

= Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan =

Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan , KCSS ( Urdu : ?????????? ??? ??? , ?adr ad @-@ D?n ?gh? Kh?n , 17 January 1933 ? 12 May 2003 ) served as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from 1966 to 1978 , during which he reoriented the agency 's focus beyond Europe and prepared it for an explosion of complex refugee issues . He was also a proponent of greater collaboration between non @-@ governmental organizations ( NGOs ) and UN agencies . The Prince 's interest in ecological issues led him to establish the Bellerive Foundation in the late 1970s , and he was a knowledgeable and respected collector of Islamic art .

Born in Paris , France , he was the son of Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan and Princess Andrée Aga Khan . He married twice , but had no children of his own . Prince Sadruddin died of cancer at the age of 70 , and was buried in Switzerland .

= = Life and career = =

= = = Childhood and education = = =

Born in Neuilly @-@ sur @-@ Seine , France , he was the only child of Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan III and his French @-@ born second wife , the former Andrée Joséphine Carron . He received his early education in Lausanne , Switzerland , before graduating Phi Beta Kappa in 1954 from Harvard College . At Harvard , he lived in Eliot House with Paul Matisse , grandson of French artist Henri Matisse , with future Paris Review founders George Plimpton and John Train , and with Stephen Joyce , grandson of Irish writer James Joyce . Along with Plimpton , he was an editor for the Harvard Lampoon . After three years of post @-@ graduate research at the Harvard Center for Middle Eastern Studies , Prince Sadruddin began a lifelong career of international service .

Although he was raised in Europe by his French mother , his father , who was the 48th hereditary Imam of the Nizari Ismaili Muslims , had a strong influence on him . He recalled that his father " insisted that I learnt the Koran and encouraged me to understand the basic traditions and beliefs of Islam but without imposing any particular views . He was an overwhelming personality but open @-@ minded and liberal . "

Together with his father Prince Sadruddin traveled widely in Muslim countries , coming into contact with his Islamic roots from a young age . He described Iran as the cradle of his family , though he never lived there . When he was a child , his paternal grandmother used to recite to him the great epic poems of Persian history . He held French , Iranian , and Swiss citizenship , and was fluent in French , English , German and Italian , while also speaking some Persian and Arabic .

= = = UNESCO = = =

Prince Sadruddin joined the United Nations Educational , Scientific and Cultural Organization ( UNESCO ) in 1958 , and became the Executive Secretary to its International Action Committee for the Preservation of Nubia in 1961 . This initiative brought together archaeologists from Eastern Europe and the West at the height of the Cold War . The construction of the Aswan Dam threatened ancient Egyptian treasures including Abu Simbel , the temples of Philae and Kalabsha , and the Christian churches of Nubia . He would later describe it as " one of UNESCO 's great achievements " because of the challenging historical context in which it took place ? in particular the ongoing tensions in the Middle East and the Cold War .

= = = UN High Commissioner for Refugees = = =

Prince Sadruddin began as a Special Envoy to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees ( UNHCR ) in 1959 with a focus on World Refugee Year ( 1959 ? 1960 ) . The initiative became known for its Stamp Plan , a philatelic programme that raised funds through United Nations member

countries , as well as the support of the Universal Postal Union . At the time , the UNHCR 's resources were primarily focused on supporting refugees crossing from Eastern Europe .

In January 1966 , Prince Sadruddin was appointed United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees after serving for three years as Deputy High Commissioner . At the age of 33 he became the youngest person ever to lead the UNHCR . For the next twelve years he directed the UN refugee agency through one of its most difficult periods , coordinating the international response to the 1971 Bangladesh crisis that uprooted 10 million people , the 1972 exodus of hundreds of thousands of Hutus from Burundi to Tanzania , and the Vietnamese boat people tragedy of the mid @-@ 1970s . In 1972 , Prince Sadruddin played a key role in finding new homes for tens of thousands of South Asians expelled from Uganda by Idi Amin .

Prince Sadruddin 's determination not to discriminate between European and Third World refugees helped prepare the UNHCR for a change in the landscape of internationally displaced persons . During the 1950s , between 200 @,@ 000 and 300 @,@ 000 refugees of European origin required assistance . By the 1970s the European refugee problems were mostly solved , but had been replaced by millions of displaced persons in the Third World . He had widened the UNHCR mandate well beyond its original focus on Eastern Europe , extending the organisation 's reach to refugees from Palestine , Vietnam , Angola and Algeria . As the scale and complexity of refugee issues continued to increase , the UNHCR and the international community at large was better positioned to adapt . By the end of 1977 when he chose to step down from the position , he had become the longest @-@ serving UN High Commissioner for Refugees . He continued to serve in various capacities dealing with humanitarian situations on behalf of the UN .

= = = United Nations diplomatic career = = =

Prince Sadruddin had , since 1978 , been variously : Special Consultant and Chargé de Mission to the Secretary @-@ General of the United Nations , Special Rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Commission and Convenor and Co @-@ Chairman of the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues and of the Independent Working Group on the UN Financial Emergency . He was later Coordinator for United Nations Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes Relating to the People of Afghanistan and Executive Delegate of the Secretary @-@ General for a United Nations Inter @-@ Agency Humanitarian Programme , which dealt with problems of Iraq 's border areas .

