

Bahá'í House of Worship Papua New Guinea

National House of Worship

Dedicated 25 May 2024

Bahá'í Class – Temple PNG

Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea in Oceania occupies the eastern half of the island of New Guinea and its offshore islands in Melanesia, in the southwestern Pacific Ocean. It has a land border with Indonesia to the west and it is directly adjacent to Australia to the south and the Solomon Islands to the east. Its capital is Port Moresby on its southeastern coast. It is the world's third largest island country, with an area of 462,840 km². It has 839 known languages, and a population between 10 and 17 million.

Papua New Guinea





Papua New Guinea

Aerial view of
Port Moresby

Papua New
Guinea



Bahá'ís in Papua New Guinea

The first Bahá'í in PNG was Violette Hoenke who arrived at Admiralty Island, from Australia, in 1954. The PNG Bahá'í community grew so quickly that in 1969 a National Spiritual Assembly (administrative council) was elected. As of 2020 there were over 30,000 members of the Bahá'í Faith in PNG. In 2012 the decision was made to erect the first Bahá'í House of Worship in PNG. Its design is that of a woven basket, a common feature of all groups and cultures in PNG. It is, therefore, hoped to be a symbol for the entire country. Its nine entrances are inspired by the design of Haus Tambaran (Spirit House). Construction began in Port Moresby in 2018 and was completed in 2024.

Bahá'í
House
of
Worship

Papua
New
Guinea



Construction of the temple

The architectural team of Henry Lape and Saeed Granfar from Port Moresby collaborated in creating a design that embodies the Bahá'í principle of unity in diversity, creating a structure that would resonate universally in one of the most linguistically and culturally diverse regions of the world. “Our goal was to find a unifying theme—a common thread that connects the diverse peoples of this region.”

(Bahá'í World News Service, 21 May 2024 <https://news.bahai.org/story/1732/>)

Architects

Henry Lape
and
Saeed Granfar



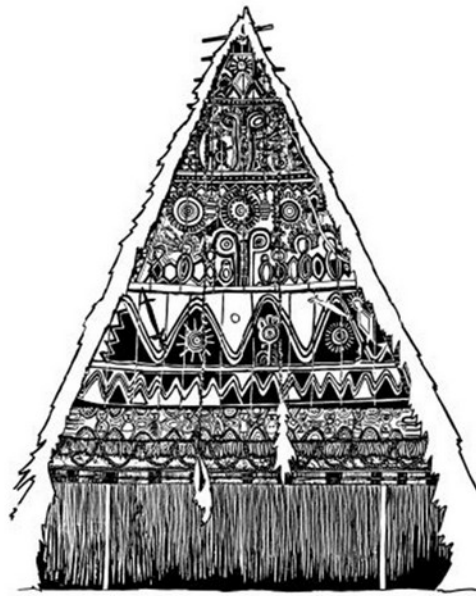
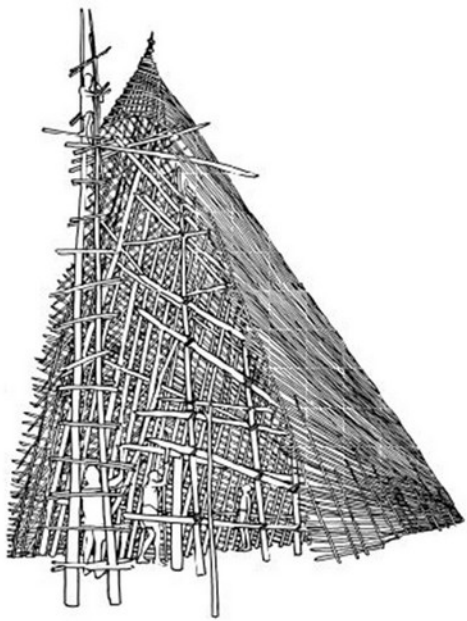
Construction of the temple

The answer lay in the traditional craft of weaving, a ubiquitous element of both village homes and urban centers across PNG.

“Weaving is integral to our cultural identity, symbolizing our interconnectedness and the intertwining of lives and communities. This became our central motif for the House of Worship, a sacred space open to all, where people can come to pray and reflect on their contributions to society.”

(Bahá'í World News Service, 21 May 2024 <https://news.bahai.org/story/1732/>)

Traditional
weaving



Construction of the temple

Throughout the construction of the temple, residents from the surrounding communities played an important role, assisting with various aspects of the construction processes. “Their hands-on involvement significantly deepened their sense of ownership of the temple.”

Community members joined to weave intricate aluminum strips to adorn the interior walls and to carve timber panels for the temple’s exterior. These activities drew on the community members’ traditional artistic skills and reinforced their profound connection to the temple.

(Bahá’í World News Service, 21 May 2024 <https://news.bahai.org/story/1732/>)

Weaving the interior cladding



Construction of the temple

Just as the vast interior features aluminum strips that were meticulously hand-woven, the hand-carved timber panels over the doors extend this expression of artistry from within the temple through to its exterior.

This seamless integration between interior and exterior craftsmanship not only reflects the convergence of diverse skills and traditions, but also embodies the unifying vision of a sacred space belonging to all.

Timber
panels
over the
doors



Construction of the temple

432 timber panels, each hand carved by local craftsmen, frame the nine doors. Sustainably sourced Chengal wood was salvaged from demolished buildings.

Covering an area of 387 square meters, the timber panels are intricately carved with a pattern of waves, which radiate outward from each entrance of the House of Worship.

(Bahá'í World News Service, 11 January 2024 <https://news.bahai.org/story/1713/>)

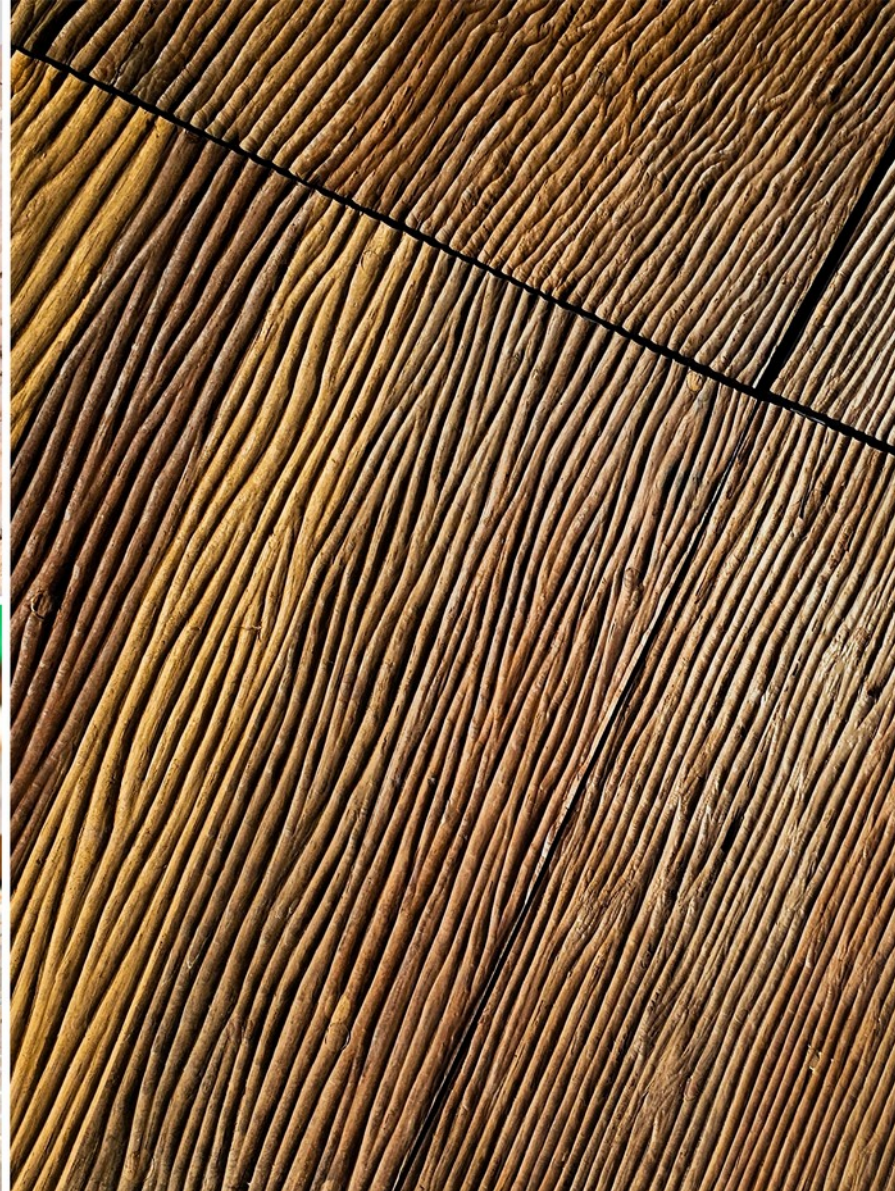


Construction of the temple

Drawing on traditional PNG wood carvers from the Sepik region, an area celebrated for its carving heritage, their skilled hands, trained through generations of tradition, transformed plain timber into expressions of beauty. Charles Sasa, master carver, shared his team's profound joy in contributing to the project. "We the carvers, our families, and our children are blessed and thankful to be part of this iconic building in our country of Papua New Guinea."

(Bahá'í World News Service, 11 January 2024 <https://news.bahai.org/story/1713/>)

Hand-
carved
wood
panels



Construction of the temple

The design of the House of Worship harmonizes with the aspirations of the people of PNG. “The principle of social harmony holds deep significance in our nation. The temple, which embodies the principle of unity in diversity, echoes our National Pledge to foster a sense of shared humanity among some 1000 tribes and over 800 distinct languages.”

(Bahá'í World News Service, 21 May 2024 <https://news.bahai.org/story/1732/>)

Planting
the
gardens







THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF
Papua New Guinea



THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF
Papua New Guinea

Dedication

On 25 May 2024, the National Bahá'í House of Worship for Papua New Guinea was dedicated on a hill in Port Moresby overlooking the Coral Sea. More than 1,000 people from across the country gathered for the inauguration ceremony.





