experiencing protection crises.

During the 1990s he bore witness to the aftermath of atrocities in Rwanda, Bosnia and Sierra Leone. He was the first British official in Rwanda to witness the aftermath of genocide, he was posted to Srebrenica following the massacre and he led a UK team in post-conflict Sierra Leone. Dr Kapila is widely known for his actions in 2004 when, working as chief of the UN mission in Sudan from 2003 to 2004, reports began to emerge of extreme violence against civilians in the western province of Darfur. Lobbying for action through the traditional diplomatic channels and frustrated by the lack of response, Dr. Kapila finally went to the media - shedding light on the world biggest humanitarian emergency at the time and forcing the UN Security Council to action.

Dr. Kapila recently returned to Rwanda with the Aegis Trust for the first time since 1994 where he witnessed peace building and reconciliation in a country struggling to come to terms with its past.