# Policy Recommendations for the 2018 G20 Summit

## from the
## G20 Interfaith Forum

**BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA**
**September 26-28, 2018**

# APPENDIX

**POLICY BRIEFS AND OTHER SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

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for
**POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE 2018 G20 SUMMIT**

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# Recommendations Regarding Religion in the Workplace

This policy brief emerged from preparation for and discussions in Parallel Session 2.1 on "Dignified Work," but its analysis was consistent with discussions in Session 2.4 on "Religion and Anti-Discrimination Norms" and Session 2.5 on "Innovation and Why Religious Voices Matter."  Lead drafters were those who led the discussion in session 2.1.  This included  Carlos Custer, Former Secretary General, World Confederation of Labour, Argentina; Richard Foltin, Senior Scholar, Religious Freedom Center, Freedom Forum Institute, USA; Mark Hill QC, Honorary Professor, Centre for Law and Religion, Cardiff University, UK; and Juan Martin Vives, Director, Center for Studies on Law and Religion, Univesidad Adventista Del Plata, Argentina.

### 1. Framing the discussion

Our religious identity travels with us. It does not exist solely in the home or the place where we choose to worship but comprises an important part of who we are and how we self-identify. Over a lifetime, a large percentage of an individual's time will be spent in a workplace – office, factory, etc. A workforce that feels respected and that it is afforded dignity is a productive workforce. Division, argument, unhappiness and dissent has the potential to compromise the effectiveness of any business or organisation. Denial of religious accommodation is a form of religious discrimination just as is discrimination on the basis of status alone. This policy brief is designed to consider how strategies for accommodating religious beliefs and practice can be deployed to promote the concept of dignity in the workplace.

### 2. When do these issues arise?

There are a myriad of circumstances when employers will need to give consideration to the religious identity of staff. These include:

- Non-discriminatory hiring and firing
- Religious dress
- Dietary requirements
- Washing and praying
- Holy days
- Performance of duties that conflict with religious beliefs and practice

### 3. What must an employer consider?

Employers need to be religiously literate. This can be facilitated from publically available guidance and by engagement with local faith leaders. Employers must also be prepared to engage constructively with employees in seeking a way to reasonably accommodate religious beliefs and practices in a fashion that does not impose undue hardship on the employer, including through undue negative impact on fellow employees.

### 4. Distinguishing religious ethos organizations

Distinct issues arise when the employer is a religious or religiously affiliated organization. As with other so called "ethos employers," freedom of association (and where religious organizations are involved, freedom of religion) entails a right to recruit and maintain personnel whose beliefs and conduct are consistent with the ethos of the organization. This is particularly true for core and leadership positions, but can be important for other personnel. The issues get more complicated where public funding supports the employer or when the employer in question is a for-profit organization. These concerns can affect the balancing of freedom of association and freedom of religion claims asserted by employers. These issues deserve continuing study, but are beyond the scope of this policy brief.

### 5. Striking the proper balance

In the accommodation of religion in the workplace, various matters must be considered:

(a) Is there a difference between private employers, on the one hand, and governmental or public sector workforce, on the other?
(b) Will different principles apply depending on the size of the business and the ease with which staff can be rostered?
(c) What factors are relevant in determining what constitutes a reasonable accommodation or an undue hardship?
(d) To what extent does harm to third parties or intersection with anti-discrimination laws and other pertinent statutes limit the obligation/option to accommodate?

### 6. Recommendations

6.1 Governments should promote and facilitate an interactive process in which:
- an employee[1] advises the employer of the need for the accommodation of a religious practice;
- the employer must engage in genuine and sympathetic discussion of whether and how such accommodation may be provided;
- the employer has an obligation to make an affirmative and bona fide effort to provide a reasonable accommodation;
- an independent adjudicator/mediator system should be established to give effect to the above.

6.2 Governments should establish legal standards as to when a religious accommodation must be provided, as follows: upon actual notice or upon belief and knowledge that an employee requests accommodation of a religious belief or practice, the employer shall provide a reasonable accommodation of a religious belief or practice unless the employer will incur an undue hardship in providing such accommodation. A reasonable accommodation must actually remove the conflict, although it need not necessarily be the reasonable accommodation that the employee would prefer. Undue hardship shall be defined as significant difficulty and expense, including material harm or substantial inconvenience to third parties, such as customers or fellow employees.

6.3 In considering whether a contemplated accommodation constitutes an undue hardship, the following factors may, without limitation, be taken into account: the identifiable cost of the accommodation, including the costs of loss of productivity and of retraining or hiring employees or transferring employees from one facility to another; the overall financial resources and size of

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[1] The term "employee" as used in this document shall include job applicants and other potential hires.

the employer involved, relative to the number of its employees; and for an employer with multiple facilities, the geographic separateness or administrative or fiscal relationship of the facilities; intersection with civil rights laws and other pertinent legislation.

6.4 With the exception of collective bargaining agreements, it is not a defence to an employee's request for religious accommodation for an employer to seek to rely on the existence of a general rule or practice that is applied without discrimination, where to do so does not resolve the conflict. The requirement of religious accommodation is not satisfied by mere formal equality, where such formal equality leaves the employee with an unnecessary choice between faith and livelihood. (Compare the protections afforded in many jurisdictions to persons with disabilities.)

6.5 Employers shall not impose upon an employee an obligation to participate in religious or sectarian observance, including prayers or Bible/holy book studies, as a condition of employment

6.6 Governments should refuse to enter into procurement and other contracts unless the contracting party has a policy in place that complies with the foregoing.

6.7 Governments should undertake a public education campaign directed at both employers and employees/job applicants, reinforcing the principle that religion is an aspect of a person's essential identity as much as race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, etc., and that religious identity encompasses religious practice as well as belief.

6.8 Religious organisations should disseminate information concerning their doctrines and beliefs, and how those are manifested in particular practices and manifestations.


## GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES

See, by way of example, the guidance available from the UK Equality and Human Rights Commission on *Religion or Belief in the Workplace* and the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission publication on *Religious Garb and Grooming in the Workplace: Rights and Responsibilities*:

https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/religion-or-belief-workplace

https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/publications/qa_religious_garb_grooming.cfm


The following are examples of helpful resources for promoting religious literacy

https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/resources/christianity-traditions

https://adfinternational.org/resource/christianity-in-the-workplace-an-employers-guide-to-christian-beliefs/

https://rlp.hds.harvard.edu/our-approach/what-is-religious-literacy

http://religionandprofessions.org/religious-literacy-toolkits/what-is-religious-literacy/

https://www.vox.com/first-person/2017/1/5/14166366/religious-illiteracy-conservative-liberal

# THE TIME MUST BE NOW

## An Urgent Message to G20 Leaders and Governments

## Action to Eradicate Modern Slavery, Human Trafficking and Forced Labour in Our Generation

Modern slavery describes slavery and slavery-like practices including forced labour, child labour and human trafficking. Over 40 million people around the world are trapped in modern slavery; 10 million of them children. More people than at any time in history despite the fact that modern slavery is illegal in almost every country and prohibited by numerous International agreements.

In the 21$^{st}$ century, modern slavery is a critical health check on our globalised world. Never before have so many children, women and men been exploited to provide services to those who wield power and control, or to satisfy the constant supply and demand culture driving our global economy. This economic structure prioritises profit above the dignity of the human being, leaving the most vulnerable exposed to exploitation with women, children and migrants disproportionately at risk.

Slavery-like conditions exist in factories, fields and fishing boats, within private residences and a multitude of other places where avarice and corruption have overridden fundamental human values. Those enslaved are frequently subjected to abuse, both physical and psychological.

It brings shame on our world that the human rights of so many are denied in this way. Pope Francis is amongst those who call this 'a crime against humanity'. Surely, this vile crime cannot be funded and must not be funded, knowingly or unwittingly, by legitimate business or by our governments' use of our taxes? Surely, all supply chain offenders must face prosecution?

Today the risk that a product or service is tainted with slave labour somewhere in the supply chain occurs in almost all industries: from electronics and high-tech to automotive, steel, mining, agriculture, coffee, seafood, garments, textiles. The list is almost endless. All countries are affected.

Best estimates show 16 million people are victims in the supply chains of the legitimate economy, producing products or services we use on a daily basis. Governments may explicitly prohibit the violation of human rights but a collective blind eye is turned to 16 million people every day: the child in a coltan mine, the exploited woman in a sweatshop, the abused man on a fishing vessel.

Many issues divide public opinion: welfare, immigration, defence, tax. But in the case of modern slavery, agreement is total. All 193 UN member states have committed to eradicating child-slavery by 2025 and all modern slavery by 2030. This commitment means their governments must not contribute to the estimated US$150 billion this crime generates every year. The reality is that across the world, all governments continue to purchase from supply chains that enslave people.

The time has come for our governments and political leaders to show decisive and determined leadership and to replace promises and speeches on the global stage with firm action.  It is time to ensure that tax payer money no longer ends up in the hands of criminals profiteering from human rights violations.  Controlling 80% of the world's trade, G20 governments must lead the world in taking action whereby they or any business they contract do not profit from this horrendous crime.

Without G20 governments reforming public procurement and directing the corporate sector in their countries and internationally, our generation will fail to eradicate modern slavery and condemn a future generation to the ongoing misery of exploitation and loss of human dignity.

Without delay, G20 commitments must move from words on a page to determined and monitored action.  The time must be now, at this G20, for Declarations and Undertakings that:

- G20 Governments reaffirm their commitment to the eradication of modern slavery, human trafficking and forced labour in this generation as declared in SDG8.7
- G20 Governments order immediate reviews of their own procurement of goods and services to eliminate suppliers who cannot prove their supply chains are free of modern slavery
- G20 Governments cease contracting with corporations, organisations and individuals who do not comply and do not demonstrate with full transparency, on an annual basis, that they are exercising due diligence to slavery-proof their supply chains.
- G20 Governments acknowledge that their procurement is made with taxpayer funds and that their citizens deserve to know that their money will not be spent on these crimes through failure to ensure that goods and services are only procured from sources free from modern slavery and forced labour
- G20 Governments agree to call for and strongly support an independent international agency mandated to promote in all nations public procurement from supply lines free from modern slavery and forced labour.  The proposed agency should also assist governments with programs and materials to educate their peoples and businesses about modern slavery, human trafficking and forced labour.

The Sustainable Development Goals were ratified in September 2015. Three years have passed yet there is no clear political strategy to achieve SDG8.7.  Political strategy must necessarily begin with governments and their public procurement. Representing two-thirds of the world's population and nearly 90% of its economy, G20 Governments must lead by example.

Our generation must not face the accusation of indifference or negligence. Let it not be said, as Wilberforce said in 1791, "you may choose to look the other way but you can never again say you did not know".  Doing too little cannot be an option. With will and organisation mobilized by G20 Governments, supported by civil society worldwide, we can meet the challenge of this vile crime and eradicate it by 2030.

The G20 Interfaith Forum has extensive outreach to all the major religious communities throughout the world and represents the moral convictions and ideals of these communities. On their behalf, the Interfaith Forum presents this urgent call to action to the G20.

## THE TIME MUST BE NOW.

**G20 Interfaith Forum Anti-Slavery, Human Trafficking and Forced Labour Taskforce 2018: Dr Brian Adams** IG20 Co-Founder & Co-Chair, Director Griffith University Centre for Interfaith and Cultural Dialogue; **John McCarthy QC** Chair Sydney Archdiocesan Anti-Slavery Taskforce, Former Ambassador to the Holy See (2012-2016); **Kevin Hyland OBE** CEO ChildFund Ireland, Author and Lead Negotiator **SDG8.7**, Member of the Vatican's Santa Marta Group, former UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, former Head of London Metropolitan Police Anti-Trafficking Unit; **Kristina Arriaga**, in her personal capacity Vice Chairman, US Commission on International Religious Freedom; **Nancy Mónzon** Former Provincial Deputy (Buenos Aires, Argentina) and author of Anti Human Trafficking Provincial Laws, representing the Anti Human-Trafficking Task Force of CEA (Argentinian Episcopal Conference)

# The Panama Declaration on Ending Violence Against Children

## Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC)
## Panama City, 9-11 May 2017

Challenged by the global epidemic of violence against children, we, leaders and members of the world's religious and spiritual traditions, girls and boys, women and men, from 70 countries, together with representatives of governments, the United Nations, and international and grassroots organizations, met in Panama City, Panama for the 5th Forum of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC), from 9-11 May 2017.

Building upon the GNRC's 17 years of service to the world's children, we affirm the fundamental dignity of every boy and girl. We reaffirm the moral imperative to protect children from harm, as enshrined and protected in the teachings of all of the world's religious and spiritual communities and in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and its optional protocols. We believe in the power of interfaith cooperation to transform the world.

We grieve the fact that half of the world's children endure physical, psychological or sexual violence. It is unacceptable that every five minutes, a child somewhere is killed in a violent act.

While our religions have been actively engaged in the service of children, we also grieve that every religion at times has been misused to legitimize, justify and even perpetuate violence against children. We are accountable for these shortcomings and ask for forgiveness. Today, we stand together to reject and speak out against all forms of violence against children in every setting.

The causes of violence against children are complex and varied. They include socio-economic causes such as poverty and social exclusion, and many other deeply rooted political, cultural and familial factors. Ending today's unprecedented violence against children calls for extraordinary and urgent collaboration among religious and spiritual communities, UN agencies, international and multilateral organizations, governments, civil society, the private sector, media — and, most importantly, with children. We honor children's unique contributions to, and insights about, ending violence.

Children thrive and grow in trusting relationships with people who love and care for them. Ideally, and for the most part, this happens within families. Sadly, it also cannot be denied that the home is the place where most abuses occur. Families need support to grow to become peaceful, safe sanctuaries.

We affirm that transformed religious and spiritual communities can offer moral teachings and model practices to prevent, heal, reduce and ultimately end violence against children.

We, the participants of the GNRC 5th Forum, both children and adults, resolve to do all that we can to end violence against children.

We commit to:

1. Listen to children with empathy and respect, welcome their wisdom and gifts, and continue to work side-by-side to address violence against them;

2. Ensure that our religious places are safe for all children, and especially for the victims of violence and abuse, and vulnerable children such as those with disabilities;

3. Increase our personal and institutional commitments to take concrete actions to address the challenges voiced by children at this forum;

4. Educate our leaders and communities about the different forms of violence against children and deploy resources to prevent and address it within and beyond our communities; educate children about human sexuality and what they can do to keep themselves safe; work to safeguard children from harmful media content and engage the media in preventing violence against children;

5. Partner with global programs such as End Violence and make the most of existing tools for addressing the root causes and drivers of the violence children face, with a special focus on countering violent extremism, gang violence, harm to children by organized crime, and sexual exploitation and abuse;

6. Strengthen local communities by offering education in positive parenting and ethical values to help families and children develop empathy, become more resilient, and grow spiritually;

7. Identify and challenge patriarchal structures and practices that perpetuate violence against and sexual exploitation especially of girls;

8. Embrace internationally agreed strategies and mechanisms to address violence against children, including the Sustainable Development Goals 16.2 on ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children;  5.2 and  5.3 on ending violence against women and girls; and 8.7 on ending economic exploitation of children;

9. Strengthen cooperation and partnerships across Arigatou International initiatives, the wider religious and spiritual communities and strategic players at local, national, regional and global levels;

10. Work to generate greater social and political will for legislation, policies, and increased funding of programs to protect children from violence.

In all of this, we will strengthen our mechanisms for continuous self-evaluation and accountability to ensure our communities are never complicit in perpetuating violence against children, build child-safe institutions, and build evidence for the effectiveness of faith-based approaches to end violence against children.

Finally, we thank Arigatou International and its partners for bringing us together for the GNRC Fifth Forum. We share the conviction that we are all responsible to every child in the world. We leave here reinvigorated and inspired by the vision of a peaceful world for all girls and boys.

Issued in Panama City, 11 May 2017

## CONCLUDING REMARKS OF ETHICS AND ECONOMY - FRIDAY 28TH SEPTEMBER.

## By Humberto Shikiya and Fr. Augusto Zampini

Faced with the "irrational negationism " of many politicians and economists of today, religions and OBF can (and must) provide our perspective, a view based on our vision of the human being and what we witness every day in our communities. Such a look tells us that there is an increase in social inequality and environmental deterioration. This "rationality of faith", in addition, is supported by the scientific look and international statistics.

The contribution of religions and FBOs is vital today more than ever, especially in meetings like the G-20, because while they talk about the poor and excluded in international congresses, their lives, desires, and difficulties are ignored. As Pope Francis says in his encyclical *Laudato Si,* such indifference "is due in part to the fact that many of those who participate in these congresses and can make decisions, are in reality" away from [the poor, without taking] direct contact with your problems. We live and reflect from the comfort of a development and a quality of life that are not available to most of the world's population. This lack of physical contact and encounter ... helps to cauterize the conscience and to ignore part of reality in biased analyzes "(LS 49). Thus, even without wanting to, we make decisions that do not really benefit them.

Hence, religions and FBOs want to echo the voices that are not heard, and so they want to bring those who make decisions in the global economy to the true reality of most people and their communities.