Dedication

Participants of the ceremony included government officials, religious leaders, members of civil society, representatives of local and national Bahá'í institutions, and many other people from across the country.





THE BAHÁ'Í'S OF
Papua New Guinea

Dedication

The program on Saturday included remarks by Kessia Ruh, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors in Australasia whom the Universal House of Justice named as its representative to the event. Mrs. Ruh read a letter from the House of Justice addressed to the gathering.



Counsellor Kessia Ruh reads
the message of the Universal House of Justice

Universal House of Justice

To the Friends Gathered in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, for the Dedication of the House of Worship

Dearly loved Friends,

With hearts filled with love and abundant joy, we greet you on this auspicious occasion, the inauguration of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár for Papua New Guinea. The emergence of this national House of Worship is a testimony to the rapid progress of the Faith across the country. We join you in expressing heartfelt praise and gratitude to Bahá'u'lláh, Who has showered upon you His grace throughout the history of the Cause in your land and now has blessed you with this momentous accomplishment.

(Universal House of Justice, 25 May 2024)



Universal House of Justice

The raising of a House of Worship in Papua New Guinea, this crowning achievement, has called forth your community's resilience, resourcefulness, and determination, as demonstrated through years of strenuous labour, earnest consultation, and ardent supplication of the Almighty. Through your dedicated efforts, a sacred space has been created in which all may, in the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "gather together, and, harmoniously attuned one to another, engage in prayer; with the result that out of this coming together, unity and affection shall grow and flourish in the human heart."

(Universal House of Justice, 25 May 2024)



Universal House of Justice

Purity of heart, deep spirituality, and unshakeable faith—these attributes are inherent in the noble people of Papua New Guinea. They are the qualities that have characterized the believers in your country ever since the Faith reached your shores; they are the foundation upon which the House of Worship has been built. This physical edifice, nestled in the hills of Port Moresby that overlook the Coral Sea, has a profound spiritual significance. By welcoming all within its walls, it expresses the unity of the human race and the oneness of all religions. It weaves together the diverse peoples of this mighty nation by inviting them all to come together in service to humanity and worship of God.

(Universal House of Justice, 25 May 2024)



Universal House of Justice

Indeed, souls across the country are already being stirred by these ideals. We rejoice to see how, in villages and neighbourhoods, worship and service have come to form the basis of a rich pattern of collective life wherever community-building activities are flourishing. In such places, brothers and sisters in spirit are learning together how they can contribute their share to the betterment of their communities—and beyond this, how they can provide for the material and spiritual prosperity of their whole society. May the dedication of this Temple, in the heart of your nation, inspire the emergence of many more communities aspiring to such noble aims.

(Universal House of Justice, 25 May 2024)



Universal House of Justice

Let all rejoice! For this is the moment when faith, hope, and shared purpose all converge. May the anthems of praise that are raised within this sacred space send your spirits soaring and call down blessings upon all who assemble inside.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

(Universal House of Justice, 25 May 2024)

Dedication



Dedication

Confucius Ikoirere, Secretary of the Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly of PNG, spoke about the significance of the temple. “This national House of Worship is the crowning achievement of all the efforts of the past, and a beacon of light and hope for the future.”

Tony Lakame, another member of the National Assembly, referring to the structure of the central edifice, said that “each component represents a story of love, sacrifice, and perseverance.”





THE BAHÁ'Í OF
Papua New Guinea

Dedication

The Governor of the National Capital District, Powes Parkop, highlighted the unifying power of the House of Worship in a land enriched with diverse ethnic groups.

“The House of Worship is not just a physical structure. It is a beacon of light inviting all to come together in prayer, in reflection, and in harmony. We are many, yet we are one,” he said.

We are
many,
yet we
are one





Dedication

Governor Parkop added: “Without peace we cannot have a prosperous country. ... Our nation will be greater; our people will prosper when we embrace this fundamental virtue that is the cornerstone of all faiths.

“We must seek to blend all this diversity into a peaceful, livable, thriving city that is the beacon of light for a nation of 1,000 tribes.”



THE BAHÁ'Í OF
Papua New Guinea



Dedication

Rusa Kenioriana, a young person who travelled from the Solomon Islands to participate in the dedication ceremony, said, “It was such a bounty to witness the opening of the Bahá’í House of Worship.

“This sacred space is the fruit of the devoted efforts of the people of Papua New Guinea who have a spirit of devotion in their homes, within their families, and throughout their communities. Their collective endeavors have led to the emergence of the House of Worship.”

(Bahá’í World News Service, Sunday, 26 May 2024, <https://news.bahai.org/story/1734/>)



Dedication

The program continued on Sunday, welcoming another 3,000 people to join in celebrating the historic occasion.



Sunday
programme



Sunday
programme



Rodney
Hancock

the
second
Bahá'í
to open
PNG
in
1954



Rodney
Hancock

the
second
Bahá'í
to open
PNG
in
1954



The
Greatest
Name
in the
dome

