

Religions for Peace

The Year 2024 at a Glance





This report showcases a few of the key highlights of *Religions for Peace's* multi-religious actions on local, national, regional, and international levels in 2024.



Photo: *A High-Level Reception, A Beacon of Light in the Darkness*, held on 21 September 2024
From left to right: Dr. William Vendley, H.E. Miguel Ángel Moratinos, H.E. Shaykh Abdallah bin Bayyah, Dr. Francis Kuria, and H.E. Alice Wairimu Nderitu

In February 2024, the World Council appointed Dr. Francis Kuria as the New Secretary General of *Religions for Peace*



On 12 February 2024, in accord with the provisions outlined in the International Standing Rules regarding the replacement of the Secretary General in the event of a vacancy in that Office, the **World Council** approved and adopted the motion that Dr. Francis Kuria be appointed Secretary General of *Religions for Peace* International. The decision came after the resignation of the previous Secretary General on 28 May 2023.

First 2024 Meetings of the Standing Commissions

The Standing Commission on Building Just, Peaceful and Inclusive Societies convened on 29 July 2024

The Standing Commission on Advancing Gender Equality convened on 30 July 2024

The Standing Commission on Nurturing a Sustainable Environment convened on 31 July 2024

The Standing Commission on Championing Freedom of Thought, Conscience, and Religion convened on 1 August 2024

The Standing Commission on Strengthening Inter-religious Education convened on 2 August 2024

Following are some of the key outcomes of the meetings across the Standing Commissions:

- Explore opportunities to expand membership.
- Explore themes and sub-themes for the *Religions for Peace* 11th World Assembly.
- Develop a document on the ten areas of **Pact for the Future**, incorporating theological reflections.
- Develop policy briefs to raise awareness of pressing global issues, highlight opportunities for common action, and advance calls to action on key concerns.
- Training **toolkit on a multi-religious approach to peacebuilding**, which was developed in partnership with the Search for Common Ground and piloted in Nigeria, to expand to other countries.
- Develop a concept paper outlining a book on Freedom of Thought, Conscience, and Religion.
- Discussed challenges in implementing inter-religious education in high conflict zones, and the need for it to foster constructive dialogue and understanding without causing further antagonism.

I. Building Just, Peaceful and Inclusive Societies

10th Anniversary Symposium on the Role of Religion and Faith-Based Organisations in International Affairs

On 23 January, *Religions for Peace* co-hosted this event with the United Nations Multi-Faith Advisory Council. High-level leaders from faith-based organisations, civil society, UN Member States and UN agencies discussed the progress on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Sustainable Development Goals, and advocated for the creation of the UN Pact for the Future, in solidarity with the Global South. A recording of the event is available [here](#).



“Forgiveness at the Roots of Faiths – How Understanding the Science of Forgiveness Can Better Heal and Restore Communities of Faith” Training of the Trainers

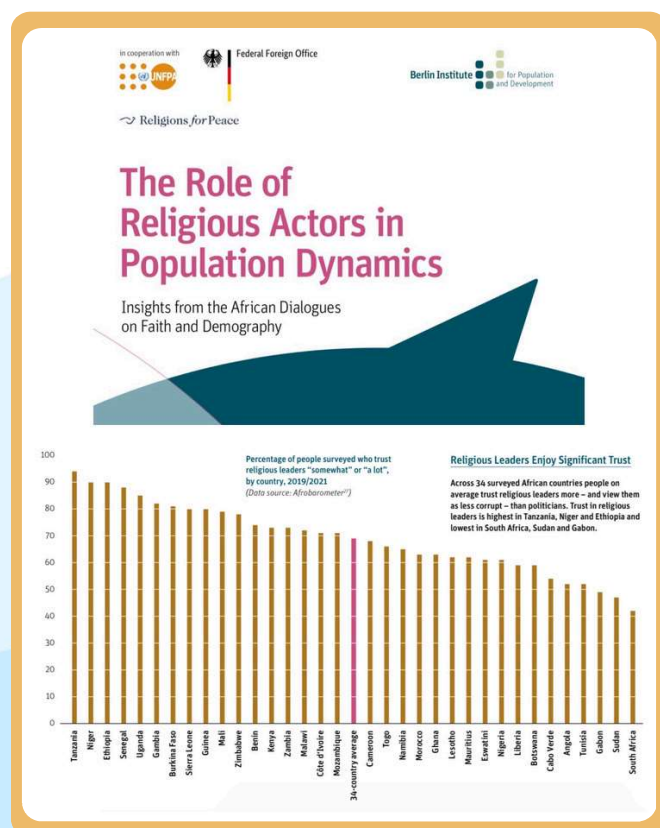
From 30 January to 9 February, Inter-religious Councils (IRCs) of Zimbabwe and Liberia convened “Forgiveness at the Roots of Faiths – How Understanding the Science of Forgiveness Can Better Heal and Restore Communities of Faith” Training of the Trainers, and dove into the profound concept of forgiveness, exchanging personal anecdotes, experiences and stories. With support from the Templeton World Charity Foundation, this training programme has been an ongoing process with the development of a new, re-adapted **toolkit**, offering mindful and psychological practices and benefits to forgiveness through a multi-religious lens. Further information on the training can be found [here](#).



I. Building Just, Peaceful and Inclusive Societies

The Second Tokyo Peace Roundtable

Religions for Peace International and *Religions for Peace* Japan, in collaboration with the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), convened diverse religious and faith leaders and actors (from Colombia, Haiti, India, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Mali, Myanmar, Palestine, Peru, Russia, Spain, Türkiye, Ukraine, and the United States), alongside policymakers and experts for the Second Tokyo Peace Roundtable from 18-21 February in Tokyo, Japan. The participants highlighted the disproportionate impact of conflicts on vulnerable populations and emphasised the urgent need for multi-religious and multi-stakeholder cooperation. As reflected in the official statement, the participants called for “the cessation and transformation of all ongoing wars, conflicts, and the use of violence and weapons” and committed to “work together, as bridge-builders and peacemakers, in ensuring that no one is left behind in common action to address severe violence, displacement, and other human rights violations.” Click [here](#) to read the official statement. More photos are [here](#).



Conclusion of the African Dialogues on Faith and Demography

In April, *Religions for Peace* developed and disseminated the report on the sixth event in the *African Dialogues on Faith and Demography Series*, *Faith Actors as Agents of Change: Strategies for Success*. The report can be found [here](#).

On 5 December, the report, *The Role of Religious Actors in Population Dynamics: Insights from the African Dialogues on Faith and Demography*, was officially launched to disseminate the key outcomes and recommendations from the dialogue series, bringing together various stakeholders – including members of the African Council of Religious Leaders-*Religions for Peace* (ACRL-RfP). Click [here](#) for the report in English and [here](#) for the French version.

This series of online exchanges started in December 2023, and was organised by *Religions for Peace*, in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the German Federal Foreign Office, and the Berlin Institute for Population and Development.

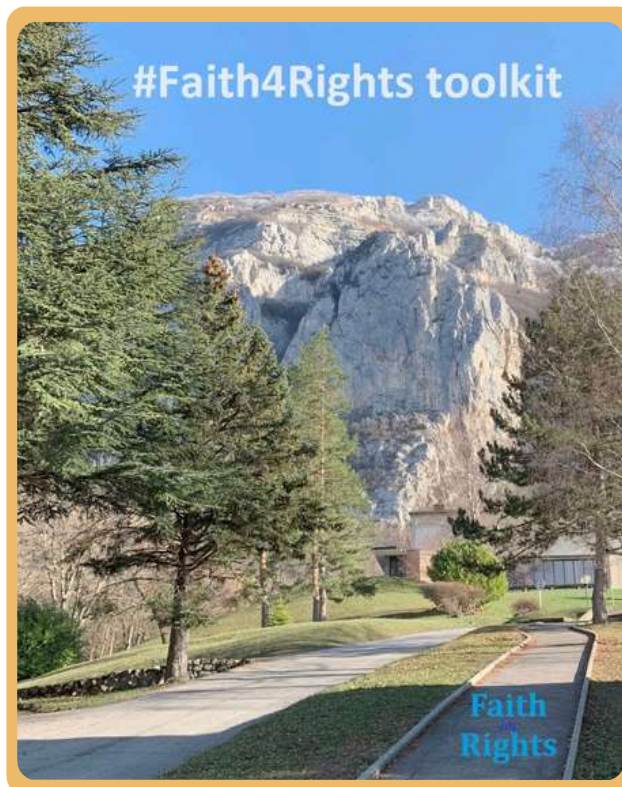
I. Building Just, Peaceful and Inclusive Societies

Religions, Beliefs, and Human Rights: A Faith for Rights Approach

Religions for Peace in partnership with the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), University for Peace (UPEACE), and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) launched a four-week facilitated online course based on peer-to-peer learning methodology of the **#Faith4Rights Toolkit** for religious, faith-based and belief actors, policymakers, and practitioners to explore a practical guide for protecting and promoting human rights and prevent, manage, and resolve violent conflicts.

The webinars covered the following topics between April and May 2024:

- Introduction to Religions, Beliefs, Human Rights, and Peacebuilding
- Religious Contributions (and Impediments) to Human Rights and Peace
- Contextualising a “Faith for Rights” Approach: Lessons Learned and Future Opportunities
- “Faith for Rights” in Practice



World Refugee Day

On 20 June, *Religions for Peace* organised a virtual webinar, *Welcoming the Other: Strengthening Advocacy and Action for Refugees and Other Forcibly Displaced Communities*, in celebration of World Refugee Day 2024. The event brought together religious and faith leaders, former refugees, youth, and other stakeholders, to engage in dialogue and share the best practices to strengthen advocacy and efforts for the protection and participation of refugees and other forcibly displaced communities in decision-making and peacebuilding processes.

H.E. Ms. Ruvendrini Menikdiwela, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), noted that refugees need the solidarity of faith actors more than ever, as the right to asylum is increasingly under threat in many parts of the world.

The report of the event is [here](#).

I. Building Just, Peaceful and Inclusive Societies

A Beacon of Light in the Darkness: A High-Level Reception and Dinner

On the International Day of Peace, which marks the 25th anniversary of the United Nations General Assembly's adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, esteemed ambassadors, religious leaders, and dignitaries, joined together for the high-level reception and dinner, *A Beacon of Light in the Darkness*.

The event marked a renewed commitment to sustained interfaith and intersectional cooperation and celebrated collective action across religious, political, and cultural spheres. Co-organised by the Alliance of Virtue, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), the Abu Dhabi Forum for Peace, the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide (UNOSAPG), the Network for Traditional and Religious Peacemakers, and *Religions for Peace*, the event brought together nearly 100 participants and provided a unique opportunity for high-level engagement.

In his Keynote Address, H.E. Shaykh Abdallah bin Bayyah, President, Abu Dhabi Forum for Peace; Co-Moderator, *Religions for Peace* expressed the urgency of continued peacekeeping efforts in the face of existing global challenges, "Peace advocates must not retreat but redouble their efforts when the drums of war echo. They need to ensure the voices of wisdom and peace are heard. We want to dream of perpetual peace instead of perpetual war."

H.E. Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos, United Nations Under Secretary General and High Representative for UNAOC urged, "Only dialogues are enough. We need to build a strong alliance for peace. Sustainable Development Goals cannot be realized if conflicts persist. Our pursuit must be rooted in peace."

H.E. Ms. Alice Wairimu Nderitu, United Nations Under Secretary General and Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, said, "It is urgent to prioritise prevention instead of waiting for a crisis to happen and react. When people with weapons take charge, the work of prevention becomes extremely important but also increasingly difficult. However, we must never give up on it."



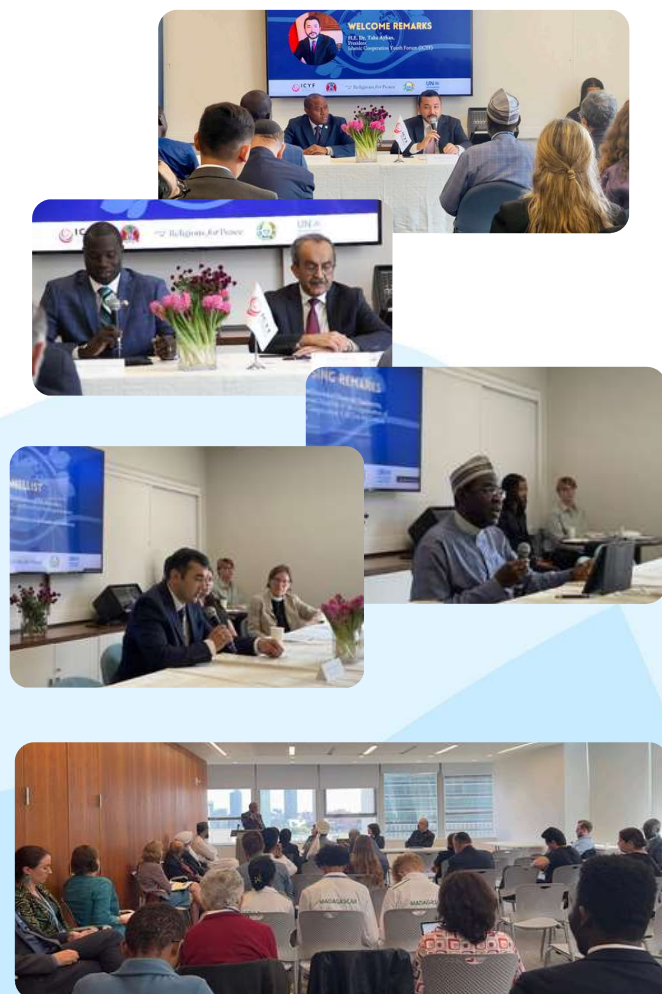
Please see the event's photos [here](#) and a press release [here](#).

I. Building Just, Peaceful and Inclusive Societies

Interfaith Youth Responses to the Century's Biggest Challenges

With the Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum (ICYF), in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Faith for Earth Coalition, and the Governments of The Gambia and Uzbekistan, *Religions for Peace* hosted the official side event to the **United Nations Summit of the Future**, *Interfaith Youth Responses to the Century's Biggest Challenges: Faith-Based Contributions to the Summit of the Future*.

H.E. Dr. Taha Ayhan, President, Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum (ICYF), shared, “Poverty, conflicts, and climate change are interconnected problems that must be addressed simultaneously,” and urged world leaders to join collective efforts to promote justice, compassion, and sustainability amidst ongoing humanitarian disasters across the globe.



The Honourable Minister Mr. Bakary Badjie, Minister of Youth and Sports, Government of The Gambia, highlighted, “Faith-based organisations are central to promoting tolerance and peace, especially in post conflict societies.” Mr. Jamil Ahmad, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) underscored the need for investment in youth education, social protection, and mental health, particularly in regions impacted by environmental crises and social injustice.

In his closing remarks, H.E. Ambassador Hameed Opeleyeru, Permanent Observer of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to the United Nations, emphasised the crucial role of youth and faith-based organisations in promoting peace, socio-economic development, and achieving the SDGs, “The nexus between peace and socio-economic development deepens as we examine the contributions of youth and future generations.” The event’s report is [here](#).

Dialogue on Transformative Peace

On 21 September, *Religions for Peace* co-organised *Multi-stakeholder Dialogue on Transformative Peace* with Lutheran World Federation, African Council of Religious Leaders-*Religions for Peace* (ACRL-RfP), Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Finn Church Aid and Network of Religious and Traditional Peacemakers during the UN Summit of the Future.

Rev Khader El-Yateem, Executive Director, ELCA said, “We need to unite to address the injustices that we’re seeing. We need to allow the victims to speak without labeling them as terrorists, without dehumanizing them. We need to recognize all as humans.”

Rev. Dr Anne Burghardt, General Secretary, Lutheran World Federation said, “The most important thing is cooperation. With our siblings from other religions, for the need of mutual respect. Where the respect is missing, it has a risk of violence.”



I. Building Just, Peaceful and Inclusive Societies

Faith, Ethics and AI: Shaping a Future for Global Peace

On the sidelines of the 79th United Nations General Assembly, *Religions for Peace* co-organised this hybrid side event with several key partners. Religious actors, technology experts, policymakers, and civil society discussed the ethical dimensions of artificial intelligence and its implications for peace and security around the world.

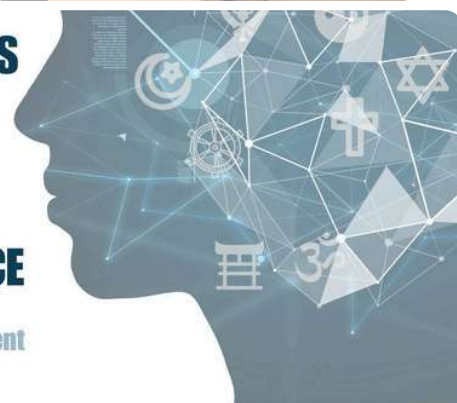
In his opening remarks, Dr. Francis Kuria highlighted the risks posed by autonomous weapon systems, which further dehumanises warfare, exacerbate civilian harm, and enable mass surveillance infringing on human dignity. Dr. Kuria warned of AI-fuelled disinformation's divisive impact and called for ethical AI frameworks rooted in justice, equality, and compassion, "Religious leaders have a moral responsibility to guide the ethical use of AI, promoting fairness, transparency, accountability, and the protection of human dignity."



FAITH, ETHICS AND AI: SHAPING A FUTURE FOR GLOBAL PEACE

Hybrid UNGA Side Event

25 September 2024
1:45-3:00 pm EDT
New York City, USA



The Network for Religion & Conflict Resolution
World Council of Churches
FCA Finn Church Aid
Religions for Peace
actalliance
The European Parliament
Baha'i International Community



Offering congratulatory remarks at this conference, Dr. Francis Kuria emphasised that "...there is a tremendous opportunity to dialogue and seek new pathways toward a globally harmonious, just, peaceable, and sustainable future for people, their communities, the planet, and the entire ecological system. This is especially timely given the current process to reform and reconfigure the international peace architecture by the UN system. This is imperative if we are to deal with the newest dynamics driving war and conflict." Dr. Kuria's congratulatory remarks can be found [here](#).

CoNGO-ICCGC Global Futures Conference: Global Citizens in Action for Peace and Sustainability

On 26 August, the conference, *Global Action on Peace, Sustainability, and Prosperity*, brought together diverse stakeholders to address issues where religion and spirituality intersect with fostering global citizenship, ethical leadership, and multilateral cooperation. The event was co-organised by the Interfaith Coalition Conference for Global Citizenship (ICCGC), the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CoNGO), and Won Buddhism, in collaboration with *Religions for Peace* and other partners.

The panel discussion, Youth for Climate Action, moderated by Ms. Kristine Leonardo, Programme Officer, *Religions for Peace*, demonstrated the power of interfaith youth leadership in tackling the global climate crisis and producing sustainable solutions. The conference successfully highlighted the importance of meaningful and sustainable youth engagement as a key factor in safeguarding a brighter future. Recordings of the conference can be viewed [here](#) and [here](#).

I. Building Just, Peaceful and Inclusive Societies

Faith and Positive Change for Children, Families and Communities (FPCC)

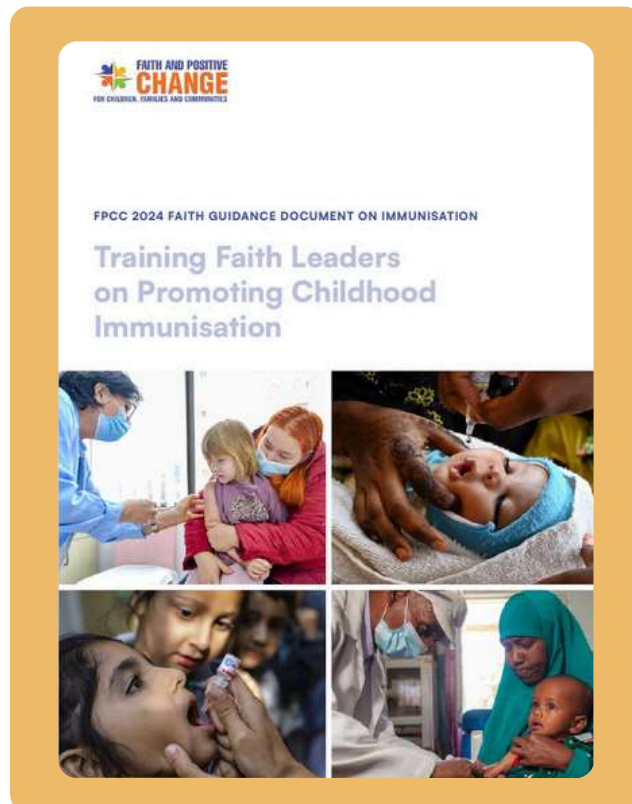
Under the FPCC programme, with support from UNICEF, *Religions for Peace* engaged with faith community members to participate in a survey aimed at assessing knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, and practices related to vaccine uptake.

Over 40,000 individuals from 10 countries (Mali, Nigeria, Zambia, Kenya, Brazil, Guatemala, Iraq, Egypt, Pakistan and Nepal) were reached directly and participated in the multi-country survey, with 19,847 completing it and providing valuable insights into the factors influencing immunization uptake within religious communities.

Central to the FPCC initiative was the development of a **Faith Guidance Document on Immunisation**, which aims to provide religious leaders with resources and guidance to promote routine vaccine uptake and primary healthcare.

In August, *Religions for Peace*, UNICEF and partners hosted a webinar to share the findings from FPCC surveys on *Drivers and Barriers to Routine Immunization for Children Under Five and COVID 19 Vaccination Among Religious Communities* in 10 countries and revealed that religious leaders' support for vaccination positively influences community immunization rates. See the report and findings [here](#).

All FPCC materials and reports, including Revised **Mind and Heart Dialogue Facilitators' Manual** are available on: www.faith4positivechange.org.



FPCC Renewed Partnership with UNICEF

Religions for Peace entered into a new partnership with UNICEF from July 2024, aimed at expanding FPCC and establish a faith-based mechanisms of skilled and committed stakeholders in countries that are at risk of a reversal in child rights, with a focus on female genital mutilation (FGM). This multi-country project covers Ethiopia, Gambia, Mali, Somalia and Uganda and is being implemented jointly with ACRL-R/P.

In June, *Religions for Peace* led an exploratory visit in The Gambia to build consensus among religious leaders to form the Inter-religious Council (IRC). The mission also mobilised religious leaders to successfully campaign against the repeal of anti-female genital mutilation (FGM) laws in The Gambia.



I. Building Just, Peaceful and Inclusive Societies

Multi-Faith High-Level Forum - Advancing Positive Outcomes for Children, Families and Communities

Religions for Peace with UNICEF and Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities (JLI) organised *Multi-Faith High-Level Forum - Advancing Positive Outcomes for Children, Families and Communities*, from 26-27 March in New York City. A total of 72 participants attended the Forum in-person, six virtually, and 36 children sent video messages.

The Forum shared learning on children's issues, leveraging experiences from the Faith and Positive Change for Children, Families and Communities (FPCC) Initiative and shared best practices and interventions in faith engagement and collaboration to respond to cross-cutting issues.

This Forum enhanced collaboration among faith-based and secular groups to address global crises impacting communities around the world, such as health, environmental, and humanitarian crises. As part of the FPCC initiative, the Forum shared the best practices in faith engagement to tackle challenges faced by children, families, and communities.



A message to the Forum from H.E. Mr. Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees can be watch [here](#), and a message from H.E. Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of WHO can be watched [here](#).

Ms. Anurita Bains, UNICEF's Deputy Director of programmes, representing the Executive Director of UNICEF, highlighted "religion has a profound impact on individual behaviors, social norms and collective action. UNICEF is very pleased with the pledge of support of faith actors to address the most pressing issues facing children - the climate crisis, violence and harmful practices, the need to access quality health care, including immunisation."



Photos from the Forum are [here](#) and [here](#).

I. Building Just, Peaceful and Inclusive Societies

High-level Roundtable Consultation of the Religions for Peace-UNHCR Multi-Religious Council of Leaders

Religions for Peace and UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency met with the Multi-Religious Council of Leaders on 3 December to welcome its new members and begin its second tenure leading up to the Global Refugee Forum 2027.

The Multi-Religious Council of Leaders works together to mobilize their faith communities, advocate for policies that provide protection for refugees, speak out against discrimination and stigmatization, promote peace reconciliation and social cohesion in their respective regions and globally.

H.E. Mr. Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees expressed, “Your voices as religious leaders carry unmatched power to reshape perceptions, promote compassion, and inspire action for displaced people.”



Multi-Religious Council of Leaders at the Global Refugee Forum in 2023. Photo: © UNHCR/Baz Ratner

H.E. Metropolitan Emmanuel, Elder Metropolitan of Chalcedon; Co-Moderator, *Religions for Peace* said, “Religious leaders have a sacred duty to protect the vulnerable, welcome the stranger, and advocate for sustainable solutions to displacement... When faith traditions unite in humanitarian efforts, we multiply our effectiveness and bring hope to those forced from their homes.”

More on this meeting is [here](#).

II. Advancing Gender Equality

Women of Excellence in Multi-Religious Action Award Ceremony

Women of faith are the backbone of all faith communities and religious institutions but are rarely recognised for their efforts. *Religions for Peace* understands the importance of recognising and amplifying the work of women of faith and women-led initiatives, as they are often overlooked in the fields of peacebuilding and interfaith cooperation. In 2023, *Religions for Peace*, with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, launched this Award. On 26 March 2024, *Religions for Peace* presented the *Women of Excellence in Multi-Religious Action Award* to honour the three women of faith who have advanced vital contributions to multi-religious collaboration and action in their respective communities:

- **Dr. Kezevino Aram**, President, Shanti Ashram; Co-Moderator, *Religions for Peace*
- **Professor Dr. Nayla Tabbara**, Co-Founder, Adyan Foundation; Co-President, *Religions for Peace*
- **Rev. Sr. Agatha Ogochukwu Chikelue**, Executive Director, Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP), Nun of the Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy; Chair, *Religions for Peace* International Women's Coordinating Committee (IWCC)



II. Advancing Gender Equality

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence 2024 took place from 25 November to 10 December. *Religions for Peace* launched online messages through its social media channels.

On 25 November - the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women - a message from Dr. Francis Kuria was released, emphasising how “the collective strength of faith communities, civil society, policy makers and advocates” can forge a path where a vision of shared human flourishing enables a future where no one is left behind.

Several esteemed leaders also expressed their thoughts through video and written messages which had an impression of total 16,707. Click the images below to visit our Instagram page to watch the videos and read the messages.

On the last day of the online campaign, 10 December, which is also the Human Rights Day, the **Executive Committee of Religions for Peace** issued a statement.

The Executive Committee stated, “We recognise that religion and cultural traditions, at times, can be misused to perpetuate harmful practices through misinformation or misinterpretation. However, as faith leaders representing diverse religions, regions, gender and generation, we affirm that no sacred teaching justifies Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or any harmful practices. Together, we stand resolutely in the truth that faith must always serve as a force for peace, dignity, equality, and healing.”

Please see the full statement [here](#).



Religions for Peace



16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence



“Women and girls in territories throughout the world are enmeshed in a culture which enables and sustains violence against them. This affects not only women and girls; such violence is ultimately an act of aggression against society as a whole. It blights the progress of victims, perpetrators, families and entire communities.

As we seek to eradicate violence against women and girls, we must not lose sight of the broader, long-term goal: namely the creation of conditions in which women and men can work shoulder to shoulder in constructing a more just and equitable social order.”



Ms. Bani Dugal
Principal Representative to the United Nations,
Baha'i International Community,
Co-President, Religions for Peace



Religions for Peace



16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence



“Ending all forms of gender-based violence is about looking at the root causes- challenging harmful gender norms, addressing inequality, and fostering respect and equity in every aspect of our lives.

During 16 Days of Activism, we call on men and boys to demonstrate their allyship by taking action, standing up against violence, and supporting initiatives that create safer, more inclusive communities.

Together, we can drive real change.”

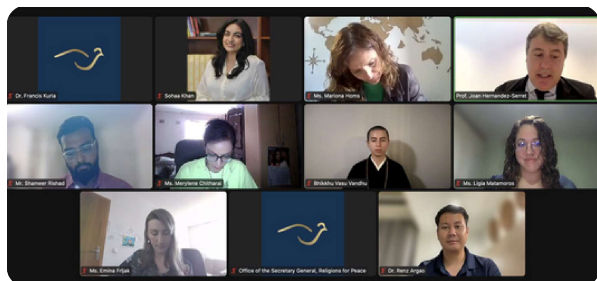


Mr. Humberto Carolo
Chief Executive Officer, White Ribbon
Member, Religions for Peace Standing Commission on
Advancing Gender Equality

III. Nurturing a Sustainable Environment

Earth Day 2024

Religions for Peace, together with *Religions for Peace-Spain*, the City of Barcelona, and the City Council of Manresa, convened the Earth Day 2024 virtual event, *Love and Respect for the Earth: Furthering Multi-religious, Multi-sectoral, and Intergenerational Collaboration to Address the Climate Crisis*, bringing together members of *Religions for Peace* International Youth Committee (IYC), Interfaith Youth Networks (IYNs), religious leaders, and city government officials to revisit the commitments made since 2022.



2024 ECOSOC Youth Forum

Religions for Peace, Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum (ICYF), and International Islamic Fiqh Academy convened a side event, *Empowering Youth in Catalysing Faith-inspired Approaches to Achieving SDGs 16 and 17 in the Climate Change Agenda* during the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum 2024. Dr. Francis Kuria recognised the youth as “the best and most important assets of faith communities, as they bring with them the necessary vitality, knowledge, and creativity to develop new innovative solutions to the climate crisis.”



United Nations 29th Annual Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP 29)

During the United Nations Conference of the Parties (COP29) in Baku, Azerbaijan, *Religions for Peace* co-organised three events. With the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation, Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA, Maryknoll Sisters of Saint Dominic Inc, and The Regeneration Project, *Religions for Peace* co-hosted *From Policy to Practice: How Faith Actors Can Promote Locally-led Adaptation* on 16 November.



Priestess Beatriz Schulthess shared, “The impacts of climate change in our communities are so devastating that with or without any additional resource, we have been taking actions to mitigate and adapt, based on our local, indigenous knowledge,” highlighting the vital work of indigenous communities do to protect our environment.

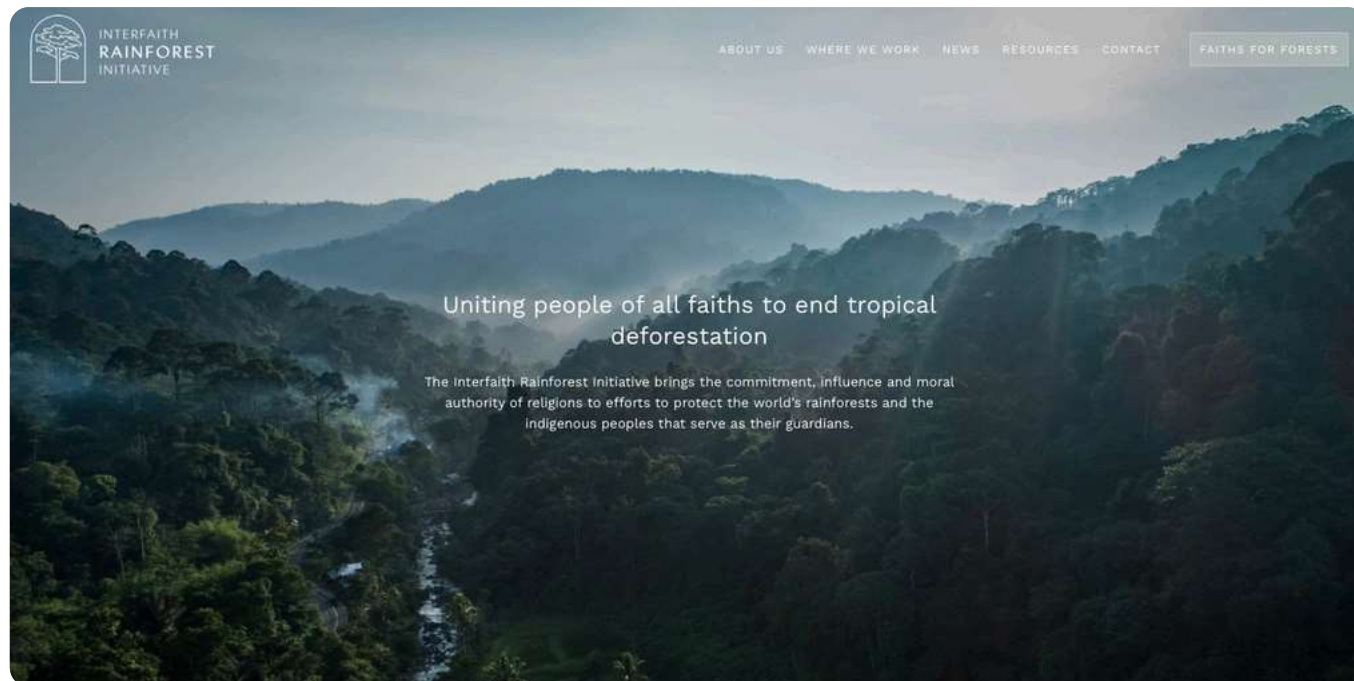
Following the success in the first-ever Faith Pavilion at COP28, *Religions for Peace* convened two side events at COP29 Faith Pavilion. On 18 November, we hosted the side event *Faith in Action: Multi-Religious, Multi-sectoral & Intergenerational Collaboration for a Better Future*, and on November 14, we co-hosted *Climate Action as a Conflict Resolution Tool within Multi-Faith Communities*, with Faith for Our Planet (FFOP) and other partners. Dr. Francis Kuria’s video message is [here](#).



In his **message**, H.E. Judge Mohamed Abdelsalam, Secretary General, Muslim Council of Elders; Co-President, *Religions for Peace*, highlighted how initiatives like the Faith Pavilion “represents an opportunity to unify efforts and enhance cooperation.” The remark reiterated how it is only through proactive engagement that our sacred teachings and values are translated into action, lifting injustices and upholding dignity.

III. Nurturing a Sustainable Environment

Interfaith Rainforest Initiative (IRI)



Religions for Peace, in collaboration with other partners and with the support of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), continued the implementation the **Interfaith Rainforest Initiative (IRI)** in five countries containing nearly 70 percent of the world's remaining rainforests (Brazil, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Indonesia, and Peru). This initiative brings the commitment, influence and moral authority of religions to efforts to protect the world's rainforests and the indigenous peoples that serve as their guardians.

Religions for Peace participated in the second IRI National Facilitators Learning Exchange, held in Brazil from 23-30 April 2024. This learning exchange enabled the five IRI country programmes to share lessons learned and best practices around mobilising faith-based actions.

As part of the IRI Global Steering Committee (GSC), *Religions for Peace* together with other members reflected on the progress of IRI. Held on 16 September, the GSC meeting reviewed the significant accomplishments of IRI's country programmes.

Religions for Peace has consistently highlighted the work of the IRI in various local, national, regional, and global discourses, raising awareness of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, environmental protection and address the impacts of climate change.

Religions for Peace continued to work at national and local levels through IRI country programmes to pass legislation that protects forests and the human rights of their Indigenous protectors, mobilise faith communities for advocacy, and facilitate learning on the science behind our spiritual commitment to protect the earth.

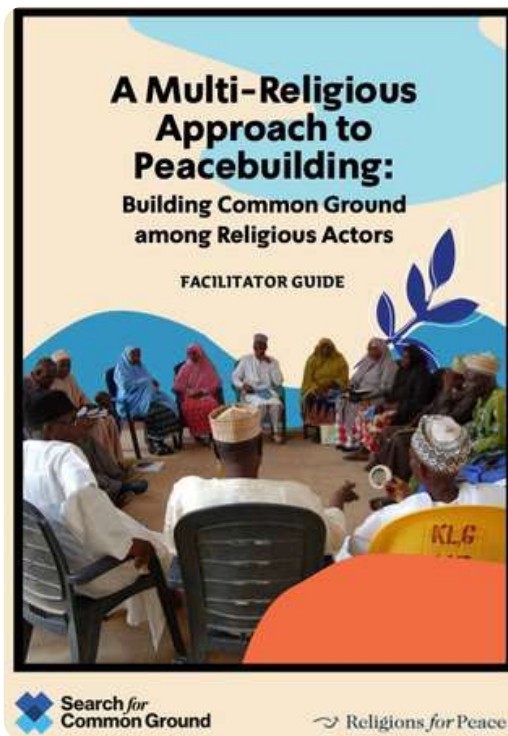
IV. Championing Freedom of Thought, Conscience & Religion

Advancing Human Dignity, Thought, Conscience and Religion among Religious Actors: A Multi-Religious Approach to Peace

Religions for Peace and Search for Common Ground have strengthened strategic partnership and currently developing new joint project as a follow up to our earlier work on designing training materials on multi-religious peacebuilding for religious actors, such as “A Multi-Religious Approach to Peacebuilding: Building Common Ground among Religious Actors” and conducting training workshops based on those peacebuilding resources.

2024 Book Launch, Author Knox Thames

On 14 November, *Religions for Peace* hosted the official launch of the book *Ending Persecution: Charting the Path to Global Religious Freedom*, written by Mr. H. Knox Thames, Senior Fellow, Pepperdine University, and published by University of Notre Dame. In the virtual session, facilitated by Ms. Deepika Singh, Deputy Secretary General, *Religions for Peace*, Mr. Thames and esteemed panelists from *Religions for Peace*'s Standing Commission on Championing Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion discussed the findings of the book. With his extensive experience working within the U.S government and as a humanitarian rights lawyer Mr. Thames's work proposes decisive strategies to advance religious freedom for all and shares available tools to encourage governments to reform their systems and uphold human rights.



Introduction to Freedom of Religion or Belief Workshop by Youth Interfaith Network

On 18 November, *Religions for Peace* Interfaith Youth Network organised an online workshop to introduce freedom of religion or belief which is often misunderstood. The recorded version can be viewed from the youth team's x.com page [here](#).

Religions for Peace

Invitation to Join A Book Launch
Ending Persecution: Charting the Path to Global Religious Freedom

A Conversation between the Author and Panelists
 Thursday, 14 November 2024, from 10.30 am to 12.00 pm EDT

Webinar Registration: <https://bit.ly/rfpwebinarbook>

ENDING PERSECUTION
 CHARTING THE PATH TO GLOBAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
 H. KNOX THAMES

Panelists:

- Dr. Francis Kuria, Secretary General, Religions for Peace
- Prof. Carmen Dominguez, Professor, Faculty of Law, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, President, Latin American Consortium of Religious Freedom
- Imam Dr. Sayed Razawi, Director General/Chief Imam, Scottish Alliance Society, European Council of Religious Leaders (ECRL/RP), International Trustee, Religions for Peace
- Mr. Knox Thames, Author
- Ms. Bani Dugal, Principal Representative to the United Nations, India's International Community Co-President, Religions for Peace
- Bishop Dr. Marib Younan, Bishop Emeritus of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, Honorary President, Religions for Peace
- Deepika Singh, Deputy Secretary General, Religions for Peace

Introduction to freedom of religion or belief Workshop

YOUTH INVITATION
 Freedom of religion or belief is often misunderstood. We want to invite you to a workshop to understand what FoRB is about.

SAVE THE DATE:
18TH NOVEMBER 2024, MONDAY
 STARTS 7 PM IST / 2:30 PM CET (2HRS)

REGISTER TODAY
 Zoom Registration: <https://bit.ly/4fd2rtll>

Moderator: Ms. Merylene Chitharai, Youth Media Team

Religions for Peace
 Global Interfaith Youth Network

MS. EMINA FRLJAK
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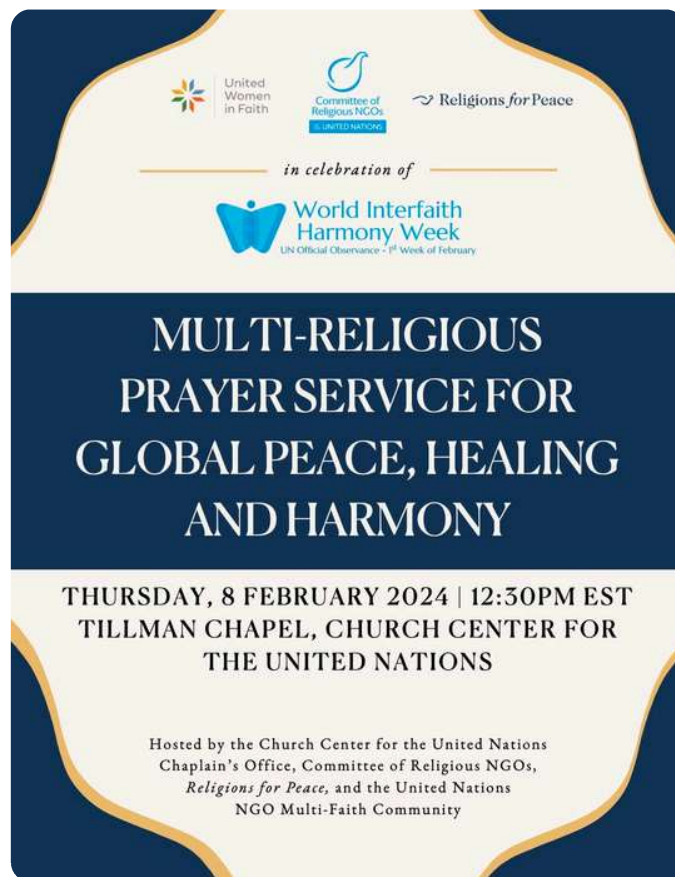
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V. Strengthening Inter-religious Education

Multi-Religious Prayer Service for Global Peace, Healing and Harmony

Religions for Peace, in collaboration with the Committee of Religious NGOs at the United Nations, co-hosted the *Multi-Religious Prayer Service for Global Peace, Healing and Harmony*, in celebration of the 2024 World Interfaith Harmony Week. The event brought together diverse faith actors and faith-based organisations who offered prayers and reflections on the current state of the international community. Convened in the spirit of interfaith unity and harmony, the event demonstrated our common humanity and served as a reminder of our shared responsibility to uphold the dignity and rights of all, especially the most vulnerable communities.

Established by the United Nations in 2010, World Interfaith Harmony Week serves as a powerful reminder of our shared humanity and the multi-religious imperative of working together to build bridges of understanding across religious divides. This year, the theme of World Interfaith Harmony Week, “Building Bridges, Breaking Barriers,” called upon people of faith to transcend boundaries and reach out across divides, to engage in dialogue and collaboration, and to serve together towards a world of peace, justice, and mutual respect.



FAU Friedrich-Alexander-Universität
Faculty of Humanities,
Social Sciences, and Theology



Education for Sustainable Development – Spiritual Dimensions



13th Nuremberg Forum 2024
30 Sept – 2 Oct 2024 in Nuremberg

The ecological crisis is also a spiritual crisis! And it is a widely shared insight that sustainability implies spiritual dimensions. This is so, because issues of sustainability touch on the fundamental questions of who we are as human beings, how our relationship with nature can be understood, how we want to live, what makes life worth living and how a life worth living can be achieved for all humans on our planet. Recently, religious and spiritual traditions have increasingly been discussed as such valuable sources. To put it in another way, the global ecological crises that we are facing today are so dramatic that they require in-depth transformations of individual and collective mind-sets. Not least, they require a sense of hope, confidence and solidarity that can support the motivation and endurance in addressing the huge challenges. In this situation, it makes sense to use all cultural sources available that could facilitate such transformations and such motivation.

Education has repeatedly emerged as a major aspect and important approach, especially concerning the question of how the widely deplored mind-behavior gap can be overcome. The major aim of the Nuremberg Forum 2024 therefore is to explore possible intersections between spirituality, sustainability and education.

The conference offers a combination of invited keynotes as well as papers and workshops that have been submitted on the basis of a call for papers. The subject focus of the conference is on ESD with emphasis on ecological, environmental issues and its intersection with spiritual, religious or world-view perspectives. For this conference, ESD stands for Education for Sustainable Development, but also includes similar educational approaches such as Climate Change Education, Ecological Education, Environmental Education, and Global Learning. The focus area of action of the conference is on public education at schools and institutions of higher education.

The conference wants to promote the integration of spiritual dimensions into ESD as well as the integration of sustainability perspectives into diverse forms of religious education or instruction. In order to achieve this aim, theoretical perspectives and academic research shall be brought into conversation with concepts and experiences from good educational practice.

We cordially invite you to a fruitful exchange!
Prof. Dr. Manfred Pirner & team

Keynote speakers & your host
Prof. Dr. h.c. Shri Satya Mohan Singh, Prof. Dr. Mary Evelyn Tucker, Prof. Dr. Pascal Frank, Prof. Dr. A. Ban Shreshth, Prof. Dr. Elisabeth Naumann & Prof. Dr. Manfred L. Pirner

Target Groups
Scholars, researchers, teachers, teacher trainers, religious leaders, politicians, stakeholders and members of NGOs, civil society as well as state organizations that are – directly or indirectly – involved in ESD.

Religions for Peace

Accommodation: we have reserved a contingent at the Kurstadt Hotel. Please book yourself: <https://www.kurstadt-hotels.de>

Registration: You can register now on our website or subscribe to our newsletter!



Nuremberg Forum 2024

Between 30 September - 2 October 2024, *Religions for Peace*, in collaboration with Friedrich Alexander University, hosted Nuremberg Forum 2024 *Education for Sustainable Development – Spiritual Dimensions*. The international, interdisciplinary and inter-religious conference facilitated an interactive exchange between scholars of various academic disciplines and religious backgrounds through several keynote speeches, papers and workshops. Having varying visions of the spiritual dimensions of sustainability, the session engaged different stakeholders on the intersecting issues of spirituality, sustainability, and education. Key speakers at the event, including representatives from *Religions for Peace* Europe and *Religions for Peace* International, reflected on connectedness as the spiritual basis of religious education for sustainability, young climate activists' perspectives on education and spiritually transformative education for global sustainability. The event explored alternatives for the integration of spiritual dimensions into Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as well as the integration of sustainability perspectives into diverse forms of religious education and instruction.

VI. Fostering Multi-Religious Collaboration and Global Partnerships

Reflections on the Inter-religious Imperative for the Pact for the Future and a Multilateralism Based on Human Fraternity

In collaboration with the Trilateral Partnership of Regional Faith-Based Networks for the SDGs and other partners, *Religions for Peace* co-organised the United Nations Summit of the Future side event, *Reflections on the Inter-religious Imperative for the Pact for the Future and a Multilateralism Based on Human Fraternity*. The event examined the ethical considerations in the Pact for the Future and the Declaration on Future Generations from an interfaith perspective, emphasising the role of religious communities and interfaith organisations in safeguarding the needs and interests of future generations. The importance of embedding these priorities in institutional policymaking through intergenerational engagement was a recurring theme.

At an interactive panel discussion, Dr. Francis Kuria, Secretary General, *Religions for Peace*, emphasised the need for “a vision of Sacred Shared Flourishing – one that recognises the Sacred as the foundational dimension of the community of being and understands that personal flourishing is intrinsically linked to the flourishing of other members of the community and of being rooted in the Sacred.” In doing so, *Religions for Peace* reaffirmed its commitment to fostering multi-religious, multi-sectoral, and intergenerational collaboration by advancing the actions under the **Manresa 2022 Pact** and the principles outlined in the **Peace Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation**.



Faith-based Solutions for the Pact for the Future and Beyond

As part of the ImPACT Coalition on Faith-based Solutions and the United Nations Multi-Faith Advisory Council (MFAC), *Religions for Peace* co-organised the Summit of the Future side event, *Faith-based Solutions for the Pact for the Future and Beyond*, which brought together faith, religion and spirituality leaders to advocate for the integration of faith-based language and common values across faiths in UN documents. The event presented case studies and good practices by the UN system and civil society in engaging with faith leaders and actors, facilitating an exchange of insights, experiences, and actionable strategies for achieving sustainable development and peace. The incorporation of faith-based perspectives into international policy frameworks, including the **Pact for the Future** was emphasised, stressing the need for deliberate consideration of the inclusion of faith actors and stakeholders in international policy discussions.

VI. Fostering Multi-Religious Collaboration and Global Partnerships

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide (UNOSAPG) and *Religions for Peace*

On 27 September, a significant partnership was formalised between the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide (UNOSAPG) and *Religions for Peace* through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The MoU outlines joint commitments of the two organisations, including working together for the implementation of the *Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes*.

UNOSAPG and *Religions for Peace* will collaborate at local, national, and international levels to foster interfaith dialogue, address religiously connected violence, and contribute to the prevention of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. Through this partnership, *Religions for Peace* is positioned as a crucial actor in supporting global peace efforts by leveraging the unique influence and capacities of its extensive multi-religious global movement.

Dr. Kuria expressed, “Hate speech is increasingly weaponized and it is alarmingly on the rise globally. It is feeding in the tragic context of ongoing conflicts and persecutions of various ethnic and religious communities, leading to displacement of millions and creating new waves of refugees. Urgency to protect vulnerable populations has never been more critical. We shall raise our voices against hate speeches as a step to protecting our shared humanity and upholding dignity for all.”

Our website and social media pages:

 rfp.org

 [religions4peace](https://twitter.com/religions4peace)

 [religions4peace](https://www.instagram.com/religions4peace)

 [religionsforpeaceintl](https://www.facebook.com/religionsforpeaceintl)



Through the mobilisation of the aforementioned highlighted initiatives, *Religions for Peace* continues to strengthen partnerships and provide technical support to regional and national Inter-religious Councils (IRCs), including Women of Faith Networks (WoFNs) and Interfaith Youth Networks (IYNs).

Religions for Peace continues to strengthen partnerships and collaborate with existing partners on various initiatives that have not only scaled up the reach and impact of our work but have also strengthened our capacity to build and maintain strong partnerships with other sectors and stakeholders.

If you would like to support our work, please consider visiting our [donation page](#):