Quotes Pope Francis

"In the predominant culture, the first place is occupied by the exterior, the immediate, the visible, the rapid, the superficial, the provisional, the real gives place to the appearance" (Evangelii Gaudium, 62)

"I would like to warn that there is usually no clear awareness of the problems that particularly affect the excluded. They are the largest part of the planet, billions of people. Today they are presented in international political and economic debates, but it often seems that their problems are posed as an appendix, as an issue that is added almost by obligation or peripherally, if they are not considered mere collateral damage. In fact, at the time of the concrete action, they are frequently in the last place.

This is partly due to the fact that many professionals, opinion makers, media and power centers are located far away from them, in isolated urban areas, without taking direct contact with their problems. They live and reflect from the comfort of a development and quality of life that are not available to the majority of the world's population. This lack of physical contact and encounter, sometimes favored by the disintegration of our cities, helps to cauterize the conscience and ignore part of reality in biased analyzes.

This sometimes coexists with a "green" speech. But today we cannot fail to recognize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach, which must integrate justice in the discussions about the environment, to listen to both the clamor of the earth and the clamor of the poor. "(LS 49)

An economy distanced from ethics, and a financial system that tends to distance itself from the real economy, generates social inequalities and environmental damage.

From the financial crisis of 2008, which was generated by the collapse of the US real estate speculative bubble and whose impact was extended to the entire international system, the damaged relationship between ethics and economics became even more evident.

Given the need to generate new consensus among high-level officials, the G20 was consolidated as an extension of the G7 and became the most significant forum to discuss global economic growth, the international financial architecture and the regulation of the post-crisis financial system. Although the G20 does not have executive powers nor its decisions are binding, those agreed by the heads of state and government in the framework of the G20 have been significantly implemented by its members.

Since then, there are many voices that, from different disciplines and economic theory, warn about the imperative need to recreate an international financial architecture on a human scale, at the service of sustainable development; and to reconstruct an ethical dimension of economic practice to answer the questions and challenges posed by the 4th industrial revolution: robotization and technological change, inclusive globalization, the future of work, universal integration, among others.

Consequently, a program view that includes but goes beyond the monetary metric (more holistic), as a notion of integral ecology, can help us to rediscover the very nature of the economy, which was designed to better organize the coexistence of human beings. They can also help us to assume the connection between our personal-family lifestyles with our culture, between the common dignity of each individual with the common good, between the justice of today with that of tomorrow, and between the social world and the ecosystems that make our life possible Integrating. All these aspects are key to respond with creativity and precision to the groans of the poor and the earth, moans that come together in a single cry for having the same roots, many of them related to economic activity, such as: production unbridled that does not care for the environment, individualism and greed to trade and accumulate, unrestrained consumerism and discarding culture, technocratic paradigm and indifference with the creation of jobs, short-termism and limited measures of progress or development ( cf LS, 115-121).

Women and young people are key to cultivate and care for creation, and thus be able to generate an economy (common household management) sustainable for future generations.

There is a new narrative (with the contribution of religions), for a new financial and economic architecture, more inclusive not only local but also global.

The term "Economy" comes from the Greek "oikonomy"; "Oikos" refers to the home, the house and the property and "nomos" to its rules and / or "némein" to the act of administering / adjudicating; hence, the economy has been etymologically defined as the "administration of the house / home".

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Then, with the development of societies and the modern means of production, this term designated the discipline dedicated to the study of the administration of certain scarce resources of a certain political society.

The main modern economic currents affirmed that the economy is an independent science of the moral field. Economics books stress that economics only describes and explains, among other issues, how markets work but does not prescribe how they should be. In this way, young students are taught that economics is a neutral science, free of ethical / moral valuations. This conception strengthened the vision of man as "homo economicus ", of which his "utilitarian" spirit is presumed, which acts according to his own interest, maximizing his benefits. However, economists did not always understand their subject in this way; just think of the classical theory, eg. Adam Smith, who conceived it as a branch of moral and political philosophy. As Artkinson (2009) points out, "the economy is a moral science", because it not only wants the welfare and / or the common good, but reflects on criteria of distributive justice. On the other hand, as the philosopher Sandel affirms, in certain cases "the market reasoning presupposes a moral reasoning". The more technological science advances and the markets increasingly extend in aspects of life, and not strictly economic fields, the economy is increasingly faced with moral dilemmas: What goods and services may or may not be in the market? Is it necessary to modify the extractive production model? Can the economy be regulated by algorithms and robots? Is artificial intelligence ethical conscience? To answer these questions, a comprehensive and systemic view of the challenges that reality proposes is necessary and an ethical dimension must be recovered both in prudential discernment and in the taking and execution of decisions.

Currently, what is under discussion is the way in which we organize our economic life. The economy based on the production of goods and services is being displaced by a speculative economy, which generates money in risk management. And this is worrisome, because it generates less fair societies, promoting, as Sandel affirms, "an ethic of speculation that corrodes morals and civic norms that are worth caring for".

Hence the importance, as pointed out by Montoya Vargas and Morales de Setién Ravin, of training economics students in the "development of the necessary skills to recognize an ethical dilemma in a daily situation, identify the values, principles and interests faced, generate alternative solutions, reason about the ethical justification of the alternatives, make reasoned decisions (Kholberg, 1981), argue and evaluate ethical decisions ".

Day by day, men and women are faced with the need to make multiple decisions of different complexity and face innumerable options and motivations to make such decisions. It is imperative that, as citizens, consumers, producers, educators, companies, legislators, politicians, mothers and fathers, merchants, businessmen, governments, public and private institutions, family groups, be aware of the transforming capacity they have with their daily decisions to shape a more equitable and sustainable system.

Role of development banks, public and private banks (including village banks), employers and unions, investors and consumers.

In 2015, the General Assembly of the United Nations approved the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which proposes a multidimensional concept of development focused on sustainability, as a new transformative paradigm of development policies.

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In this way, development is no longer understood only as economic growth; and sustainability, consisting of the harmonious relationship between economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection, becomes a sine qua non condition for genuine development. Since then, different research has been developed regarding the ethical dimension of development and religious perspectives around the methodological foundations of how to build a new development model to "leave no one behind", caring for the future of the planet.

In the same year, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change was adopted by COP 21, the Addis Abeba Action Agenda on financing for development and the Sendái Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, which together with the 2030 Agenda propose a turn to the style of development and a holistic and integral vision. The cost of its implementation requires a great mobilization of resources from both the public and private sectors, accompanied by changes in its financing, organization and allocation. A process that must be accompanied by good cooperation and global governance practices.

However, it is pertinent to ask how to make the economy contribute to the 17 Development Goals proposed in the 2030 Agenda, and in that way, rectify the trends that threaten human well-being and the life of the planet?

The financial system plays an important role in this process and it is necessary to take advantage of all its instrumental potential in the transition of the global economy. It is necessary that the financial system is aligned with the Agenda for Sustainable Development. Some efforts began to be made in that regard; for ex. In January 2014, the United Nations Environment Program initiated a "Research on the Design of a Sustainable Financial System" to advance policies that produce a radical change in the efficiency of the financial system to mobilize capital towards a sustainable and inclusive economy.

In recent years, various international studies and practices have recognized the significant role that religious communities and faith-based organizations have in addressing complex global challenges because of their work on sustainable development, in situations of extreme poverty, in natural disasters and disasters, in peace building processes, in zones of violence and conflict and even where the State is absent. Thus, they become necessary actors who exert their influence and leadership both in their work at the grassroots level and at high political levels.

In this way, it is noticed that religion is no longer a forgotten dimension in development studies. Not only has the literature on religion and development flourished over the past decade, but partnerships between international development institutions, governments, international cooperation agencies and religious communities have also multiplied, especially to achieve development goals.

Civil society and religious groups play a fundamental role in developing proposals, monitoring progress and ensuring that the opinion of all interested parties is included in the process.

For this reason, the High Level Dialogues on Ethics and Economics, due to their interdisciplinary and ecumenical character, have collected the different contributions and reflections on economics and finance elaborated from religious perspectives.

1. Challenges:

a) An economic practice that degrades the "common house"

    i. A myth of the nineteenth century, lifestyles and production of that time is maintained, but advancing with technologies of the 21st century, and this planet in this line, is coming to the exhaustion, both of its species and of the sustainability of the modes of production.

    ii. The degradation of the environment, climate change, loss of biodiversity, among others, call for a substantial change in the way of managing the global commons.

b) An international financial architecture without limits or regulation

One of the reasons that is at the base of some crises that we have experienced is explained by the separation of finances from the real economy, from production and labor. "Finances, if left alone, dislocate, drive you crazy and drag you into your madness". The market deregulation, the indiscriminate growth of profits over integral welfare, the speculative purpose, as well as the practice of certain financial instruments such as the " credit default swap" (CDS); parallel banking systems (shadow banking system); offshore finance; sovereign public debt of the states, generate great instability, distort functionality and affect the health of the economic and social system, damaging the effective realization of the common good.

c) Structural inequalities , work and automation

    i. Inequality in the distribution of wealth and social goods evidences the presumption that not all societies have a place in societies. "A good part is considered disposable: they do not count. Technology can deepen the concentration, abuse of power and inequity on the planet."

    ii. Work and Automation: Technology platforms can improve lives, narrow gaps, or can become a way to deepen abysses. It is estimated that no less than 50% of current jobs run the risk of being replaced by robots in the next decade.

        While there are dissimilar estimates of the possible impact on the use of automation, there is a consensus that automation implies a structural transformation from which winners and losers will emerge. As a consequence, certain social tensions will be present.

d) Corruption and organized crime

    i. In Latin America there is an increase in the lack of confidence in the democratic quality of the region due to the high levels of public and private corruption at different levels of society, whose practice alters the system of incentives of organizations and corrodes social civility.

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ii.  At the same time, organized crime networks flourish in spaces of informality and institutional precariousness. In various reports it is stated that in Latin America the high rates of violent crime and insecurity are related to the inequality in the access to opportunities of some people. Organized crime has become a complex phenomenon, with porous limits between the formal, the informal and the criminal, with associations between groups and people that transcend the borders of the State. These networks have a negative effect on the institutions of the countries and the rule of law.

1. **PROPOSALS to which we commit ourselves as Churches, Religious Communities and Faith Based Organizations**

   a) Towards the Care of the Common House

   i.  Commit to the promotion and consolidation of economic systems that care for and guard human life and the planet in all its manifestations; a non-exclusive economy of life, like the vegetable one, that takes enough to live and recreate life. This approach translates into the effective transformation of modes of production towards sustainable and sustainable forms; in the management of companies whose main purpose is to commit to integral human development over the maximization of profits; in public policies that promote renewable energy, sustainable agriculture as well as measures that regulate and sanction activities that degrade the eco-system.

   ii. Create a regulatory framework for the protection of the global commons

Recreate an international financial architecture

   i.  Strengthen global governance - The globalization of finance must be accompanied by the globalization of international cooperation. The financial system and the market must be reinserted as instruments at the service, and not the owner, of the global governance system;

   ii. Create new qualitative and quantitative indicators of integral well-being;

   iii. Need to regulate the financial sector and renew the purpose of the banks;

   iv. Financing for Sustainable Development:

      1. Promote investments of Impact for Sustainable Development (Triple impact investment agenda: social, ecological, economic).

      2. Create eco-sustainable financial instruments, such as ex. "Green bonds".

      3. Foster the religious commitment of the FBOs and religious communities in investments to sustainable development. It is estimated that funds from faith-based institutions represent around 10 trillion dollars of funds invested in the world, becoming leaders in institutional investment trends and, as a block, at least in the fourth largest investment group.

b) Equity, Innovation and inclusive finance

i. Generate relational dynamics of economic and inter-generational justice in such a way that no one is discarded and everyone finds their place in the community (koinonia), in the enjoyment of a full and full life.

ii. Innovation: Propose a new Social Technology Contract (CST) that turns technology into a fundamental means for social inclusion. A contract with an ethic that puts the human being at the center of the concept of innovation, because otherwise it runs the risk of falling into technocratic societies and governments. It must be taken into account that the data is the new oil that is why it is necessary to join public and private wills in order to achieve said CST. "Rebuilding the ethical dimension means building bridges between technological change, the work of human beings and universal integration. It is the key to transcend the current situation that exceeds the concept of time and space. Where the pre-industrial era coexists for hungry crowds, the industrial one for thousands of workers and the post-industrial one for brilliant minds exploring new technical frontiers "( Béliz )

iii. The future of work and Automation:

1. Train workers according to the knowledge, "soft" skills and competencies needed to face the transformation in progress.

2. Adopt income distribution policies: several proposals are being discussed: Universal basic income; Salary supplement; Tax on robots.

**The imperatives of better governance:**
**An ethical/religious lens on the fight against corruption**

G20 Interfaith Forum Policy Paper
Draft, October 21, 2018

*Abstract*: No public policy topic is more discussed across world regions than the scourge of corruption. Corruption takes different forms in different settings but it fuels anger and cynicism everywhere. Corrupt practices of many kinds undermine efforts to advance on virtually any front, including fighting poverty, assuring security, addressing climate change, and supporting vulnerable people and communities. Fighting corruption thus belongs at the center of global policy agendas, as a moral imperative and a prerequisite for practical results. Religious actors can be powerful allies in the effort but are insufficiently involved. Why so? They can document and pinpoint the daily corrosive effects of corruption on poor communities and, building on shared ethical teachings, bolster effective action. To move forward, religious actors must address corrupt practices within their own communities; without such efforts they are crippled in contributing effectively and with trust to broader community, national, and global agendas. There are many priority, practical areas where focused action by religious actors can bolster integrity movements. Action can be global, national, and local, separate and in coalitions. Specific platforms include the global International Anti-Corruption Conference (IACC) in Copenhagen in October 2018, UN Forums, and the G20 Summit in November.

The G20 Interfaith Forum in September 2018 urged G20 leaders to heed the insights of religious communities and commit to continuing engagement with broad civil society and private networks that include religious actors, as they act decisively to rebuild trust and integrity in governance and public services.

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**Inspiration**

Pope Francis is among religious leaders who point to corruption as a greater ill than sin but also highlight that it can be avoided: "it demands the commitment of one and all." Corruption undermines both the natural environment and human society, hanging like a dark cloud over progress in many countries. Shameful across cultures and religions, perceptions of widespread corruption feed the citizen disengagement and anger that help explain the appeal of both populism and extremism. Fighting corruption demands the engagement of all sectors of society, but perhaps of religious communities more than any others. They can ideally offer a moral compass and practical eyes and hands to help navigate the complexities of corruption in our modern era.

**Facets of modern governance challenges**

Corruption is as old as human societies. Widely held ideals and expectations that rule of law and notions of justice and fairness will govern societies speak to aspirations, shared across cultures, for honest government. This means prominently integrity and honest use of resources for the benefit of the governed. Global movements like Transparency International and the International Anti-Corruption Conference (IACC) address the complex forces at international, national, and community and municipal levels that undermine good governance. They focus on traditional issues like bribery and political corruption as well as more modern topics like mass communications; social media, for example, works both for good and evil, interrupting patterns that permit elites to capture power, even as they can sow misunderstanding, misinformation, and strife.

Corruption is the enemy of democratic values and systems, of human rights, of human dignity, and of equitable, sustainable, thriving societies. Global and national drives towards accountability and integrity are shaped by several factors:

- Corruption is a *widespread, shared concern across the world*. A 2011 survey covering 23 countries (carried out for the BBC), found that corruption was the topic most frequently discussed by the public, ahead of poverty, unemployment, and rising costs. Nearly a quarter of those surveyed said they have discussed corruption recently and many rank it the most serious problem facing their society. When people speak of ethics and politics, corruption is often the leading edge. The myth that many societies accept corruption as a norm is patently false: people everywhere hate corruption.

- *National strategies to fight corruption systematically are relatively new* and important new tools and experience are available. Managing public procurement and finance and punishing theft have long roots but national approaches that look professionally and systematically at changing both public management systems and cultures that permit corruption are quite recent. Not long ago, mainstream economists and politicians often argued that corruption served as "grease for the motor", acceptable within a culture. Such arguments are rarely heard today. Corruption is widely seen as an evil, a cancer that eats away at social cohesion, "sand in the engine". Governments and nations are judged by their levels of integrity and quality of administration.

- We appreciate more clearly today that *meaningful efforts to fight poverty, assure security, and assure prosperous and equitable societies depend on public integrity*. Efficient use of resources is vital for delivering services like education and health. The damage to pension programs, social protection, quality education, and decent health care from corrupt systems go far beyond the direct damage inflicted because they erode trust. Businesses increasingly avoid investments in corrupt environments where governance is poor.

- *Democratic systems are threatened at their core by corrupt practices*. When young people see their societies as irremediably corrupt, the temptations of extremist promises have wide appeal. Likewise, populist and autocratic leaders feed on anger against corruption and the promise of strong, often authoritarian measures to right the society.

**Religious leaders need to be concerned and involved**

Religious leaders and communities should be central to efforts to end corruption. Ethics and action are their business and religious figures commonly enjoy respect and attention. Potential roles range from contending with personal responsibilities to the tenor and core values of a society and nation. Each religious tradition has teachings that speak to the core values of trust and honesty. These teachings have much in common, as reflected, for example, in the principles set out in the Global Ethic (articulated by theologian Hans Kung) and in many common calls of interreligious bodies and gatherings. Courageous religious leaders in exemplary situations speak truth to power about ethical challenges to governance that include corruption.

That said, religious leaders have yet to take on leading roles in the modern efforts to address corruption that constitute an international and national integrity movement. This is partly because the leadership of anti-corruption movements has become quite secular and technocratic in language and ethos. Moral issues tend to take second place, for reasons that include, for example, a desire to focus more on the systems that make embedded corruption possible than on personal failings and to avoid the political taint sometimes associated with religious involvement in public affairs. The focus on environmental factors rather than moral failings has also reflected the multicultural nature of global anti-corruption movements. As a practical matter, close relationships between governments and religious authorities can dampen criticism as can the precarious situation of religious actors in many settings.

The pendulum has swung too far in a technocratic direction. Corruption will not be defeated by technical means alone. Ethics, values, and morality must be part of the equation in strategic plans. Religious leaders should have clear roles to play, in speaking truth to those in power and in guiding individuals as they navigate complex choices, for example in how to combat corrupt practices they see or to avoid temptation to fudge rules or seek quick fixes. Religious leaders have central roles in articulating values and norms, including through religious education at many levels. Inter and intra faith alliances can look to the common good across society.

One explanation why some religious leaders are reticent to engage in anti-corruption efforts is awareness that their own organizations may not meet the highest standards of accountability. A tendency to view accounting and reporting as secondary matters is not uncommon. This obviously can and should change: there is no justification for tolerating careless oversight and use of funds and unethical management of personnel. With houses in order, religious institutions are well placed to demand high standards of their governments and leaders.

A further challenge is that many corruption issues are complex, with causes and consequences interlinked. Corrupt practices are linked to inequality among nations and within them, to the abuses of the powerful, to the underworld of trafficking and crime, and to concerns that social values overall are dominated by greed and uncontrollable market forces leading to a daunting erosion of morality. Conflict and corruption go hand in hand. None of these problems have easy solutions. Debates rage fiercely as to which matters most: mega-corruption –large-scale bribes and theft— or the widespread corruption that saps the trust and time of poor people when they try to obtain health care, succeed in school, register their child's birth, or seek justice. Anti-corruption strategies

are complex as is judging performance fairly. Measuring progress is difficult; perceptions do not always fit well with objective reality. Even so, it is feasible and desirable to assure that anti-corruption measures are communicated in understandable terms and that accountability challenges are intelligently addressed. Partnerships and clear communication are vitally important.

**What measures can religious actors take to advance anti-corruption efforts?**

It is an assertion of faith, bolstered by examples from different times and places, that courageous and determined religious leadership can make a difference in turning societies around. Transnational and interreligious and cultural understanding and cooperation can play significant roles.

Religious institutions and approaches are infinitely complex but several common themes and questions offer a frame:

(a) There specific and priority dimensions of corruption challenge swhere religious institutions and actors have special interest and comparative advantage. Apart from the imperative effort to address internal issues (abuse of clergy, sloppy accountability), social priorities stand out (care for vulnerable groups such as refugees, widows, and orphans, poverty, quality education, holding governments to account).

(b) In the panoply of actors addressing corruption, religious institutions and actors have some specific gifts and capabilities that include:
   - Speaking authoritatively about what is right and wrong in their tradition or their society's traditions.
   - Mobilizing member to observe and report acts of corruption.
   - Institutionally, helping with the design, implementation, and monitoring of programs addressing public issues aligned with (a) above (e.g., schools, hospitals, social work…).
   - Communications media of certain kinds, building on trustworthiness, distinctive audiences, etc.

(c) Examples of success can be documented to form part of broad narratives, where religious institutions have made a difference in fighting corruption.

The following suggestions look to defining promising areas for action.

1. Undertake, publish, and disseminate a *systematic review of pertinent teachings and texts* that relate to corruption. This would ideally take an interreligious perspective. The goal would be to identify and highlight specific texts responding to priority issues, drawing on individual traditions and highlighting common threads. This could help build commitment and address common misperceptions, for example that cultural differences explain or even justify corrupt practices. The work of theologian Hans Kung to promote the values-based "Global Ethic" exemplifies this approach. The annex points to a few examples of pertinent texts and highlight both common themes and the rich insights that can be drawn from a spiritual framing of issues.

2. *Pilot and exemplary anti-corruption initiatives and programs* that build on critical ethical values that bolster honest government. This could feature in religious education and could

form part of ongoing efforts to build religious literacy at different levels (from early childhood through professional training).

3. *Listen to specific grievances of vulnerable communities linked to corrupt practices, including as part of efforts to address extremist recruitment.* This could be linked to anti-poverty programs (Bolsa Familiar, for example) with a view to assuring that objectives are met and pointing to practical areas for improvement.

4. A closely related priority is *robust action to stop trafficking of women and children* and patterns of abuse.

5. *Build on ongoing efforts that address tangible topics like extractive industries* (where extensive religious initiatives are underway), identifying and promoting action on human rights violations, failures to assure protection of indigenous communities, and vigilant monitoring of environmental impact.

6. *Cooperate actively with promising integrity programs, for example at the municipal or community level;* youth prizes and support for women's initiatives are examples. Such efforts highlight what works and encourage promising efforts

7. With information and communication appreciated as powerful tools in fighting corruption, religious communities can have an impact by *focusing on governance topics through communication channels they manage and influence*. That means educational programs, radio, television, print, and social media.

8. Define specific efforts (initially at a pilot level) that support *robust monitoring and evaluation of initiatives and efforts to bring about change*. That means defining common, meaningful objectives and indicators of progress, that allow religious communities to contribute to broader community and national strategies.

9. Specific efforts to *support religious institution learning from the secular world in preventing sexual and financial abuses of many kinds*. Many industries and nonprofits are struggling with these issues and it would be feasible and useful to pull together promising initiatives for the consideration of religious institutions. Religious leaders themselves might call for dialogue to highlight area for secular religious collaboration that could open windows of opportunity.

10. Leading *interreligious bodies working together* can focus on understanding patterns of corruption, defining meaningful tools to combat them, and agree on specific priority areas for action.

**Action in the G20 context, building on work at the September 2018 G20 Argentina Summit and potentially in the framework of Japan's hosting of the 2019 G20 Summit.**

- Good governance should be a central theme of G20 Summits, with specific commitments to action and continuing monitoring.
- The framework of the G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group should be addressed with specific reference to religious actors and voices.
- The issues of land reform and extractive industries, including fisheries and rainforests, which are of special concern to religious communities, should be a focus of the G20 Communique, with commitments to active consultation with pertinent religious groups.

**Possible next steps**

These ideas need a time frame, committed actors, and specific audience

**Annex: A Few Relevant Religious Texts[1]**

*Buddhism*

The Buddha discussed the importance and the prerequisites of a good government. He showed how the country could become degenerate and unhappy when the government becomes corrupt and unjust.

The Buddha once said, "When the ruler of a country is just and good, the ministers become just and good; when the ministers are just and good, the higher officials become just and good; when the higher officials are just and good, the rank and file become just and good; when the rank and file become just and good, the people become just and good." (*Anguttara Nikaya*)

In the *Jataka*, the Buddha gave rules for Good Government, known as *Dasa Raja Dharma:*
1) be liberal and avoid selfishness, 2) maintain a high moral character, 3) be prepared to sacrifice one's own pleasure for the well-being of the subjects, 4) be honest and maintain absolute integrity, 5) be kind and gentle, 6) lead a simple life for the subjects to emulate, 7) be free from hatred of any kind, 8) exercise non-violence, 9) practise patience, and 10) respect public opinion to promote peace and harmony.

The Buddha further advised:
- A good ruler should act impartially and should not be biased or discriminate between one particular group of subjects against another.
- A good ruler should not harbor any form of hatred against any of his subjects.
- A good ruler should show no fear whatsoever in the enforcement of the law, if it is justifiable.
- A good ruler must possess a clear understanding of the law to be enforced. It should not be enforced just because the ruler has the authority to enforce the law. It must be done in a reasonable manner and with common sense. (*Cakkavatti Sihananda Sutta*)

*Islam*
"The Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) cursed the one who bribes and the one who takes bribes."
[Abd Allah ibn Amr ibn Al As, Abu Dawud, hadith no 3573]
"The Prophet (s.a.w.) has condemned the giver or receiver of bribe in decision making (ruler, management, judges etc...)"
[Narrated by At- Tirmidzi, 3/622: Imam Tirmidzi said: Hasan Sahih]

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[1] Thanks to Robert Klitgaard

"And do not devour your property among yourselves by wrongful means, nor offer it as a bribe to judges, with intent that you may unlawfully swallow up a portion of other people's property, while you know."
[Al-Baqarah:188]
"Woe to those that deal in fraud."
[Al Qu'ran 83-1]

*Christianity*

"Corruption is something that enters into us. It is like sugar: it is sweet, we like it, it's easy, but then, it ends badly. With so much easy sugar we end up diabetic, and so does our country. Every time we accept a bribe and put it in our pocket, we destroy our heart, we destroy our personality and we destroy our homeland. … What you steal through corruption remains … in the heart of the many men and women who have been harmed by your example of corruption. It remains in the lack of the good you should have done and did not do. It remains in sick and hungry children, because the money that was for them, through your corruption, you kept for yourself." Pope Francis, Audience with youth in Kasarani Stadium, Kenya, Nov. 28, 2015

"The World Council of Churches' concern and response to the issue of corruption is founded on God's preferential option for people in poverty. Corruption is rooted in and propagated by our prevailing economic structures, cultures and value systems" which are driven by "greed, relentless pursuit of power, profit and material gain by corporations, political bodies, administrators and individual actors. Confronting systemic corruption is therefore a matter of upholding God's justice." Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, the WCC general secretary.

# Sharpening the focus:
# Religious actors addressing extremism and violence

(G20 Interfaith Forum Policy Paper)
Draft, September, 2018

***Abstract*:** Governments worldwide seek effective policies to address the ravages caused by non-state social and political movements that deliberately use violence to achieve their ends. However, experts disagree sharply about why such movements persist and on the most appropriate response. How religious factors contribute to extremism and violence is a central and sensitive topic. The common framing as "Countering Violent Extremism"—CVE, or "Preventing Violent Extremism"—PVE, mask underlying complexities that demand sensitive understandings of religious roles and engagement with religious actors. Explicit or implicit assumptions that religious factors and especially Islam are centrally involved in both extremism and violence exacerbate intergroup tensions and impede efforts to engage leaders in meaningful response. Negative consequences include dominance of security perspectives, threats to human rights, and tradeoffs that undermine development efforts. Understandings and approaches involving religious factors need to be revamped. The G20 Summit should highlight CVE debates as a priority topic; alongside UN and other efforts, the G20 platform with its sharply focused agenda can generate fresh insights and shift counterproductive debates. A multi-stakeholder task force that includes economic and religious actors should report to the 2019 G20 summit with action recommendations.

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*(citation) "Current CVE approaches are flat out dumb and misbegotten"* former US government official

**The Challenge**

Few topics challenge conventional thinking about social cohesion more forcibly than the violence linked to extremist movements. Views differ widely as to why extremist ideologies are attractive to certain groups and what those involved aim to achieve through violent acts. Are there common causes or is each situation sui generis? Are religious ideologies central or marginal as explanatory factors? If grievances are linked (in varying ways) to economic inequalities, poor governance, and failures of development, what action does that imply? How far and under what circumstances do security dominated approaches aggravate the situation?

Several observations frame the topic as a global challenge that deserves priority focus by the G20:

- Policies and programs responding to non-state violence show mixed results; damage associated with such violence (including in lives lost) is on the rise.
- Divisive debates at international and national levels undermine effective and coordinated response
- Security centered responses color institutional accountability, deployment of financial resources, and development and diplomatic efforts. They too often override human rights concerns.
- The focus on extremist religious movements, especially Muslim, oversimplifies their complex and diverse part in violence and contributes to polarization within and among communities
- CVE approaches can obscure grievances that underlie specific local conflicts, and can aggravate rather than mitigate underlying tensions
- Inadequate information, much largely anecdotal, on patterns of violence complicate both analysis and policy debates.
- Sound guidance for policymakers and practitioners on responding to religious aspects of extremist movements is often not available.

In short, large strategic gaps impede efforts to engage religious actors intelligently in responding to extremist violence.

**Background**

Widely varied non-state violent acts, often characterized as terrorism and perpetrated by movements and individuals using violent tactics, are disrupting societies in many regions. They include ISIS (Daesh), Al Qaeda, anti-Rohingya, White supremacism, and Boko Haram. Extensive military and internal security responses to the threats of non-state violence consume vast resources. They also are transforming civic space and contribute to curtailing human rights including religious freedom. They exacerbate social polarization and impede development efforts including education, health care, and business development.

A central policy question for governments and policy makers is why movements characterized as extremist attract followers and tacit support among large communities. A key related issue is how to respond to extremist violence in ways that win support from the larger community of co-religionists who are not prone to violence, rather than stirring resentment and further radicalization of others. Clearer answers are needed to reshape optimal policy responses that prevent violent actors from undermining democratic societies and values and that assure the human security that is a priority national and international objective.

These challenges affect different world regions but have especially dominated policy debates in the United Nations, the United States, and Europe since terrorist attacks of 9/11/2001. Past counterterrorism efforts focused on combatting organized terrorist groups directly or degrading their capacity. The contemporary paradigm labelled as preventing or countering violent extremism (CVE and PVE) focuses more on the various societal factors and drivers that lead individuals and small groups to embrace or otherwise support militant ideologies. Responses have focused on security, with a marked shift towards preventing radicalization and extremist violence through better knowledge and information campaigns. CVE is not an entirely new approach, but the current focus is more expansive and systematic and has involved significant research on understanding root causes and the proper response to them. Responding to non-state violence has focused significantly on religious ideas, actors, and institutions. Some movements (prominently ISIS, Al Shabaab, Boko Haram) frame ideologies in religious terms and use them as motivation. Religion has thus figured into multiple waves of CVE approaches, at times more directly and intentionally than others.

The White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism convened by President Obama in February 2015 highlighted CVE in the administration's foreign policy agenda, spurring a deluge of related conferences, conversations, and considerations globally. Besides institutionalizing strategy and standardizing the lexicon, the summit identified gaps and opportunities in domestic and international approaches. Subsequent regional summits around the globe were inspired by or directly connected with the White House initiative. They responded at least in part to President Obama's call for global partners to join the CVE effort in his September 2015 speech to the UN General Assembly. A May 2016 Department of State and USAID Joint Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism defined CVE as "proactive actions to counter efforts by violent extremists to radicalize, recruit, and mobilize followers to violence and to address specific factors that facilitate violent extremist recruitment and radicalization to violence." Parallel efforts within the United Nations and in Europe and Australia have followed similar CVE/PVE approaches.

Understandings of CVE highlight ambiguities that contribute both to tensions and problematic tactics. The terms *countering, violent*, and *extremism* are all ambiguous. Like terrorism, the notion of extremism can be highly subjective, as is violence. Most problematic is the common association of extremism with political, religious or social ideology and especially Islam. It makes eminent sense to work to understand the intersections of violent behavior and the ideas that inspire, justify, or give meaning to that violence—identifying the contextual factors that support both ideologies and recourse to

violence. However, Governmental adoption and validation of such categories can feed unhelpfully into sectarian dynamics and cycles of conflict in settings characterized by complex and often longstanding tensions within and between religious groups. By defining "violent extremism" as a distinct issue or problem and addressing it via various policy and programmatic mechanisms, the CVE paradigm can serve to mask and distract from more fundamental political and geopolitical drivers of violence.

Thus CVE approaches can have negative effects. They tend to give priority to approaches that blur the boundaries between security responses and the tools of diplomacy and development. This in turn complicates or impedes efforts to address root grievances and to focus on improving welfare, including social cohesion, for the community at large. Further, because CVE approaches often link both extremism and violence to religious and especially Muslim teachings and communities. they can exacerbate bias against Muslims in non-Muslim societies and accentuate counter-productive divides within and among communities. Shifting the focus from CVE to PVE responds to some but not all concerns.

Current CVE/PVE approaches commonly overstate and oversimplify religious dimensions; actual and perceived religious links color policy responses. Various countries have established counter-ideology messaging centers, imam training programs, or otherwise sought to propagate "moderate Islam" as part of their contribution to broader counterterrorism efforts. Some such efforts can be valuable but there are deep flaws both in highlighting "moderate Islam" and in governments engaging in government-sanctioned religious propaganda. The risks associated with governments directly using religious language or concepts in official statements and messaging are substantial; governments rarely have standing to make pronouncements in matters of religion, or at the very least are not seen as credible religious messengers. Governmental adoption and validation can feed unhelpfully into sectarian dynamics and cycles of conflict in settings characterized by existing tensions between religious groups.

Relationships within and among religious communities are critical factors in social cohesion, albeit with different manifestations that are linked to history, welfare (inequalities, for example), political organization, leadership stance, and other factors. The specific roles that religious beliefs and mobilization play in contemporary extremist movements is the subject of intense analysis and debate.

Both CVE and PVE debates and policies need to be delinked from their over-simplified religious association as significant research shows that religious beliefs are rarely the primary cause of extremism. The implications of how religious dimensions affect violent extremism extend far beyond security, involving economics, politics, and social welfare. Politicians' and policy-makers' language and assumptions around fighting terrorism need to be stripped of false religious language.

The focus needs to shift instead to constructive engagement of religious actors in efforts to understand better the motivations behind extremist views and to find solutions. Religious actors are best placed to challenge problematic religious interpretations of extremist groups. They can help reframe religious narratives to address grievances driving

extremism—such as politics, socioeconomics, and localized conflicts—and highlight the positive potential to build peaceful, pluralistic societies.

