



**Dr Muhammad Sohail Ali**

Dear Participants

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the 24th World Congress of Psychotherapy, to be held in New York City, USA, from 4 to 6 June 2026, co-hosted by the Critical Incident Stress Management Section (CISMS) of the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) the City University of New York (CUNY) and the World Federation for Psychotherapy.

CISMS was established in 2001 by a United Nations General Assembly Resolution, with the main goal of managing stress and coordinating Critical Incident Stress Management across the global United Nations system. Our mission is to enable all individuals and entities within the UN system to prepare for, cope with, and recover from the impact of critical events and emergencies, ensuring they remain effective and efficient contributors to their life and work.

We advocate for sustainable psychosocial support services and partnerships, such as the one established with the World Federation for Psychotherapy, along with providing capacity building for stress management, coordinating preparedness and response for critical incidents, mobilising surge support, and overseeing the monitoring and evaluation of operational responses and service delivery. Our team includes ninety-five field stress counsellors based in fifty-three countries, and over three hundred External Mental Health Professionals (EMHPs) who support UN personnel and families during emergencies and critical incidents. Additionally, we partner with over one hundred staff counsellors from other UN Agencies, Funds, and Programs, to deliver scientifically valid, culturally sensitive, and contextualised psychosocial support services in UN operations around the world.

In 2024, CISMS coordinated the UN psychosocial support management in over 20 major emergencies such as in Ukraine, Afghanistan, Haiti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Mozambique, Mali, Niger, DRC, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Israel/Gaza, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, Libya, Türkiye and Iran, supporting over 23,000 humanitarian workers and their family members on the frontlines delivering essential life-saving, peace building and emergency humanitarian assistance.

This Congress is a unique opportunity for the exchange of diverse ideas and theoretical constructs to advance the practice of mental health and psychosocial support. We are honoured to co-host this event with the World Federation for Psychotherapy and the City University of New York and look forward to the exciting discussions and insights that will emerge.

On behalf of CISMS and UNDSS, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all participants for your dedication to advancing the field of psychotherapy. Your presence and contributions are invaluable to the success of this Congress.

Welcome, and thank you for being a part of this significant event.

Sincerely,



Dr. Muhammad Sohail Ali

Chief, Critical Incident Stress Management Section (CISMS)

United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS)