Teresa award for Abdullah for anti-terror initiatives

Staff Reporter

DUBAI – The efforts of Shaikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, has gained international attention for his efforts in starting institutions that protect the youth from radicalisation and indoctrination from terror groups.

Recognising his efforts, Dubai-based Harmony Foundation will confer the prestigious Mother Teresa Memorial Award for Social Justice on Shaikh Abdullah today.

Speaking about the award, Dr Abraham Mathai, president of the Harmony Foundation, said honouring Shaikh Abdullah “was an obvious choice”. “His Excellency’s work speaks for itself. In starting the Hedayah and Sawab Centres, he has demonstrated how serious he is about ensuring that the youth are not swayed with extremist ideologies whose main purpose is to leave behind a trail of destruction and devastation.”

Mathai said Shaikh Abdullah’s work in the field of anti-terrorism and combating radicalisation this year was relevant to the times we live in.

“The stance against terrorism is well known. We support His Highness’s commitment and honour his efforts to ensure that peace and prosperity is enjoyed by the UAE in these tumultuous times even as the neighbouring region stands at the intersection that comes from extremist and radical ideologies. The Hedayah and Sawab Centres are shining examples of what can be done with innovative and well-planned strategies,”said Dr Mathai.

Dr Mathai also praised Sheikh Abdullah’s initiative, Abu Dhabi Reads, saying that the campaign which aims to encourage the youth to read is most welcome in our world.

The Harmony Foundation will also be hosting an international conference on Combating Terrorism Through Education during the awards. Addressing the conference will be Shaikha Lubna Al Qasimi, Minister of State for Tolerance; Sri Lankan Union Minister Eran Wickramaratne; former In- dian union minister Farooq Abdullah and several others.

Mother Teresa Awards explained

It is conferred by the Harmony Foundation on persons who have taken a stand against injustice and prevented oppression of those who are voiceless and nameless in our world.

The past recipients of the award include:

- Dalai Lama
- Malala Yousafzai
- Malaysian Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohammad
- Former Deputy Prime Minister of Afghanistan Dr. Sima Samar
- Former Deputy Speaker of the House of Lords, Baroness Caroline Cox
- Medecines Sans Frontieres being the first recipient 2002

UAE’s anti-terror centres

- Hedayah centre: Shaikh Abdullah launched the Hedayah (Arabic for Guidance) Centre in December 2012. The centre is tasked with becoming an international incubator of a pool of experts and specialists who will partner with their in-house peers to counter violent extremism.
- Sawab Centre: The centre was launched in July 2015 to counter online messages, propaganda and recruitment by Daesh. The centre is a joint online engagement initiative, in support of the Global Coalition Against Daesh. The word Sawab in Arabic signifies “doing the right thing” or being on the “right path.”