In recent years, a number of governments—including numerous G20 members—have begun to explore the importance of enhancing their capacity to engage with religious actors across a wide range of foreign policy and national security concerns. The George W. Bush administration established a White House team focused on faith sector engagement in 2001. An analogous office at the US Agency for International Development (USAID) focused on the role of religious actors in international development. US government engagement with religious actors in foreign policy, including in peacebuilding, development, and human rights, became more formalized, strategic, and institutionalized during the Obama administration, particularly through the creation at the U.S. State Department of the Office of Religion and Global Affairs. But this interest and capacity is not confined to the United States. 2015 saw the establishment of the Transatlantic Policy Network on Religion and Diplomacy, a coordinating mechanism for governmental engagement with religion in foreign policy whose membership includes fifteen foreign ministries from across the Euro-Atlantic region, the European Union, and the United Nations.

The challenge of religious engagement demands wise interventions that start with strategic knowledge of both institutions and the politics of leadership. G20 governments are starting to develop that capacity, but challenges still remain. Differing views on human rights often need to be addressed, especially with respect to roles of women and youth. In many settings, the direct influence of formal religious leaders—even in matters of religion—is questionable. Religious leaders who actively put themselves forward as CVE partners—particularly those active on transnational interfaith circuits and in global "peace summits"—do not necessarily have the greatest following within their communities. Religious leaders at the local and provincial level are likely to be more trusted and to have a more granular understanding of the specific issues facing their communities. Creative efforts to address approaches to equity and equality are often needed. Diverse voices must be at negotiating tables.

Understanding better how religious factors affect violent extremism can help inform the design and implementation of solutions to violence. These must vary by country and region according to government/religious relationships and practical assessments of effective potential roles. Approaches that focus on roles or functions that religious teachings and beliefs play in violent extremism—facilitating mobilization, shaping narratives, providing a justification, and sanctifying violent acts—shows promise. Religious actors, as integral members of civil society and key contributors to public and political discourse, can engage in many fields, if done with care and sensitivity to power asymmetries and potential risks. Religious actors can be partners. Success factors include engaging them at the right time, designing effective training, and ensuring effective and inclusive partnerships across sectors. Above all, it is vital to understand religious institutions and communities as broad, deep, and complex. The concept of lived religion is important, to go beyond official religious authorities and formal institutions.

Negative consequences of broad CVE policies include restrictions on civic space and alienation of large communities. Distorted understandings undermine the effectiveness of response in practice and can have high human rights, financial, social, and economic costs.

**Proposals:**

*The G20 members and engagement groups*:

- Should work to ensure better alignment between counterideology or counternarrative efforts focused on drivers of violent extremism. The goal is turn an informed, nuanced, and constructive approach to religion in relation to non-state violence. That means recognizing that ideological drivers of extremism always occur and gain traction within settings defined by a wide range of other factors.

- The G20 members in setting and implementing agendas should take religious factors more systematically into account. That means thinking beyond theology when assessing potential roles for religious actors in addressing social violence and extremist views. As part of civil society, religious actors are relevant to a much broader range of sectors and activities associated with CVE—for example, combating corruption, alleviating socioeconomic inequalities, resolving conflict, and peacebuilding.

- It is important that CVE not be used as a pretense for proscribing religious freedom and human rights. Some governments use CVE policy discourse as top cover for violations of religious freedom and other human rights, or to crack down on religious groups or forms of religious expression they perceive as political opposition.

- Avoid interpretations of religion or use of religious language and symbols in official government statements that can accentuate problems, especially when state actors claim to speak for religious actors by favoring some views over others.

- The G20 Summit should highlight CVE debates as a priority topic; alongside UN and other efforts, the G20 platform with its sharply focused agenda offers a chance for fresh insights. A multi-stakeholder task force that includes economic and religious actors should report to the 2019 G20 summit with action recommendations.

*Religious coordinating networks:*

- Should focus on developing proposals that reflect inclusive involvement of their communities. They can ensure that understandings of the religious sector reflects the relevance of actors beyond formal religious authorities and official institutions. Women, younger religious leaders, and traditionalist faith practices are key players in the religious landscape and often more influential than their formal and titled religious counterparts.

- Develop a strategic analysis of track records of religious engagement on non-state violence with a view to highlighting best and worst practice and practical guidelines for action.

**Resources:**

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G20
INTERFAITH
FORUM

ÉTICA Y ECONOMÍA

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POLICY AREA:
**Forced Migration**

# G20 policy makers should support wider religious roles in refugee resettlement

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## Abstract

Religious entities play significant roles in the current refugee/ forced migration crisis. These roles include innovative and experience based ideas to address broken aspects of the humanitarian system, overall advocacy on behalf of refugees and migrants based on humanitarian and spiritual principles, direct action in refugee camps and communities, action in communities that refugees and migrants flee, and support for refugee integration in host countries, including explicit efforts to promote social cohesion and address trauma. Broadly, however, religious factors and contributions are poorly understood and insufficiently taken into account by policy makers and in think tank analyses of these (among other) issues. In each area of religious engagement measures to harmonize and enhance efforts could increase impact.

This brief focuses on the European and US resettlement challenge, which is linked in multiple ways to the broader crisis of forced migration. The G20 in its approach to the forced migration crisis and specifically to resettlement and reintegration should engage more directly with religious actors as central partners. These actors should be part of policy discussions on issues like criteria for resettlement, engagement with host communities to assure welcome, a sharp focus on the protection of unaccompanied or separated children, special measures to counter risky transit like the humanitarian corridor proposal, and post arrival reintegration including education and trauma healing. Recognition of and support for religious engagement could help to counter the fears and negative responses that affect political responses to refugee resettlement. Closer cooperation with key religious actors could substantively strengthen integration processes.

# Challenge

Religious dimensions of the current forced migration crises are significant, often misunderstood, and commonly underappreciated.

UNHCR's 2017 Global Trends report notes that more than 68.5 million people have been forced to flee their homes, the highest number of forcibly displaced populations since the end of World War II. Just under two thirds of these are internally displaced persons (IDPs). About 86 percent of refugees under UNHCR's mandate are in low and middle income countries, including Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Uganda, Chad, and the Sudan. Jordan alone hosts at least 630.000 refugees (UNHCR 2015), ten percent of its total population (unofficial numbers are considerably higher). The multiple causes of forced migration include complex and protracted conflicts and poor governance.

The dimensions of the current refugee and migrant crisis are quite well known and documented, albeit with gaps in knowledge. Substantial international efforts are devoted to addressing practical dimensions of the immediate situation and to exploring long-term policy responses (for example at the May 2016 World Humanitarian Summit and during UN General Assembly discussions).
A small percentage of forced migrants are resettled in G20 countries, notably in the European Union countries and the United States, with active issues in Australia also. The acceptance and integration process is an immediate topic of concern for G20 members, as are the longer term issues related to the overall humanitarian system.

Perceived and actual links to religion of aspects of the forced migration crisis are complex, involving both distorted narratives (for example associating refugees with specific religious beliefs, perceived versus actual threats to security) and practical issues (addressing cultural/religious differences pertinent for successful integration such as gender roles and application in crisis situations of human rights principles). In some situations religious tensions play a part while religious actors are involved in many dimensions of mediation and peacebuilding. Tensions around perceived religious dimensions stymie successful integration and contribute to political tensions in countries of resettlement.

Many religious institutions, including interreligious and intrafaith bodies (the Catholic Church, World Council of Churches) and faith-inspired organizations (inter alia Caritas Internationalis, Jesuit Refugee Service, Islamic Relief Worldwide, Lutheran World Relief, and World Vision) have active and long-standing programs that involve direct action to support forced migrants and global advocacy calling notably for compassionate and actionable responses to refugees.

The involvement of religious bodies in refugee resettlement issues is dynamic and often responsive both to formal religious leadership and to local community initiatives involving religious actors. Some (for example actions of the International Catholic Migration Commission – ICMC) are formal and transnational while others are more local and informal. Action overall is inspired and shaped by important religious ethical teachings. Many of these teachings – welcoming the stranger, hospitality, compassion for the most vulnerable – are shared among religious communities. Thus interreligious and ecumenical approaches are some of the most inspirational and effective among practical efforts and responses (witness the impact of Pope Francis's and the Patriarch of Constantinople's personal engagement with refugees and migrants).

A practical example of an initiative that combines exemplary and operational intervention is the Sant'Egidio Community's Humanitarian Corridors program. This pilot project, in collaboration with the Federation of Evangelical Churches and the Waldensian and Methodist Churches, aims to avoid the boat journeys in the Mediterranean that cause countless deaths, including many children; to avoid human trafficking, to prevent the exploitation of human traffickers who do business with those who

flee from wars, and to grant to people in "vulnerable conditions" (victims of persecution, torture and violence, as well as families with children, elderly people, sick people, persons with disabilities) legal entry to Italian territory with a humanitarian visa, with the possibility to apply for asylum.

The evidence basis for policy planning and implementation on refugee/forced migrant integration overall is fragmented and coordination among different actors – secular and religious and among religious groups – is insufficient. The response and organization of religious support for resettlement of forced migrants varies considerably among G20 member countries and so do the issues involved. There is an urgent need for a rigorous mapping of ongoing efforts and robust communications strategies. This is a responsibility of religious communities. Various centers are undertaking such efforts.

Religious beliefs and institutions play central roles in the everyday lives of the majority of people around the world, leading both to forces that generate conflict and to a rich potential source of motivation, strength, and resilience in the face of crises such as the forced migration and reintegration challenge. Religious roles in humanitarian agendas have received considerable recent attention, including action proposals featured during the May 2016 World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul. However, more systematic engagement with religious actors and cooperation with religious organizations and actors (including the large body of faith-inspired organizations), which are doing important work on the ground, is needed. The G20 can play a crucial role by devoting explicit attention to the topic.

Sharper identification and recognition of religious roles (positive and less positive) in resettlement must be at the foundation of active G20 engagement on the resettlement issues. This effort is also foundational for the broader 2030 agenda as the disruptions involved in the forced migration crises deflect energy, attention, and financial resources from pursuit of broader global goals. Religious communities with their dense local networks and long-standing and resilient local presence as well as their rich transnational networks are well positioned to see these linkages and to appreciate the challenges involved. That is why the forced migration issue is of special concern and focus for religious bodies, interreligious institutions, and faith-inspired institutions. The negative impact of distorted narratives involving religious beliefs and complex linkages among the multiple pressures that force migration and insecurity are central topics of concern for religious leaders and communities and for G20 leaders. Their positive potential should be explicitly acknowledged and acted upon.

In Europe, individual religious communities and leaders as well as interreligious groups (both established institutions and spontaneous local responses) support a wide variety of initiatives to support refugees and to facilitate their integration into the communities of resettlement. Some actions are quite well known: the leadership of Pope Francis in urging a welcome. Others have received limited attention. The Winchester Centre of Religion, Reconciliation and Peace at Winchester University has undertaken research on responses in several European countries, identifying a range of positive efforts and indicative narratives suggesting positive impact where religious groups support refugee resettlement.

In the United States, six of nine long established refugee resettlement agencies that support the US government refugee program have religious ties. Thus there is a lengthy experience to draw on. These groups could have a distinctive positive impact on advocacy. Learning from the resettlement experience and particularly its religious dimensions could provide pertinent knowledge to guide future policy on refugee and migrant resettlement. This could link to efforts to address popular concerns about refugee impact by linking experience to shared and individual religious community teachings.

While religious institutions and communities are actively involved in the crisis, there is a clear and shared appreciation (among religious actors) that they could do far more. Religious actors for example

provide practical support to migrants in integration into new societies (e.g. financial support by host congregations, legal or housing assistance, befriending or accompaniment services, language training, educational or employment support) National support mechanisms could draw more systematically on these resources in G20 states. Religious actors can be engaged and positive partners in addressing rising xenophobia and nationalism in G20 states.

Areas of suggested focus are the authority that influential leaders can use to promote tolerance and peace, defend humanitarian values, and offer alternative narratives to radicalization. Likewise local religious actors (including formal clerics but also women religious actors) can contribute action and insights.

# Proposal

Given the critical importance of the forced migration issue, the G20 should establish an informal network of religious actors and communities to centralize and disseminate evidence based information. The network can also advocate on behalf of the needs of refugees and forced migrants and identify critical areas where intervention is needed and appropriate.

Religious actors, because of their broad transnational links and direct operational experience, should have G20 recognition as central partners in addressing the overall forced migration crisis and in any reforms to the refugee system. Actions should focus both on the broad forced migration crisis and specific resettlement programs.

G20 members should recommend the establishment of a commission to redesign the UNHCR system to make it a truly global system. This would include religious participation. Muslim engagement (Muslim majority nations and Muslim religious leaders) is vital to efforts to address the system. Among the three Muslim majority countries among the G20, only Turkey is a party to the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

The G20 should establish a global refugee and religion research fund to support research into the complex role religion plays in the global refugee crisis. Research topics would include, but not be limited to, religion as a driver of refugee displacement, treatment of religious minorities in refugee camps, best practices in treatment of diverse religious communities in host countries and by host governments, religion as a source of resentment of refugees, religion as a resource in the treatment of refugee trauma, and the dissemination of lessons learned across all governments involved in refugee resettlement.

The G20 Summit should acknowledge religious engagement in the resettlement process specifically in European Union countries and in the US and commit to drawing on this experience: for example ICMC's Resettlement Support Centre – covering the Middle East and Turkey – based in Istanbul and with an outreach office in Beirut, facilitates application, screening and processing of refugees (already given refugee status by UNHCR and referred by UNHCR for possible resettlement to USA) and the Humanitarian Corridors project.

Specifically, the G20 gathering can support these efforts by:

(a) Identifying a standing interreligious advisory group to advise the G20 leaders and advisors on religious dimensions of the forced migration crisis and specifically resettlement issues and approaches. This could be the basis for explicit discussion during the 2018 and 2019 G20 meetings

(b) Enhance systematic mechanisms to assure cooperation and joint advocacy among religiously active communities and public authorities, at G20 level as well as EU and national government.

(c) Support programs of religious organizations and actors that strengthen the resilience of displaced communities. Safe space exchanges between people of different religious and social groups, including migrants and host communities, could help identify innovative approaches and solutions.

(d) Acknowledge religious organizations and actors as key stakeholders in refugee response during negotiations and formulation of the Global Compact on Refugees, which is expected to be finalized in 2018.

(e) Acknowledge the important support that religious actors can provide in psycho-social interventions and overcoming trauma.

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# IMPLEMENTING THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES FROM A FAITH PERSPECTIVE
## POLICY NOTE - SEPTEMBER 2018

## CONTEXT

An unprecedented 68.5 million people are currently displaced globally, including 25.4 million refugees. Recognizing the need for new approaches amid the changing landscape of humanitarian assistance, the global community gathered in 2016 for a UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants which resulted in adoption of the New York Declaration. Signed by 193 countries, the Declaration set in motion a two-year consultative process to develop Global Compacts on Refugees and Migration aimed at enhancing protection for millions of people who have been forcibly displaced and are otherwise on the move around the world.



Set to be endorsed by the UN General Assembly in September 2018, the primary objective of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) is to facilitate access to durable solutions for refugees with a focus on 1) easing pressures on host countries; 2) enhancing refugee self-reliance; 3) expanding access to third country solutions; and 4) supporting conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

The GCR is comprised of two primary components, a Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), which was piloted by UNHCR in 12 refugee-hosting countries, and a Program of Action that outlines actions that can be taken – by UN member states or other stakeholders – to support refugees and countries particularly affected by large-scale refugee movement or protracted refugee situations.

As faith-based organizations working with refugee communities across the globe, ACT Alliance, Catholic Relief Services, Jesuit Refugee Service/USA and Islamic Relief recognize the important role that the GCR can play in building the political will to address the needs of refugees and improving current response mechanisms that can no longer support these needs. We are particularly interested in ensuring that the GCR is fully implemented, funded and monitored as it has the potential to mobilize greater action and transform the lives of refugees and host communities.

## THE POTENTIAL FOR IMPACT

Although not legally binding, the GCR is grounded in long-standing international refugee protection mechanisms, including the 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol. The GCR provides an opportunity for countries not yet party to these mechanisms to consider acceding to these important global instruments, which are at the heart of the global refugee response system.

In addition to reinforcing these critical policies, the GCR recognizes that the current needs of refugees are not being met by the current system. By bringing together stakeholders through new mechanisms – including a Global Refugee Forum every four years and a Solidarity Conference on an as-needed basis – the GCR has the potential to mobilize support for refugee situations in a timelier manner.

The GCR prioritizes three areas of intervention including:

- humanitarian assistance
- development cooperation
- maximizing private sector contributions.

In 2017, there were 4.4 million newly displaced refugees, making the case for continued and improved access to humanitarian assistance. At the same time, two-thirds of all refugees lives in a protracted situation defined as refugees in exile from their home country for five or more years. The need to transition from an emergency response to a more development-focused approach with an eye towards durable solutions is ever-more critical.

Notably, the GCR highlights several refugee needs that require particular support. This includes access to education, jobs and livelihoods, health, food security and the special needs of vulnerable groups including women and girls, children, adolescents and youth. To prevent duplication of efforts and recognizing that the needs of individuals are complex and must take into consideration the whole person, any response effort must take a holistic approach. This starts with comprehensive needs assessments that are not sector-specific and must take into consideration the psychosocial needs of populations that have gone through trauma induced by their displacement.

To be successful, the GCR must be supported by strong partnerships and embrace a full participatory approach. The Program of Action calls for the inclusion of local and national actors, civil society, host communities and refugees themselves, but we must all be responsible for ensuring that this new approach is carried out in a consistent and meaningful way.

To do so, reliable funding will be critical alongside support for capacity-building initiatives. This must not be an afterthought, but instead investments in capacity-building and engaging with all actors must take place before an emergency, through the provision of humanitarian assistance, and into a more robust development stage. This will require adequate resources, time and partnerships among a diverse group of actors including host governments, current and new donors, and civil society including faith-based organizations.

As noted in the GCR, faith-based organizations are well-placed to engage in the areas of conflict prevention, reconciliation, and peacebuilding. But we can also play a larger role in the planning and delivery of assistance to refugees and host communities as well as in shaping public opinion, galvanizing action, generating resources, and providing the necessary expertise for these types of interventions.

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faith-based organizations are well-placed to engage in the areas of

**CONFLICT PREVENTION**
**RECONCILIATION**
**PEACEBUILDING**

The need for data collection and evidence to inform any intervention is highlighted in the GCR and must be carried out in a meaningful way. Unfortunately, data collection is often under-prioritized and under-resourced, yet improvements in response mechanisms will not come to fruition without the necessary evaluation mechanisms.

Finally, recognizing that the journey of a person may not fit into a neat category of refugee, migrant or otherwise, we must ensure that the Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact on Migration are aligned in taking a human-centered approach to caring for all of God's creation.

## CONCLUSION

We are at a tipping point in addressing the needs of those who are forcibly displaced from their homes due to conflict, persecution and violence. As organizations rooted in our diverse faith backgrounds, we applaud efforts to place a spotlight on these important issues and call on all decision-makers to remember the individuals, families and communities that are counting on real change so that they can plan for a better future.



*This policy note is brought to you from the interfaith partnership of ACT Alliance, Catholic Relief Services, Islamic Relief USA, and Jesuit Refugee Service/USA.*

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# POLICY BRIEF: FAITH ACTORS AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES

• Faith actors are actively involved in responding to forced displacement, well-positioned to mobilize resources, and provide material and immaterial support to foster appropriate, tailored response.

• Faith actors' experience and role should be acknowledged and considered in the design and implementation of every stage of the humanitarian response to forced displacement.

• Faith can play an instrumental role in forced migrants' experiences. Stakeholders should work to more fully understand this aspect of displacement experiences and facilitate spiritual support across all stages and places of displacement.

## INTRODUCTION

To maximize the significant opportunities presented by the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), the international community must recognize the experience and capabilities of faith actors (FAs) and break down existing barriers to partnerships to enable a more comprehensive, effective, and durable response. While the GCR does acknowledge that: "Faith-based actors could support the planning and delivery of arrangements to assist refugees and host communities, including in the areas of conflict prevention, reconciliation, and peacebuilding, as well as other relevant areas," the critical and comprehensive role that FAs play – as well as their potential for engagement for efficient service delivery – warrants a fuller and more nuanced examination.

This policy brief provides a set of recommendations based on evidence concerning the multiple roles that faith and faith actors[1] play across different stages and spaces of forced displacement. The brief is aligned with the GCR's sections on Arrangements for Burden- and Responsibility-sharing and its three Areas in Need of Support (Reception and Admission, Meeting Needs and Supporting Communities, and Solutions).

## BURDEN- AND RESPONSIBILITY-SHARING

The international community is committed to the development of a **more equitable, effective, and predictable distribution** of efforts to receive and support forced migrants and host communities. FAs are crucial partners as they represent several aspects of the GCR's multi-stakeholder approach, including local, civil society, and faith-based representation, and recognizing the place of religious belief and practice for refugees and host communities.



Adbu Rahim (25) holds his sick 2-year-old son in Tombro makeshift camp, next to no-man's land by the Myanmar border. Abdul and his wife walked for 14 days fleeing from the brutal violence that the Myanmar Army has hit upon his and other Rohingya villages in their home country of Myanmar. Photo: Ruben Salgado Escudero/Islamic Relief 2017

**Enhancing response.** FAs around the world provide critical support to displaced people, ranging from meeting basic needs, such as food and shelter, to providing education, and tracking migration routes through transnational networks.

**Coordination.** FAs frequently coordinate both among themselves and with non-faith-based organizations to provide support to refugees and IDPs, often enhancing the efficiency of response.

**Understanding concerns with FAs.** Issues related to proselytization are at play with some faith-based actors, inhibiting compliance with the humanitarian standard of impartiality and posing challenges to cooperation with secular actors.[5] However, other FAs are working to mitigate threats to impartiality, e.g., through relationship-building processes and training. Evidence also shows that discussion of religious beliefs and practices between refugees and hosts can be better understood as deeply connected to the different actors' agendas, including refugees' own choices and agency.

**Barriers to funding.** Despite FAs' extensive experience in supporting displaced people, they often face barriers to international funding, as with poorly designed regulations related to anti-terrorist legislation that prevent Islamic FAs from accessing international donor funds. Such exclusions can impede FAs and subsequently hinder important components of response.

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**PRACTICE EXAMPLES**

**Enhancing response**
• Islamic NGOs are providing comprehensive humanitarian assistance to Syrian refugees in Jordan through a variety of local faith-based or faith-influenced actors and relying on funding by Gulf donors.
• The Baptist Church utilizes its network to assist Chin-Burmese refugees along their migration route.[2]

**Coordination**
• The Bangkok Asylum Seekers and Refugee Assistance Network (BASRAN) was established to coordinate faith and secular actors in engaging in humanitarian assistance to refugees in the city.[3]
• FAs including Caritas Nepal, Catholic Relief Service, JRS USA, and the Jesuit Conference for South Asia were among the major providers of services to Bhutanese refugees in Nepal.[4]

**Understanding concerns with FAs**
• Evangelical churches in Lebanon have received training to understand the need for impartial food assistance to Syrian refugees.[6]
• Islamic Relief, along with many FAs, has a long-standing commitment to proving its impartiality.[7]

**Barriers to funding**
• Muslim charities operating in the Middle East have particularly experienced difficulties in receiving funding due to "de-risking," or withholding resources from actors in regions associated with a high risk of funding terrorism.[8]

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## RECOMMENDATIONS ON BURDEN- AND RESPONSIBILITY-SHARING:

• Humanitarian actors and other institutions involved in forced migration responses must ensure that FAs' experience, as part of a multi-stakeholder approach, is taken into account in burden- and responsibility-sharing arrangements. FAs responding to displacement emergencies must be recognized for their ability and potential to make humanitarian assistance more effective, predictable, and sustainable.
• National and international actors including UN agencies and NGOs should expand their engagement with FAs, particularly local FAs, as partners in collaboration and coordination of assistance to refugees and IDPs, e.g., through engagement and consultations with local FAs in relevant decision-making fora.
• Humanitarian stakeholders – particularly donor agencies – should make a concerted effort to mitigate the risks of FAs' real and perceived lack of compliance with international humanitarian standards and support local FAs to build capacity so that compliance issues can be resolved.
• Financial barriers preventing FAs from receiving donations and funding should be removed in order to avoid discrimination between and among secular actors and FAs, and to facilitate more equally distributed burden-sharing arrangements.

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## I. RECEPTION AND ADMISSION

FAs play a critical role in ensuring immediate and appropriate reception arrangements and can be instrumental in referral and access to Refugee Status Determination (RSD).

**Resource mobilization and tailored response.** FAs have a long history of providing immediate assistance and reception arrangements at different stages of displacement, including through the use of religious buildings as sanctuaries. FAs also often address the needs of specific populations, such as women, children, and LGBTIQA+ persons, to ensure that the needs of all forced migrants are considered and met.

**RSD processes.** FAs often facilitate access to registration, refer particular cases, provide legal assistance, and even undertake prima facie RSD procedures. On the government side, a restricted understanding of the role of religion and/or faith-related prejudice can affect immigration officials' decision-making processes.

**Spiritual support during RSD.** FAs offer spiritual support to asylum seekers in registration and procedure centers. Additionally, faith motivates many volunteers taking part in visitations and other activities within immigrant detention and deportation centers,[13] and often plays an important role in migrants' experiences of detention.[14]

**Dignity and awareness.** FAs, including faith-motivated refugees, often engage in practices aimed at restoring the dignity of deceased or missing forced migrants, facilitating mourning, and raising awareness of the dangers of current national and international migration policies.[16]

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### PRACTICE EXAMPLES

**Resource mobilization and tailored response.**
• Muslim faith communities – differing from other state institutions and national faith organisations – welcomed refugees in transit in Kumanovo, Macedonia, in 2015.[9]
• The La72 shelter in southern Mexico, run by Franciscans, provides tailored responses for LGBTIQA+ people seeking protection.[10]

**•RSD processes.**
 FAs have facilitated RSD procedures for Canadian private sponsorship programmes.[11]
• RSD officials in the UK demonstrated preconceptions related to asylum seekers' religious affiliations.[12]

**Spiritual support during RSD.**
• A team of multicultural and multi-religious volunteers provide spiritual support for refugees at the Registration and Procedure Centre in Basel, Switzerland.[15]

**Dignity and awareness.**
• A formal burial ground for refugees is a key feature of the Baddawi refugee camp in Lebanon.[17]
• Identification attempts and mourning rituals are carried out by faith leaders as well as local faith communities in in Italy[18] and Spain.[19]


Response for Syrian refugees in Serbia. Photo credit: ADRA

**RECOMMENDATIONS ON RECEPTION AND ADMISSION:**

• FAs' practices of immediate and tailored response to displacement should be regarded as inspiration for affordable, effective, efficient, and innovative reception and admission activities.
• Collaboration between FAs and other stakeholders should be pursued to ensure referral for people with specific needs and facilitate access to registration and assistance, as well as to overcome faith-related prejudice and illiteracy in RSD procedures.
• Spiritual support should be implemented for refugees in stages of transit, detention, RSD, and for those at risk of deportation. Relevant and appropriate faith-motivated initiatives to support people in immigration centers should be supported
• Government authorities in charge of admission and arrival procedures must ensure that they adequately respond to forced migrants' deaths, and give them the dignity and visibility they deserve. FAs' and other stakeholders' efforts to restore dignity through identification, burial and mourning practices should be recognized and supported.

## II. MEETING NEEDS AND SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES

Host countries and communities need to provide services to the newly arrived, identify and respond to special needs, and foster good relationships between different groups. FAs are well-positioned and well-equipped to contribute to these efforts.

**Positioned for support.** With their community networks and a highly relational approach, FAs are effective providers of material and immaterial services. Furthermore, faith is central to the development of coping strategies and a sense of belonging in displacement and FAs are well-positioned to provide essential psychosocial and spiritual support, often crucial to refugees' and IDPs' wellbeing.[20] In fact, FAs are often the only actors in a position to engage with communities on sensitive issues.[21]

**Spiritual support for vulnerable groups.** FA initiatives often target specific groups such as children and adolescents or elderly refugees and IDPs and have proven beneficial. For example, numerous studies have shown the importance of faith and faith-related practices for children and adolescents' spiritual development[24] and resilience[25] in contexts of forced displacement.

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### PRACTICE EXAMPLES

**Positioned for support.**
• In Lebanon, MERATH, a national faith-based organization, operates as a mediator between international humanitarian actors and local faith communities – supporting the latter with training and administrative and logistical support – and fosters local networks.[22]
• FAs in Kenya were found to be the only actors able to provide trauma counselling to internally displaced Kikuyu victims of sexual assault.[23]

**Spiritual support for vulnerable groups.**
• Programmes like World Vision's Child Protection in Emergencies (CPiE) in Ugandan refugee camps include access to child-friendly spaces, spiritual support, peace education and conflict resolution activities.[26]
• Female and male refugees have been described as finding a source of strength in religion, for instance after resettlement to the United States.[27]

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**Addressing gender.** The nexus between gender, forced migration, and faith is complex,[28] and analysis shows that FAs are no more or less likely to provide tailored services to LGBTIQA+ people than secular organizations. On the other hand, there is evidence that faith-illiterate interventions to promote gender equality may prove counterproductive if the dynamics of religious beliefs and practices are not taken into account.[29]

**Livelihoods.** Local FAs often mobilize their resources and networks in order to increase the likelihood of employment and resocialization in the country of settlement. However, issues related to conversion and its impact on the interpretation of past traumatic events are yet to be addressed.

**Peaceful coexistence.** FAs can foster good relations and peaceful coexistence in host societies through multi-religious initiatives. Activities in support of refugees also create possibilities for inter-faith awareness and enhanced visibility for religious minorities. Peacebuilding and reconciliation processes can also benefit from FAs' engagements, especially those that involve children and youth.

**Influencing xenophobia.** FAs often help combat xenophobia in the country of settlement through education projects and can protect refugees from xenophobic attacks. On the other hand, faith leaders and/or members of local faith communities can contribute to an anti-refugee environment by fueling sentiments of suspicion and even discrimination within and between religious communities.[35]

## PRACTICE EXAMPLES

### Addressing gender
• A digital storytelling project in Canada is designed to facilitate LGBTIQA+ refugees' inclusion in a queer Christian community.[30]

### Livelihoods
• The Vaiz of Bursa helped create a network for refugees by facilitating their access to education, health services and the job market.[31]
• In Colombia, Pentecostal congregations have played an important role in the resocialisation of many displaced persons.[32]

### Peaceful coexistence
• In addition to hosting various interfaith activities, the Sant'Egidio Community in Sicily also incentivizes exchanges between refugee youth and elderly and encourages participation in cultural activities to promote interaction with host communities and foster a peaceful coexistence.[33]
• Multi-religious programs in Germany, Sweden, the UK and Poland are connecting diverse communities and dismantling negative perceptions between hosts and migrants.[34]

### Influencing xenophobia
• In Greece, Arigatou International's "Learning to Play Together" program promotes intercultural and interreligious learning through physical education classes.[36]
• Churches responded to the 2008 xenophobic violence in South Africa by providing shelter and mobilizing resources including money, volunteers, and supplies. [37]



Baddawi refugee camp in North Lebanon has been hosting refugees from Syria since the outbreak of the conflict. Masjid al-Quds – in the background – is at the geographical and metaphorical core of the camp. Masjid al-Quds overlooks the cemetery, the camp's ultimate shared space in life and death for new and established refugees alike.

**RECOMMENDATIONS ON MEETING NEEDS AND SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES:**

• Humanitarian stakeholders, including donors, should endorse and support FAs' efforts to provide services, e.g., food distributions, education, and psychosocial and spiritual assistance, in particular where the FAs are contextually well-positioned to execute them.
• Spiritual support for displaced people with specific needs (e.g., children, youth and older people), must be put in place alongside secular psychosocial support.
• Stakeholders should consider faith and engage FAs when planning and implementing initiatives to promote gender justice and LGBTIQA+ rights.
• FAs' support for forced migrants' livelihoods and durable solutions should be acknowledged and enhanced through collaboration with other stakeholders.
• Multi-religious and interfaith initiatives (including peace-building and reconciliation) should be supported in order to foster peaceful coexistence in host societies as well as countries of origin/return.
• Government authorities and policy-makers must support and consult – as part of their engagement with civil society – FAs actively working and campaigning against the rise of xenophobia

## III. SOLUTIONS

In the last few decades, complementary pathways to relocation such as private sponsorship programs have been developed alongside UNHCR's three primary long-term solutions to displacement: voluntary return to the country of origin, resettlement in a third country, and local integration. FAs are integral to these complementary pathways.

**Faith in return and reintegration.** Refugees' spiritual and religious beliefs are often intertwined with their relationships to their country of origin and can affect their perceptions of displacement and the possibility of voluntary return. In turn, faith-related experiences while in displacement, such as conversion, can have a strong impact on processes of reintegration.

**Resettlement.** FAs participate in resettlement programs by providing services and developing innovative strategies for resocialization in the host country. FAs are often confronted with issues of cultural and religious familiarity in resettlement programs, and with tensions and opportunities resulting from close collaboration with secular stakeholders including local and national authorities.

**Complementary pathways of admission.** FAs are major promoters of complementary pathways of admission to third countries. While these programs can present challenges in negotiating with national authorities,[40] they also clearly represent valuable models for expanding refugee protection through a multi-stakeholder approach which safeguards refugees' rights to life and safety.

**Local integration.** FAs can facilitate local integration, both by fostering the development of forced migrants' livelihoods through their community networks and by using the influence and moral authority they often enjoy in the host society to promote mutual understanding and social connections. FAs' long-term efforts towards local integration - such as providing support to find employment, youth activities, and advocating for the inclusion of refugees in civil registries for births and marriages, are often linked to religious values and traditions.[43] Additionally, faith itself can play an instrumental role in forced migrants' integration into host communities.