His appointment in September 1990 as Personal Representative of the UN Secretary @-@ General for Humanitarian Assistance Relating to the Crisis between Iraq and Kuwait required diplomatic finesse . Iraq 's President Saddam Hussein was deeply suspicious of the UN , and was loath to do anything that would benefit the country 's Shia Muslims . Despite this , Prince Sadruddin was able to successfully negotiate with Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz for the establishment of a UN relief program for tens of thousands of Shia Muslims trapped in worsening conditions in the marshlands of southern Iraq .

Prince Sadruddin was nominated and passed over twice for the post of UN Secretary @-@ General . Although he won the 1981 vote , the Soviet Union considered him too Western and vetoed his election . When he was nominated again in 1991 , the United States and Britain expressed their disagreement with his belief in a policy of boosting aid to Iraq .

= = = Environmental protection and advocacy = = =

In 1977 , Prince Sadruddin , together with Denis de Rougemont and a few other friends , established a Geneva @-@ based think @-@ tank , Groupe de Bellerive ( named after Bellerive , the municipality where he lived in Geneva ) , and a non @-@ profit organisation , the Bellerive Foundation . The foundation collaborated with international institutions , British and Scandinavian bilateral aid organizations , and other NGOs such as the World Wide Fund for Nature ( WWF ) . It became a leading grassroots action group promoting environmental protection , natural resource conservation and the safeguarding of life in all its forms .

Initially , Bellerive worked with UNICEF and the United Nations Children 's Fund in the struggle against deforestation . Prince Sadruddin was motivated in part by what he called " ecological refugees " , who were forced to leave regions that could no longer sustain them due to desertification and other environmental changes . The foundation worked with Swiss specialists to develop low @-@ cost , energy @-@ efficient cooking stoves that relied on renewable energy sources such as methane and biogas . It distributed these among needy rural populations , primarily in Africa . Other areas of concern for Bellerive included the proliferation of nuclear weapons , and the protection of threatened species .

As a resident of Switzerland , Prince Sadruddin was concerned about the impact of insensitive tourist development and deforestation on the European Alps . At the World Economic Forum in 1990 , he launched Alp Action to protect the mountain ecosystem and preserve the Alps ' cultural diversity and vitality . The Bellerive Foundation program encouraged eco @-@ tourism , aiming to reduce the impact of outdoor adventure sports on the fragile alpine habitat . During its years of operation , Alp Action successfully launched over 140 projects in seven countries . It found inspiration in the system of national parks of the Canadian Rockies .

A long @-@ standing trustee and former Vice @-@ President of the World Wide Fund for Nature International , Prince Sadruddin led Bellerive 's support for threatened species . Bellerive was also amongst the first organisations to warn of the potential human health hazards of modern intensive farming methods .

In May 2006 , the activities of the Bellerive Foundation were merged into the Geneva @-@ based Aga Khan Foundation ( founded in 1967 by Prince Sadruddin 's nephew Karim Aga Khan IV ) to form the Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan Fund for the Environment . The US \$ 10 million fund is dedicated to finding practical solutions to environmental problems . The fund concentrates its activities in six areas that were important to Prince Sadruddin : environmental education ; natural resource management in fragile zones ; nature parks and wildlife reserves ; environmentally and culturally appropriate tourism infrastructure ; environmental health ; and research .

= = = Death and remembrance = = =

Prince Sadruddin died of cancer in Boston , Massachusetts , on 12 May 2003 , coincidentally , the same day as his elder half @-@ brother Prince Aly Khan had died 43 years earlier . His body was conveyed to Switzerland , where members of the diplomatic corps , government officials and close friends were invited to pay their last respects at the Château de Bellerive , and sign books of condolence at various locations around the world . Ruud Lubbers , then UNHCR High Commissioner , expressed the sadness of the UNHCR and the entire humanitarian community , commenting that " he left an indelible print on UNHCR 's history ? leading the agency through some of the most challenging moments . Sadruddin 's name became synonymous with UNHCR . "

In accordance with his wishes , Prince Sadruddin 's burial took place at a private ceremony attended by members of his family . Traditional Muslim ceremonies were led by Sheikh Ahmed Ahmed Ibrahim , who leads the prayers at the mausoleum of the Prince 's father , Aga Khan III , in Aswan , Egypt . Last respects were paid beneath the arches of the Château de Bellerive , before the bier was carried to the local cemetery of Collonge @-@ Bellerive . A tribute from the Canton of Geneva read : " The destiny of this family of high Persian nobility , descended from the Prophet Muhammad , is inextricably linked to that of this small European town and to an ambitious project to improve the human condition . "

The United Nations community celebrated Prince Sadruddin 's life at a memorial ceremony held in his honour at its headquarters in New York on 28 October 2003 . He was remembered for representing the moral and compassionate side of the international community . Then United Nations Secretary @-@ General Kofi Annan commented that " he combined respect for humankind with concern for our environment . He worked on behalf of the poor and dispossessed , while celebrating humanity through culture and art . " He concluded his tribute by praising Prince Sadruddin as " a role model to many of us ... his example will continue to inspire new world citizens for several generations to come . "

He was survived by his wife of 31 years , Princess Catherine ; his three stepsons Alexandre , Marc and Nicolas ; as well as his nephews and niece Prince Karim , Prince Ayn and Princess Yasmin ; and his cousin Mme. Francoise Carron . It was Prince Sadruddin 's and Princess Catherine 's wish that their remains be buried in Muslim soil in Egypt .

= = Personal life = =

Prince Sadruddin 's life was deeply influenced by his family roots and cultural heritage . It is claimed that his paternal lineage goes back to Muhammad , the Prophet of Islam , through the Prophet 's daughter Fatima and cousin Ali . Prince Sadruddin 's grandmother was the granddaughter of the Qajar Emperor Fath 'Ali Shah .

International service was a family tradition , and throughout his life Prince Sadruddin was surrounded by it . His father held influential roles in British India . He also served two terms as President of the League of Nations . Prince Sadruddin 's older half @-@ brother , Prince Aly Khan , was Pakistan 's Ambassador to the United Nations . Prince Karim Aga Khan IV , the 49th Imam of the Ismaili Muslims and present Aga Khan , was a nephew to Prince Sadruddin , and is the founder and Chairman of the Aga Khan Development Network . His brother , Prince Ayn , had previously worked with the United Nations before joining the Aga Khan 's secretariat . Meanwhile , Prince Sadruddin 's niece Princess Yasmin , has devoted herself to the fight against Alzheimer 's disease .

Prince Sadruddin had a taste for culture , including music , art and literature . He was a familiar figure at music festivals and other cultural events , both in Europe and overseas . His concern for the environment was complemented by his enjoyment of the outdoors ; he was a keen skier and an accomplished sailor . While still at Harvard in 1953 , Prince Sadruddin became the founding publisher of the Paris Review , which was established with the aim of bringing original creative work to the fore . Every year the Review awards the Aga Khan Prize for Fiction ( established by his father ) for the best short story that it published in the past year .

= = = Marriages = = =

On 27 August 1957 , in Bellerive , Switzerland , Prince Sadruddin married Nina Dyer ( 1930 ? 1965 ) . An Anglo @-@ Indian fashion model , she was the former wife of Baron Hans Heinrich Thyssen @-@ Bornemisza . She converted to Islam , taking the name " Shirin " ( lit . " sweetness " ) . They had no children and divorced in 1962 .

His second marriage took place in November 1972 , in the British West Indies . He married Catherine Aleya Beriketti Sursock who was born in Alexandria , Egypt in 1938 . She was formerly the wife of Lebanese aristocrat Cyril Sursock ( son of Nicolas Sursock and Donna Vittoria Serra of the Dukes di Cassano ) . She and Prince Sadruddin had no children , but from this marriage he gained three stepchildren : Alexandre Sursock ( married to Thai Princess Mom Rajawongse Charuvan Rangsit Prayurasakdi ) , Marc Sursock and Nicolas Sursock .

= = = Art collection = = =

During his lifetime Prince Sadruddin assembled one of the finest private collections of Islamic art in the world . He became a knowledgeable and respected collector , accumulating a priceless collection of paintings , drawings , manuscripts and miniatures over 50 years . He had also gathered a collection of primitive and African art which he sold sometime prior to 1985 .

Prince Sadruddin 's interest in Islamic art was sparked in his youth by his paternal grandmother 's library of Persian books , mystical texts and astrological treatises . While at Harvard in the 1950s , he would make purchases in New York , and eventually began to acquire from dealers in Paris , Geneva and London . He would bid regularly at Sotheby 's and Christie 's auctions in Europe and North America . For advice , he looked to his friend Stuart Cary Welch , a noted historian of Islamic art at Harvard University .

His collection is vast and diverse , and includes Arabic , Persian , Turkish , and Indian pieces dating

from the 10th century . One example is a Quranic page of North African origin written with gold lettering in the Kufic script ? it is more than 1 @,@ 000 years old . Prince Sadruddin 's Persian roots are well represented in calligraphic as well as pictorial specimens reflecting a range of periods and dynastic patrons . Also included are several examples of Ottoman callographies , manuscripts and paintings .

Over the years , parts of his collection were exhibited in New York , London , and Zurich , including a touring show , " Princes , Poets and Paladins " , which was organized by the British Museum in 1998 . The full collection has been housed at the new museum established by Prince Sadruddin 's nephew , the present Aga Khan , in Toronto .

= = Awards and decorations = =

Prince Sadruddin received several honorary doctorates and national decorations from states as diverse as Pakistan , Poland and the Vatican , as well as the United Nations Human Rights Award . He was elected a Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1991 . He was awarded the Bourgeois d 'Honneur de Geneve , made a Commandeur of the Légion d 'honneur of France and a Knight Commander of the Order of St. Sylvester ( KCSS ) of the Holy See , and was a recipient of the Order of the Nile of Egypt . Furthermore , he was made a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire ( KBE ) , this for his services to humanitarian causes and the arts . He was an honorary citizen of Patmos , Greece , where he owned a house .