## PRACTICE EXAMPLES

**Faith in return and reintegration.**
• Many of Sudan's "lost boys" who converted to Christianity during their displacement found new community structures as well as a new context through which to understand their experiences.[38]

**Resettlement.**
• The US Conference of Catholic Bishops/ Migration and Refugees Services' program "Parishes Organized to Welcome Refugees" has galvanized 14,000 volunteers to provide support including legal work, medical services, food, companionship, and employment to more than 30,000 refugees.[39]

**Complementary pathways of admission.**
• Historically, the majority of agencies involved in Canada's long-standing private sponsorship program are faith-based.[41]
• Recent Humanitarian Corridors initiatives providing safe and legal routes to Europe are entirely funded and implemented by FAs, i.e., Christian organizations (the Community of Sant'Egidio, the Italian Episcopal Conference and the Italian Federation of Evangelical Churches).[42]

**Local integration.**
• Volunteers from the Interfaith Council for New Americans Westchester work together to support and integrate refugee families resettling in New York.[44]
• In Ghana and Liberia, shared religious beliefs and group prayer have fostered relationships between refugees and host communities.[45]

## RECOMMENDATIONS ON SOLUTIONS

• Faith-related experiences including the dynamics of conversion and cultural traditions connected to spirituality should be considered by non-faith actors when addressing processes of return and reintegration.
• FAs' significant contribution to and long-standing experience with resettlement programmes should be valued, and their initiatives supported by local and national stakeholders, in particular policy-makers.
• States adhering to the GCR must engage FAs to set up, implement, and expand complementary pathways for admission to third countries.
• The unique role FAs can play in catalysing local integration processes should be regarded as key in integration-related policies and networks.

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# Engaging religious actors in addressing the famine emergency in South Sudan, Nigeria, Somalia, and Yemen

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## Abstract

The United Nations has declared a famine emergency in light of the imminent danger of starvation facing an estimated 20 million people in four countries, and it has appealed urgently for US$4 billion to meet immediate needs. This crisis should be prominent in G20 discussions. Religious institutions and leaders are actively involved in the immediate and specific famine situation affecting African nations and Yemen and in efforts to end the conflicts that are the primary cause of famine. More broadly, religious leaders are acting to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, Zero Hunger, by 2030. This imperative is shared across religious divides and the common purpose that binds different religious communities portends well for peacebuilding and progress in the affected areas. Religious actors should thus be an integral part of the international response to the famine emergency as well as to the Zero Hunger challenge. G20 attention and support to religious roles would enhance responses to the famine and peacebuilding in affected areas and thus contribute to unlocking Africa's potential. Interfaith action on SDG 2, highlighted as part of the global agenda, can speed progress towards Zero Hunger.

## Challenge

The UN has signaled a famine emergency in parts of South Sudan and Somalia, warning that the situation in adjoining areas of the horn of Africa: Ethiopia, Burundi, Kenya, and Uganda, is fragile and very concerning. Parts of Nigeria face famine, as does Yemen. Resources to provide food aid are insufficient: immediate needs are estimated at US$4 billion, with only a fraction raised to date.

Eradicating hunger and malnutrition is one of the great challenges of our time. Not enough – or the wrong – food causes suffering and poor health and slows progress in other areas of development like education and employment. Some 795 million people – one in nine – go to bed on an empty stomach each night and many more suffer from some form of malnutrition. Thus the aim of SDG 2 is Zero Hunger by 2030.

Religious entities are directly involved in addressing both the famine emergency and the global challenge of Zero Hunger. Religious institutions and ecumenical and interreligious bodies build on core teachings about feeding the hungry and widely varied programs address needs. Religious actors are among the most effective and prominent advocates for policy and programmatic action. Religious leaders from many traditions and the world's leading interreligious and ecumenical organizations endorse the Global 2030 agenda Zero Hunger objective. Organizations like Caritas Internationalis, World Vision, Islamic Relief Worldwide, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, and Tzu Chi provide food relief and support food security policies including nutrition and smallholder farmers programs. Bread for the World, a US faith-inspired coalition, is a powerful advocate for action against hunger. The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance and the World Council of Churches (WCC) give priority to food and nutrition issues in their global action programs; they are organizing an emergency meeting in Nairobi in June 2017 specifically to identify areas for action to address the African famine crisis. May 21 will see the launch of a global Day of Prayer and Action.

The World Food Programme (WFP) is the leading global humanitarian organization fighting hunger worldwide, delivering food assistance in emergencies, and working with communities to improve nutrition and build resilience. WFP has identified strengthening strategic partnerships with religious institutions as a priority in the effort to achieve Zero Hunger. Pope Francis spoke to WFP's Executive Board, management, and staff in June 2016, emphasizing the importance of cooperation across secular religious boundaries. WFP has launched an interreligious initiative to further this goal, with support from religious leaders from a wide range of traditions. The strength of religious commitment is reflected in statements by 25 leaders supporting the June 2016 interreligious event at WFP and the diversity and reach of operational programs to address hunger is wide and generally well known.

## Proposal

Urgent action is required by G20 leaders to (a) signal the gravity of the famine situation in Africa and Yemen with strong statements and commitments to action; (b) assure adequate and timely financing for food aid; (and c) link famine relief to resolute action to assure access to affected populations. This is in line with the 2018 G20 framework: "More than ever, joint action by the world community is needed in order to address acute global challenges: geopolitical conflicts, terrorism, famine, natural disasters, climate and health catastrophes, migration and displacement, as well as social inequality." Religious institutions (formal and informal) are critical partners in the challenge.

The planned visit of Pope Francis and other religious leaders to South Sudan, interreligious focus on the famine crisis, and local faith initiatives are indicative of actual and potential religious roles. However, the full potential for harmonized efforts is limited by weak institutional links among relevant agencies that limit communications and partnerships. G20 recognition of the priority for religious engagement can help unlock this potential.

The G20 should link their support for action to UN resolutions. A request for quarterly reporting on progress of engagement of religious institutions and leaders could help chart the future course of engagement and ensure rigor in following up on Summit commitments.

The G20 can also act to advance progress towards SDG2: Zero Hunger by 2030 through explicit support for the global agendas for food security including food production and distribution and nutrition.

Success towards these objectives requires: (i) Full engagement of religious leaders at senior levels in highlighting the ethical issues at stake in the famine emergency, building on the teachings of religious traditions, individually and collectively; (ii) specific engagement of religious leaders in efforts to negotiate access to areas acutely affected by famine; and (iii) cooperative (track two) peacemaking efforts with religious communities in famine affected areas.

Religious actors support food programs and policies in communities across the globe but play especially critical roles in countries threatened by famine. South Sudan, Somalia, and Nigeria offer vivid examples of situations where religious actors are actively engaged in peace negotiations and famine relief and where interreligious cooperation has the potential to assure access to vulnerable populations and to support community resilience. This potential is only partially realized and G20 recognition of the positive potential for interreligious cooperation to address both immediate needs and long term solutions could highlight new paths for action by relevant global bodies.

The planned visit to South Sudan by Pope Francis and other religious leaders is an opportunity to highlight religious engagement in the famine crisis and, in preparing for and following up on the visit, to explore opportunities to broaden advocacy and operational engagement in areas of critical need.

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**SUMMARY OF COMMENT OF GLOBAL HUMANITARIAN AID LEADERS**
**at the**
**G20 INTERFAITH FORUM**
**Buenos Aires, Argentina**
**September 28, 2018**


**ADVANCING THE WORK OF**
**RELIGIOUSLY-AFFILIATED HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS**

This plenary session explored the work of several faith-inspired organizations that operate in every world region; it focused on human dignity and on responses to humanitarian crises. Chaired by Fr. Augusto Zampini (Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, Holy See); speakers were Jonathan Duffy (President, Adventist Development and Relief Association - ADRA); Sharon Eubank (LDS Charities; Presidency, Relief Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints); Humberto Ortiz Roca (Latin American Council of Bishops, CELAM-Latin American Episcopal Council); Carlos Rauda (Regional Representative, ACT Alliance); and Christina Tobias-Nahi (Director of Public Affairs, Islamic Relief, USA).

**Fr. Augusto Zampini** introduced the panel. Faith organizations are indispensable actors, inspired by their faith to be and to stay in the most difficult situations; they contribute to hope and dignity. They work within the SDG framework and, as for all humanitarian organizations, face the challenge of linking aid, especially in crises and with refugees, with long term development. Humanitarian aid is not simply giving things to the poor; it is about transformation, and it requires complex alliances, among faith actors but also with non-believers, within a framework of human rights. Faith organization work with refugees has special significance and presents both financial and political challenges. Fr. Zampini highlighted the issue of responsibility: people suffer not because they are lazy (they did not cause climate change), yet prospects are that their situation will become worse. Where will resources come from to address these problems? The shift in world demographics towards urban life affects this work: Argentina is now 70 percent urbanized, thus one of the world's most urbanized countries, yet proper urban planning (including to cope with disasters) is rare.

**Jonathan Duffy** focused on the evolving roles of and challenges facing ADRA and other faith-inspired organizations. He began with a historical backdrop, stressing that the church has long played an important part in society, promoting issues of justice and service to the poor. Churches established hospitals to serve the sick, schools to give children opportunities to achieve their potential, and prisons to help reform individuals. They also provided significant voices on social reform: abolition of slavery and the rights of women, to name two. However, with the onset of World War 1 and the global atrocities of war, churches began to see themselves as incapable of changing society and switched more to the role of lifesaver, rowing amongst the drowning mass of humanity, saving one life at a time as they dragged a drowning soul into the safety of their boat. With World War II coming so close on the heels of WWI, much of Europe came to believe there must be no God as He would not have allowed this. We saw the rise of secularism and with it a divide between religion and the private world of the supernatural and spiritual beliefs and the "real" world of things scientific, political, and day-to-day living.

Perhaps unconsciously, religious groups have allowed themselves to be boxed into a religious category. Much of their focus centers on whose doctrines are correct and personal spiritual commitment and conversion. While their ideological commitment to assisting the poor is acknowledged, this has come to be seen not as their main mission, often relegated to a secondary position or a means to introduce people to their central mission.

As a faith-based humanitarian organization, ADRA is asked to straddle two camps. As an NGO, we need to demonstrate our commitment to best practices, global standards, and transparency and to prove that we do not proselytize. We also live within the world of our faith communities and battle the concept that we are not core to the main mission of the church; we are asked to demonstrate how we contribute to the fulfillment of our faith communities' mission. In order to prove our value as an NGO and be successful in winning grants (in the end it is still a business), we have tended to distance ourselves from the mainstream church activities, seeing the church as an opportunity to rob from the rich to give to the poor.

We come to the reality of the present as we cast an eye toward the future. In the past few years, dialogue around the role of faith in development and humanitarian response has changed. There is a growing awareness that with around 80 percent of the world's population having some form of religious affiliation, religious communities are a strong part of civil society. Organizations such as the Joint Learning Initiative for Local Faith Communities (JLI) have established a knowledge platform that, through empirical research, demonstrates the effectiveness of faith communities as agents of positive change within their societies. We see a changing role of FBOs, to reconnect with their faith groups to help them understand their responsibility as social actors and resource them to be social agents for change. I see this as the future for FBOs.

With that background, let's look at the challenges facing FBOs in situations of humanitarian crisis. My agency, ADRA, is present in most conflict areas. ADRA has a strong presence in Syria, Yemen, South Sudan, DRC, and many other fragile states. In one country, we are only able to respond through using local faith communities to distribute food, but unfortunately the situation is so sensitive I cannot expand upon this potential case study. Working in conflict areas constantly challenges our values. When things go bad, we immediately evacuate expatriate staff, but local staff (who make up the majority), are left to carry on under difficult circumstances. What is our responsibility to local staff and the imperative of serving those in need? Sometimes my staff brag that we have not been banned from the country like other NGOs, but where does the balance lie between speaking against a regime that is at the root cause, and the need to remain present in order to continue to provide the much-needed humanitarian relief? Are we under resourced to meet the needs of those in humanitarian crisis?

Let's understand that there is no free money. Private donors may give out of compassion for the poor with the expectation that every cent goes to the poor or in a few cases with the expectation that your presence creates a presence for the church in that region. Monies from national governments are sometimes politically driven and, rightfully so, have terms and expectations attached. In reality, in some way we are political actors, and are constantly challenged in 'what monies do we accept' and 'what monies can't we afford to take?' As a faith-affiliated humanitarian agency, we work with local faith communities in training them in disaster response so that in the event of a disaster, they can be first responders and be skilled in and understand the role they can play. These trainings often engage local government and faith

communities so that there is an understanding of each other's role in the case of a disaster. If I had more time, I would share case studies of where religious institutions have provided safe havens in times of conflict, health care to the injured, distributed goods to the displaced and served as first responders, established informal language schools for refugees, and supported them in seeking employment.

Concluding, FBOs, like the rest of the world, find themselves in a constantly changing environment. We are being asked to transition from being service deliverers to being agencies of influence and to focus on scalability. To achieve these ends, we must learn to engage, motivate, and resource our faith communities to be social agents of change for good. No one FBO can do this alone in isolation. Faith leaders need to engage in interfaith discussions and come together through their common values and desire to be agents of hope and healing. If we can accomplish this, then faith actors can be powerful agents in transitioning the SDGs from being aspirational toward being a reality.

**Sharon Eubank** highlighted longstanding friendships among colleagues on the panel. A short video illustrated migration flows over the past several years, while photos of Yemen, showed what happens to people and what can make their lives more bearable. With an estimated 65.6 million people displaced worldwide, it is hard to get a handle on what that actually means. Many come from middle class families, very much like those of us sitting in this room. They are thrust not only into financial poverty, but also spiritual and emotional poverty that is devastating to them at the family level. They are stressed in ways that they have a hard time articulating. An estimated 99 percent of them will never be resettled (Argentina intends to resettle some, but that only represents about 1 percent).

LDS Charities works to make policies that work for them at the tent level. Besides sanitation, protection and food, things at that tent level are not given much attention, seen as amenities that are often let go. FBOs are good at offering several items: 1) Choice - almost all choice has been taken away from refugees so to have even the smallest choice is helpful. People can choose what they use for their aid and it is innovative. With ADRA, LDS Charities offered 10,000 winter coats and boots in places like Iraq, where people could choose the coats they get, reducing waste. 2) Family –oral history interviews help in processing trauma, a collaboration with IsraAID in Sodoku, Japan. 3) Dignity – giving people something to do that helps provide their livelihood by collaborating on projects with Convoy of Hope in Uganda. 4) Friendship – bringing people together for a soccer tournament, establishing refugee and community football leagues with Caritas in Florence, Italy 5) Meaningful Work - to not have anything to do and the feeling of stagnation and rot is so difficult for people in camps. A program allows Christian parents to build school furniture for their own children for their school (with Caritas) in Mosul, Iraq. Another project involves sustainable family gardening, a collaboration with Muslim Aid in Bosnia 6) Culture and Sport - Community Centers with Christian Councils in Sinjar, India 7) Freedom of Faith - often an underlying reason why they are displaced- they work with a community in collaboration with Rahma Relief Foundation in Detroit, Michigan, USA. 8) Education –work in Argentina contributes concrete progress.

Finally, she recommended that the G20 to consider actions in relation to SDG 4: Ensuring Inclusive and Lifelong Education. This is not funded at the UN level in the cities of displacement; most education be among displaced persons is funded by FBOs. If we don't want further strife, we must invest in education in the cities of displacement. If we don't, they will be marginalized and radicalized, not because they came that way, but because we made them that way. Invest in education for the flowering of human

potential so that they reach their potential wherever they are. There are 65 million people that are displaced. If the G20 would invest in education in the cities of displacement, they would be meeting all of the following aspects of SDG 4: 1) ensure literacy and numeracy, 2) ensure educational access, 3) ensure affordable quality primary education, 4) substantially increase the number of youth and adults, 5) build and upgrade education, 6) substantially expand globally the number of scholarships, and 7) substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers. This is a large payoff for a concentrated focus area.

**Humberto Ortiz Roca, re**presenting the union of two Latin American church organizations: Caritas Latin America and SILEM (the justice group), described their work and approach. Teams from both organizations work together on social pastoral work. The approach is focused on civil and political rights and economic and environmental rights. Human rights are seen from a pastoral view. Political violence in our countries is still an important issue as is the humanitarian crisis around migration and transitional justice in Columbia and Peru. They now have 500,000 Venezuelans and by year end, due to migrants from Peru, they expect it to increase to a million. What does the Gospel say? 'I came from the outside and you received me.' They also work in jails, recognizing the dignity of people: despite their condition, they are still a child of God. We are concerned about the environment. There are conflicts in relation to extractive industries. We also have conflict management work and risk management. Our region is greatly affected by earthquakes and hurricanes and environmental issues. In the area of the economy, we are working on human economy with solidarity, and cooperative civil economics. With local work, we can rethink the economy at a macro level. We also encourage comprehensive healthcare including solidarity from the community side and what we call the political institutional approach. In the area of youth and childhood, we have a continental call to attention to care and to practice nonviolence in the home. There is a Panamazonic ecclesiastical network, as a social movement. We are working on a pillar we call the social environmental justice and good living pillar – a comprehensive view of development that emphasizes the full life model. There is involvement on political issues; with a focus on rights and political advocacy they work with the public sector. They work with youth to promote social action and increase their representation among the leadership. Accountability, responsible action and institutional life is to be at the service of local parishes at the grassroots level.

The social doctrine of the church is growing in importance. Pope Francis said: "I am personally respectful of NGOs, but the Caritas is the evangelizing work of the church altogether. So we have to work on the joint pastoral approach." Caritas is a warm expression of the church with a political perspective. Our way of work is linked to training in technical areas. Professional services advocating for rights and on environmental issues are increasingly important and there is a need for competent professionals who can talk about environmental assessments and standards. We want to join forces with civil society – believers and non-believers - with whom we can bring about transformative change. We need to see how we can work as a joint church, but also in alliance with civil society.

Regarding recommendations, how do we emphasize policies related to transitional justice in a post conflict period? How do we care for migrants? How do we care for the assets of creation? It is important to promote new grassroots initiatives that inspire new economies that affirm the common good and encourage citizen participation. Advocacy for children and protecting the Amazonian forest and the aquifers are vital. Caritas emphasizes a comprehensive human development framework. Development is for all people, and the approach is moving from less to better human conditions. They work from the

grassroots, then move to the parish level, then to the regional and finally the global. Gender equality is an approach that cuts across all of their programs. Thus Caritas workd with groups sharing a similar vision.

**Carlos Rauda** (ACT Alliance) highlighted emphasized that the G20 Interfaith Forum cooperation is what ACT is about. The vision for humanitarian affairs means that fulfilling the SDGs is not possible if we don't address humanitarian affairs. Millions of vulnerable people in humanitarian crisis suffer from hunger. What do we mean about leaving no one behind with the SDGs? Taking responsibility for the humanitarian crisis is the ethical challenge for true implementation of the SDGs. Disasters result from historical environmental disasters and political crisis. ACT Alliance faces this challenge in a twofold manner: compassion and love for humans who suffer and taking responsibility and trying to transform it. We must talk about justice and put ourselves in the place of the most vulnerable. If we do not do so, we are not talking about true justice. In humanitarian affairs, we face drastic situations and have little time to work with scarce resources. As FBOs, we are well positioned to professionally respond to needs, not based on their beliefs. We go where we are needed. We have advantages as FBOs. Faith contributes to offering people facing vulnerability hope. We work to express faith that there must be a future beyond the suffering. We have a capability to be among the most vulnerable. We are not civil society that goes in simply with an intervention. We support people in many ways, accompanying them, ensuring that they don't feel lonely. We are part of the affected, in community, suffering with them. That allows us to reach out to certain sectors where others do not go. We are local actors who are part of the community. We are not first line actors. We are right there. We were already there. After a crisis, everyone leaves. Look at Haiti: after the disaster, we created another issue with lack of coordination. Haiti has been abandoned, but FBOs have stayed there. Because we were already there, we are able to respond when things happened. We must understand risk and disaster. Being in the community allows us to do that. We don't work on all seven sectors (water, food, etc.). That's ok, but we embrace a development perspective because development matters. I

He suggested four ideas for the G20. 1) Localization Commitments - two years ago, we had a 'Grand Bargain' of localization commitments at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul: an agenda of localization to enable us to reach out with greater resources to more affected areas. This belongs on the agenda; there cannot be a safe world if there is not enough resources; 2) Global Involvement – we need a revolution in our participation. We can no longer think that the West and North has to support the humanitarian crisis; there needs to be global involvement and the ones affected need to participate in the decisions that affect their own lives; 3) Linking humanitarian work to the SDGs - what can we do to create better synergies and promote actions coordinated and framed within the SDGs focused on food, water, and climate change? The Caribbean faces many hurricanes that increase vulnerability. Humanitarian work must be linked to the SDG agenda to be effective, with climate change mitigation part of the humanitarian agenda. We cannot deny that the hurricanes are also part of climate change. Humanitarian response is not enough; and 4) Gender Justice - a gender justice strategy that recognizes the roles of women, also building new gender identities is needed to act appropriately so there is recovery for a decent future. Finally, e need to be aware of the power we have as FBOs on the SDGs, the capabilities and the faith people have in us. This will improve our humanitarian support.

**Christina Tobias-Nahi**. I am glad to be here in Pope Francis' home; his encyclical was inspiring. While faith and humanitarian NGOs can provide tents, food, and education in some cases - although that is

becoming increasingly more difficult – we as FBOs can't be a band aid. It takes all the actors here to restore dignity, but also to provide hope. Islamic Relief USA is an international relief and development organization present in 40 countries. Islamic Relief took that mantle and held consultations in 2015, taking into consideration recent natural disasters. We considered a declaration that came out that year, and we reflected on climate change.[1] The first issue we took up was that those most affected are the least responsible for its cause. Another recent global consultation focused on gender justice. The Islamic Declaration on Gender Justice[2] addressed cultural practices and called on our network to affirm gender justice.

It is important to look at these big issues using theology from an Islamic framework. *The Guardian* recently published an article on "Why Faith is Becoming More and More Popular"[3] that argued that the population as a whole is getting more adherents to faith. About 80 percent of global population subscribes to faith, with Islam being the second and fastest growing faith at 24 percent. We need to frame these issues and mobilize them so that we have advocates. We hear about conflicts between faiths in the media; what we hear less often is that faith can be a healer. Some concrete examples: (a) working out of the office of Catholic Relief Services in partnership with World Vision in an economic, not a faith partnership. (b) working with HIAS (a Jewish refugee resettlement agency) on refugee issues. As Islamic Relief matures, it is increasingly engaged in advocacy. From Washington DC IRUSA advocates around systemic and structural issues that create inequality. Our motto is 'working together for a better world.' A new program with funding from USAID looks at solar energy and works with local farmers with technology for economic development.

Looking to concrete recommendations to the G20, urbanization is important: how are we preparing for mega cities when 2/3 of our population are urbanized? Urbanization brings with it increased pollution, traffic, commuting, unsupervised children, and lowered quality of life; there is a need to think more about green spaces as we urbanize and for women to be more involved in urban planning. There is also the need/right for education and the right to dignified work, particularly for the displaced. We want the G20 to find political solutions to protracted crisis such as in Syria. We want them to create more access for FBOs in the financial system to transfer the funds to conflict situations (it is increasingly difficult to do the work on the ground because of financial holds on funds). The challenge is not just about providing basic needs, it is about restoring the dignity of people and providing them with hope. "Let there be among you a community calling to the good, enjoining right, and forbidding wrong. It is they who shall prosper" (AYAH al-Imran 3:104, The Study Quran). We partner and call on others to partner. We need all the stakeholders to find the solutions to these global problems.

**Key Points Made:**
- FBOs work within the SDG framework; like all humanitarian organizations, they face the challenge of linking aid, especially in crises and with refugees, with long term development.
- Humanitarian aid requires complex alliances as it is not simply giving things to the poor but about transformation.
-Changing FBO roles involve higher expectations responsibility as social actors and social agents for change
-Local empowerment of displaced peoples is important in preventing radicalization

**Recommended Points for G20 Dialogue:**

-That the G20 governments focus on commitments made under the 'Grand Bargain' on localization (from the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul)

-More focus on education among displaced populations

-Priority to strategies that affirm gender justice and empowerment among peoples affected by humanitarian crises.

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[1] For more information, see https://unfccc.int/news/islamic-declaration-on-climate-change

[2] For more information, see https://www.islamic-relief.org/islamic-declaration-gender-justice

[3] See https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/aug/27/religion-why-is-faith-growing-and-what-happens-next

# G-20 - ACCESS TO FINANCIAL SERVICES FOR NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS
Authored by a Global NPO Coalition on the FATF product[79]

There is an increased tendency on the part of financial institutions to restrict or terminate relationships with categories of customers such as corresponding banks, money remittance agencies and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) – a practice known as de-risking. The G-20 has recognized the impact of de-risking on financial inclusion and is working with different bodies such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the Word Bank to address it and find solutions. However, the G-20 effort does not consider the negative effect of de-risking on the financial inclusion of non-profit organizations (NPOs)[80] and the people who benefit from or depend on the work of NPOs. To our understanding, there is also a lack of G-20 action and measures to help avoid the negative impact on NPO financial inclusion and operations caused by de-risking.

There is now a growing body of evidence showing that NPOs (including both large, international organizations and smaller poverty alleviating and advocacy organizations) have been heavily impacted by de-risking. Manifestations include: inability to open bank accounts, arbitrary closure of accounts, inordinate delays or termination of transactions, onerous due diligence and reporting obligations that can inhibit engagement with communities.[81] De-risking has had devastating consequences for many organizations as interrupted access to resources is forcing charitable and humanitarian programs to close. Furthermore, it affects people directly, including refugees and victims of conflict who cannot receive resources and may therefore be subject to starvation, exposure, and disease.[82] The FATF President concluded that de-risking significantly impacts NPOs, preventing the provision of "vital services to society, often in dangerous regions and for vulnerable communities".[83]

**We ask the G-20 and its members** to take global leadership on reducing bank de-risking, ensuring that all entities, including NPOs, have equal access to financial services. Through a communique at the November summit, the G-20 can recognize the problem for NPOs and commit its bodies, Member States and the FATF to take specific actions to address the impact of bank de-risking on NPOs. We further ask the G-20, its platforms, its Member States and its partners to align their policies and monitoring tools in order to enforce effective implementation at the national level to help improve the financial access of NPOs.  Specific actions could include:

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[79] The corresponding author is Sangeeta Goswami who may be reached at sangeeta@hscollective.org
[80] See https://blogs.worldbank.org/psd/miga/de-risking-impedes-access-finance-non-profit-organizations
[81]http://www.cfg.org.uk/resources/Publications/~/media/Files/Resources/Briefings/Impact%20of%20money%20laundering%20and%20counter-terrorism%20regulations%20on%20charities.pdf;
https://www.charityandsecurity.org/FinAccessReport; http://www.hscollective.org/uncategorized/new-research-report-understanding-drivers-de-risking-impact-civil-society-organizations/;
https://www.demos.co.uk/files/DEMOSuncharitablebehaviourREPORT.pdf;
https://law.duke.edu/humanrights/tighteningthepursestrings/;
https://nonprofitquarterly.org/2017/04/24/banks-deriskings-hinders-humanitarian-aid-work-needed/
[82] See http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/financialsector/brief/de-risking-in-the-financial-sector
[83] See https://aplusmag.goodbarber.com/home-order/c/0/i/20307420/keeping-it-clean

i)      Preparatory discussions in groups within the G-20 structure (e.g., at the meetings of finance ministers, within the Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion[GPFI]) on how to address the issue;

ii)     Tasking the GPFI to set up a sub-group on financial access for NPOs (or amend the mandate of an existing group) and monitor the impact on NPOs;

iii)    Tasking FATF to address the issues specific to FATF-related processes, in terms of the risk assessment and evaluation of compliance, in line with the risk-based approach.

We present below a more detailed analysis and elaboration of proposed next steps for the G-20. We remain available to enter into dialogue and provide support to the G-20 to address this problem.

## Background

> "There are an estimated 10 million NPOs worldwide.
> If NPOs were a country, it would be the 5th largest economy in the world."[84]

Banks' approach to de-risking emanates from the FATF standards, which require financial institutions to identify, assess and understand their money laundering and terrorist financing risks, and implement measures that are commensurate with the risks identified. However, in practice, banks are reassessing their risk appetite in light of anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) enforcement actions (which often result in high penalties for banks). Therefore, banks weigh the possible breach of legal or regulatory regimes against the profit margin from those customers or transactions perceived to be risky. In the case of non-profit customers, the profit margins are typically so small relative to others that the cost–benefit calculation results in decisions to turn away or sever ties with non-profit clients.

Financial institutions have not developed effective methodologies to identify AML/CFT risk; they have used broad categories (such as geographical location or legal status) in order to manage risk. As NPOs often work in the most challenging environments, this has compounded the impact of the rules. Furthermore, in such cases, non-profits are denied a chance to seek redress or challenge the risk assessments conducted by banks that led to the denial of services in the first instance. This, in turn, has the opposite effect of the aim of global AML/CFT standards: risk is actually increased by de-risking, as money continues to flow outside of official, regulated channels and under the radar of state bodies.[85]  Mission-driven NPOs that are shut off from formal financial institutions are forced to use other methods, including cash couriers and *hawala*, all of which are riskier than formal banking channels. While much of this empirical research relates to moneys being sent from foreign sources, there is evidence emerging of domestic money flows also being impacted.

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[84] Johns Hopkins University, Center for Civil Society Studies

[85] Also detected by the UK National Risk Assessment, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-risk-assessment-of-money-laundering-and-terrorist-financing-2017

Research has shown that the impact of bank de-risking is disproportionately borne by smaller organizations, often working in difficult contexts – these community-based grassroots organizations are crucial when it comes to implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in preventing radicalization that might lead to violent extremism, or supporting the enforcement of rights for women or the marginalized worldwide.

Analysts have put forward various explanations for de-risking but almost all agree that international rules designed to combat money laundering and terrorist financing are the most significant.[86] Several UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteurs have called for civil-society-friendly reform of the stringent AML/CFT regime, contending that arbitrary decision-making by banks breaches non-discrimination laws.[87]

In several countries, there are ongoing attempts to resolve the de-risking issue at the national level (e.g. UK, US, The Netherlands). However, the issue is systemic and cannot be solved just by addressing it at the national level. **There is a need for a global approach, especially considering the global goal of advancing financial inclusion. The global response mechanisms on de-risking and financial inclusion towards NPOs are not aligned.**

**Proposed Actions for the G-20**

Given the global and interconnected nature of world financial systems, it is important that the G-20 engage at this stage in the different cross-country efforts to tackle the problem of de-risking facing non-profits. Such engagement between FATF, G-20, the GPFI, Member States, and NPOs would contribute to enhanced policy coordination, with clearer evidence of the problem and more refined potential solutions.

A key consideration should be policy coherence as part of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17,[88] which calls for governments, the private sector and NPOs to work together in pursuit of shared objectives at all levels. The GPFI[89] has already been tasked by the G-20 to increase its efforts to reach the hard-to-bank and to accelerate the advancement of financial inclusion for underserved and vulnerable groups with the aim to "leave no one behind." The GPFI Action Plan on Financial Inclusion proposes measures to analyse and address the problem of de-risking and explore options to address the drivers of de-risking. The GPFI calls for sharing that understanding with the public and private sectors through publications and activities, and in line with the SDG goals which call for increased public participation in financial institution decision-making.[90] Such efforts should also include NPOs, as they are a vital and essential partner in SGD implementation; without the successful engagement of non-profits, which requires an enabling legal and financial environment for their operations, the SDGs cannot be achieved.

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[86] https://www.opendemocracy.net/ben-hayes-lia-van-broekhoven-vanja-skoric/de-risking-and-non-profits-how-do-you-solve-problem-that-n

[87] For example, http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=19854&LangID=E

[88] Revitalising partnership for global development, http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/globalpartnerships/

[89] See https://www.gpfi.org

[90] The G20 2017 Financial Inclusion Action Plan (p 10, 21), https://www.gpfi.org/publications/g20-financial-inclusion-action-plan-fiap-2017

**The following steps outline how the financial access of NPOs could be improved**. We welcome further discussion on what would constitute the best mechanism to promote financial access for NPOs and guidance as to what is feasible at this G-20.

- ➤ **The G-20, its bodies and Member States should recognize NPOs as a sector that is negatively affected by bank de-risking and that deserves protection as other private sector groups receive**. This can be done in several ways:

  - o The G-20 could adopt a communique at the November G-20 summit that recognizes the problem and commits its members, the FATF, and the GPFI to take specific actions to address bank de-risking.
  - o In advance of this meeting, and to support discussions on the communique and actions, the G-20 could encourage groups within its structure (e.g., the meetings of finance ministers, the GPFI) to address the issue at their upcoming meetings and convene an event at the November G-20 summit to discuss the effects and possible concrete actions together with the civil society affinity group, the C-20, and NPOs working on the issue.

- ➤ When dealing with the impact of de-risking on different legal entities, the G-20, the FATF and Member States should also include **a review of the impact on NPOs and consider possible response strategies.** This effort, which should be done together with the NPOs, should explicitly call on countries to gather and assess data on the impact of bank de-risking on the entire sector (including NPOs that fall outside of the FATF definition – e.g., human rights and campaign groups, and both NPOs that are evaluated as high risk and those that are not). Such **impact assessment** should focus not only on financial transfers and inclusion but also on the overall effect on the operating environment of the sector.

- ➤ **The GPFI should set up a sub-group on financial access for NPOs** (similar to the group on SMEs) which should also include various NPOs. The sub-group could develop specific action items regarding NPOs under the Action Plan on Financial Inclusion to address the matter. Possible actions could include: a review of existing evidence of the negative impact of de-risking on NPOs, financial transfers and the broader operating environment for NPOs, proposed global guidance or principles to ensure NPO access to financial services, and inclusion of an indicator on monitoring NPO access in the G20 Financial inclusion Indicators.

- ➤ **G-20 and its bodies should identify and promote institutional-level good practices, including specific policy and reporting reforms to ensure financial access, transfers and operations for NPOs.** This can be facilitated through collaboration and dialogue between institutions. For example, the G-20 could facilitate exchanges around the impact of de-risking, mitigating efforts, policies and national-level measures in coordination with the GPFI or other bodies it cooperates with on the de-risking issues such as the Financial Stability Board or the FATF. Such exchanges could help stakeholders (financial institutions, governments, NPOs) identify experiences and existing good practices and consider their applicability for the participants' respective national contexts. Evidence-based dialogue which considers successful responses will be more likely to increase global awareness on the negative consequences of the de-risking and engender confidence and consensus on preventive actions to address the problem.

➤ **Regulatory expectations for financial institutions on the risk-based approach should be clarified:** G-20 members should further clarify regulatory expectations for financial institutions on the risk-based approach through outreach and guidance at the national level, and adjust supervisory approaches and regulations to stimulate an appropriate, risk-based review of customers by banks, where needed.[91]

➤ **The FATF should produce more comprehensive guidance on the risk-based approach for NPOs** as a specific-type of banking customer based on the revised Recommendation 8. The FATF should also train its evaluators to look into the potential de-risking attitudes of banks as part of the FATF's effectiveness methodology during peer evaluations, enabling evaluators to raise concerns about NPO-wide de-risking in their country assessment reports. The FATF leadership should reinforce the need for national governments to continue working on these issues.

**The Global NPO Coalition on FATF** is a loose network of diverse non-profit organizations (NPOs) that engage with the FATF process with the aim of eliminating the unintended consequences of FATF standards on civil society. A core group of NPOs representing a wide range of interests across countries and regions helps develop strategies, and facilitates and coordinates the coalition.

Coalition achievements so far include:

- Revision of Recommendation 8 and its Interpretive Note: the June 2016 revision retracted the claim that the NPO sector is 'particularly vulnerable' to terrorist abuse.
- In-depth revision of the Best Practices Paper (June 2015), a policy guidance document that countries use to help them implement the standards.
- Formalization of a risk-based approach, which means more proportionate and context-specific implementation of FATF standards.
- Establishment of regular engagement between the FATF Secretariat and NPOs, including seats at the FATF Private Sector Consultative Forum, which allows for more effective NPO participation.
- Awareness-raising and coalition-building among multiple stakeholders (NPOs, governments, regulators, financial institutions) at the global, regional and national levels.

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[91] See also FATF report to G-20 finance ministers and central bank: http://www.fatf-gafi.org/media/fatf/documents/FATF-G20-FM-CBG-March-2018.pdf

# The Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on

# Faith *for* Rights

Report and outlook

UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

# Beirut Declaration on "Faith for Rights"

*"There are as many paths to God as there are souls on Earth." (Rumi)[1]*

1.    We, faith-based and civil society actors working in the field of human rights and gathered in Beirut on 28-29 March 2017, in culmination of a trajectory of meetings initiated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR),[2] express our deep conviction that our respective religions and beliefs share a common commitment to **upholding the dignity and the equal worth of all human beings**. Shared human values and equal dignity are therefore common roots of our cultures. Faith and rights should be mutually reinforcing spheres. Individual and communal expression of religions or beliefs thrive and flourish in environments where human rights, based on the equal worth of all individuals, are protected. Similarly, human rights can benefit from deeply rooted ethical and spiritual foundations provided by religions or beliefs.

2.    We understand our respective religious or belief convictions as a source for the protection of the **whole spectrum of inalienable human entitlements** – from the preservation of the gift of life, the freedoms of thought, conscience, religion, belief, opinion and expression to the freedoms from want and fear, including from violence in all its forms.

> ➢ *"Whoever preserves one life, is considered by Scripture as if one has preserved the whole world." (Talmud, Sanhedrin, 37,a).*
> ➢ *"Someone who saves a person's life is equal to someone who saves the life of all." (Qu'ran 5:32)*
> ➢ *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and with your entire mind; and your neighbour as yourself." (Luke 10:27)*
> ➢ *Let them worship the Lord of this House who saved them from hunger and saved them from fear." (Sourat Quraish, verses 3,4)*
> ➢ *"A single person was created in the world, to teach that if anyone causes a single person to perish, he has destroyed the entire world; and if anyone saves a single soul, he has saved the entire world." (Mishna Sanhedrin 4:5)*
> ➢ *"Let us stand together, make statements collectively and may our thoughts be one." (Rigveda 10:191:2)*
> ➢ *"Just as I protect myself from unpleasant things however small, in the same way I should act towards others with a compassionate and caring mind." (Shantideva, A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life)*
> ➢ *"Let us put our minds together to see what life we can make for our children." (Chief Sitting Bull, Lakota)*

3.    Based on the above, among many other sources of faith, we are convinced that our **religious or belief convictions are one of the fundamental sources** of protection for human dignity and freedoms of all individuals and communities with no distinction on any ground whatsoever. Religious, ethical and philosophical texts preceded international law in upholding the oneness of humankind, the sacredness of the right to life and the corresponding individual and collective duties that are grounded in the hearts of believers.

4.    We pledge to disseminate the **common human values that unite us**. While we differ on some theological questions, we undertake to combat any form of exploitation of such differences to advocate violence, discrimination and religious hatred.

> ➢ *"We have designed a law and a practice for different groups. Had God willed, He would have made you a single community, but He wanted to test you regarding what has come to you. So compete with each other in doing good. Every one of you will return to God and He will inform you regarding the things about which you differed." (Qu'ran 5, 48)*

> *"Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch." (Bahá'u'lláh)*

5. We believe that freedom of religion or belief does not exist without the **freedom of thought and conscience** which precede all freedoms for they are linked to human essence and his/her rights of choice and to freedom of religion or belief. A person as a whole is the basis of every faith and he/she grows through love, forgiveness and respect.



6. We hereby solemnly launch together from Beirut the **most noble of all struggles, peaceful but powerful**, against our own egos, self-interest and artificial divides. Only when we as religious actors assume our respective roles, articulate a shared vision of our responsibilities and transcend preaching to action, only then we will credibly promote mutual acceptance and fraternity among people of different religions or beliefs and empower them to defeat negative impulses of hatred, viciousness, manipulation, greed, cruelty and related forms of inhumanity. All religious or belief communities need a resolved leadership that unequivocally dresses that path by acting for equal dignity of everyone, driven by our shared humanity and respect for the absolute freedom of conscience of every human being. We pledge to spare no effort in filling that joint leadership gap by protecting freedom and diversity through "faith for rights" activities.

> *"We perfected each soul within its built in weakness for wrong doing and its aspiration for what is right. Succeeds he or she who elevate to the path of rightness." (Qu'ran 91, 7-9)*

7. The present declaration on "Faith for Rights" **reaches out to persons belonging to religions and beliefs in all regions of the world**, with a view to enhancing cohesive, peaceful and respectful societies on the basis of a common action-oriented platform agreed by all concerned and open to all actors that share its objectives. We value that our declaration on Faith for Rights, like its founding precedent the Rabat Plan of Action on incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence (October 2012), were both conceived and conducted under the auspices and with the support of the United Nations that represents all peoples of the world, and enriched by UN human rights mechanisms such as Special Rapporteurs and Treaty Body members.

8. While numerous welcomed initiatives attempted over time to link faith with rights for the benefit of both, none of these attempts fully reached that goal. We are therefore convinced that **religious actors should be enabled**, both nationally and internationally, to assume their responsibilities in defending our shared humanity against incitement to hatred, those who benefit from destabilising societies and the manipulators of fear to the detriment of equal and inalienable human dignity. With the present F4R Declaration, we aim to join hands and hearts in building on previous attempts to bring closer faith and rights **by articulating the common grounds** between all of us and **define ways in which faith can stand for rights** more effectively so that both enhance each other.

> *"Mankind is at loss. Except those who believe in doing righteous deeds, constantly recommend it to one another and persist in that vein." (Qu'ran 103, 3)*

9. Building on the present declaration, we also intend to **practice what we preach** through establishing **a multi-level coalition**, open for all independent religious actors and faith-based organisations who genuinely demonstrate acceptance of and commitment to the present F4R declaration by implementing projects on the ground in areas that contribute to achieving its purpose. We will also be charting a roadmap for concrete actions in specific areas, to be reviewed regularly by our global coalition of Faith for Rights.

10. To achieve the above goal, we pledge as believers (whether theistic, non-theistic, atheistic or other[3]) to fully adhere to **five fundamental principles**:

a)  Transcending traditional inter-faith dialogues into **concrete action-oriented Faith for Rights (F4R) projects at the local level**. While dialogue is important, it is not an end in itself. Good intentions are of limited value without corresponding action. Change on the ground is the goal and concerted action is its logical means.

   ➢ *"Faith is grounded in the heart when it is demonstrated by deeds." (Hadith)*

b)  **Avoiding theological and doctrinal divides** in order to act on areas of shared inter-faith and intra-faith vision as defined in the present F4R declaration. This declaration is not conceived to be a tool for dialogue among religions but rather a joint platform for common action in defence of human dignity for all. While we respect freedom of expression and entertain no illusion as to the continuation of a level of controversy at different levels of religious discourse, we are resolved to challenge the manipulation of religions in both politics and conflicts. We intend to be a balancing united voice of solidarity, reason, compassion, moderation, enlightenment and corresponding collective action at the grassroots level.

c)  **Introspectiveness** is a virtue we cherish. We will all speak up and act first and foremost on our own weaknesses and challenges within our respective communities. We will address more global issues collectively and consistently, after internal and inclusive deliberation that preserves our most precious strength, i.e. integrity.

d)  **Speaking with one voice**, particularly against any advocacy of hatred that amounts to inciting violence, discrimination or any other violation of the equal dignity that all human beings enjoy regardless of their religion, belief, gender, political or other opinion, national or social origin, or any other status. Denouncing incitement to hatred, injustices, discrimination on religious grounds or any form of religious intolerance is not enough. We have a duty to redress hate speech by remedial compassion and solidarity that heals hearts and societies alike. Our words of redress should transcend religious or belief boundaries. Such boundaries should thus no longer remain a free land for manipulators, xenophobes, populists and violent extremists.

e)  We are resolved to **act in a fully independent manner**, abiding only by our conscience, while seeking partnerships with religious and secular authorities, relevant governmental bodies and non-State actors wherever Faith for Rights (F4R) coalitions are freely established in conformity with the present declaration.

11.  Our **main tool and asset is reaching out to hundreds of millions of believers** in a preventive structured manner to convey our shared convictions enshrined in this F4R declaration. Speaking up in one voice in defence of equal dignity of all on issues of common challenges to humanity equally serves the cause of faith and rights. Human beings are entitled to full and equal respect, rather than mere tolerance, regardless of what they may believe or not believe. It is our duty to uphold this commitment within our respective spheres of competence. We will also encourage all believers to assume their individual responsibilities in the defence of their deeply held values of justice, equality and responsibility towards the needy and disadvantaged, regardless of their religion or belief.

   ➢ *"People are either your brothers in faith, or your brothers in humanity." (Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib)*
   ➢ *"On the long journey of human life, Faith is the best of companions." (Buddha)*

12. We aim to achieve that goal in a concrete manner that matters **for people at the grassroots level** in all parts of the world where coalitions of religious actors choose to adhere to this declaration and act accordingly. We will support each other's actions, including through a highly symbolic annual Walk of Faith for Rights in the richest expression of our unity in diversity each 10th of December in all parts of the world.

13. Articulating through the present declaration a common vision of religious actors, on the basis of the Rabat Plan of Action of 2012 and follow-up meetings, would provide the tipping point for **disarming the forces of darkness**; and help dismantling the unholy alliance in too many hearts between fear and hatred. Violence in the name of religion defeats its basic foundations, mercy and compassion. We intend to transform the messages of mercy and compassion into acts of solidarity through inter-communal social, developmental and environmental faith-based projects at the local, national, regional and global levels.

14. We **fully embrace the universally recognised values** as articulated in international human rights instruments as common standards of our shared humanity. We ground our commitments in this F4R declaration first and foremost in our conviction that religions and beliefs share common core values of respect for human dignity, justice and fairness. We also ground these commitments in our acceptance of the fact that *"**Everyone has duties** to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible"*[4]. Our duty is to practice what we preach, to fully engage, to speak up



and act on the ground in the defence of human dignity long before it is actually threatened.

> ➢ *"Oh you believers, why don't you practice what you preach? Most hateful for God is preaching what you don't practice." (Qu'ran 61: 2-3)*
> ➢ *"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy." (Proverbs 31:8-9)*

15. Both **religious precepts and existing international legal frameworks** attribute responsibilities to religious actors. Empowering religious actors requires actions in areas such as legislation, institutional reforms, supportive public policies and training adapted to the needs of local religious actors who often are one of the main sources of education and social change in their respective areas of action. International conventions and covenants have defined key legal terms such as genocide, refugee, religious discrimination and freedom of religion or belief.[5] All these concepts have corresponding resonance in different religions and beliefs. In addition, numerous declarations and resolutions[6] provide elements of religious actors' roles and responsibilities that we embrace and consolidate in this F4R declaration.

16. We agree as human beings that **we are accountable to all human beings** as to redressing the manner by which religions are portrayed and too often manipulated. We are responsible for our actions but even more responsible if we do not act or do not act properly and timely.

> ➢ *"We will ask each of you about all what you have said and done, for you are accountable" (Quran, Assaafat, 24)*
> ➢ *"Every man's work shall be made manifest." (Bible, 1 Corinthians iii. 13)*

17. While States bear the primary responsibility for promoting and protecting all rights for all, individually and collectively to enjoy a dignified life free from fear and free from want and enjoy the freedom of choice in all aspects of life, we as religious actors or as individual believers do bear a distinct responsibility to **stand**

**up for our shared humanity and equal dignity of each human being** in all circumstances within our own spheres of preaching, teaching, spiritual guidance and social engagement.

> ➢ *"Whoever witnesses an injustice or wrong doing should change its course by his hand. If He or she cannot do that, they by his words. If he or she is unable to do that then by their hearts. This would be the weakest of acts of faith" (Hadith).*

18. **Religious communities, their leaders and followers** have a role and bear responsibilities independently from public authorities both under national and international legal instruments. By virtue of article 2 (1) of the 1981 UN Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion of Belief, "no one shall be subject to discrimination by any State, institution, group of persons or person on the grounds of religion or belief". This provision establishes direct responsibilities of religious institutions, leaders and even each individual within religious or belief communities.

19. As much as the notion of effective control[7] provides the foundation for responsibilities of non-State actors in times of conflict, we see a similar legal and ethical justification in case of religious leaders who exercise a **heightened degree of influence over the hearts and minds of their followers** at all times.

20. Speech is fundamental to individual and communal flourishing. It constitutes one of the most crucial **mediums for good and evil sides of humanity**. War starts in the minds and is cultivated by a reasoning fuelled by often hidden advocacy of hatred. Positive speech is also the healing tool of reconciliation and peace-building in the hearts and minds. Speech is one of the most strategic areas of the responsibilities we commit to assume and support each other for their implementation through this F4R declaration on the basis of the thresholds articulated by the Rabat Plan of Action.
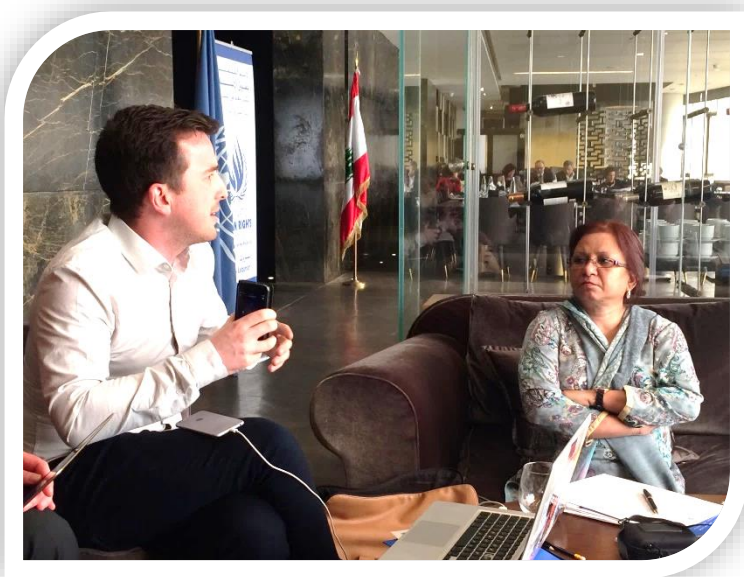


21. Under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (article 20, paragraph 2), States are obliged to prohibit any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence. This includes **incitement to hatred by some religious leaders in the name of religion**. Due to the speaker's position, context, content and extent of sermons, such statements by religious leaders may be likely to meet the threshold of incitement to hatred. Prohibiting such incitement is not enough. Remedial advocacy to reconciliation is equally a duty, including for religious leaders, particularly when hatred is advocated in the name of religions or beliefs.

22. The clearest and most recent guidance in this area is provided by the 2012 Rabat Plan of Action[8] which articulates **three specific core responsibilities of religious leaders**: (a) Religious leaders should refrain from using messages of intolerance or expressions which may incite violence, hostility or discrimination; (b) Religious leaders also have a crucial role to play in speaking out firmly and promptly against intolerance, discriminatory stereotyping and instances of hate speech; and (c) Religious leaders should be clear that violence can never be tolerated as a response to incitement to hatred (e.g. violence cannot be justified by prior provocation).

Endnotes

1  All quotations from religious or belief texts were offered by participants of the Beirut workshop in relation to their own religion or belief and are merely intended to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

2  OHCHR organized related international meetings, expert seminars and regional workshops, including in Geneva (October 2008), Vienna (February 2011), Nairobi (April 2011), Bangkok (July 2011), Santiago de Chile (October 2011), Rabat (October 2012), Geneva (February 2013), Amman (November 2013), Manama (2014), Tunis (October 2014 and April 2015), Nicosia (October 2015), Beirut (December 2015) and Amman (January 2017).

3  See UN Human Rights Committee, general comment no. 22 (1993), UN Doc. CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.4, para. 2.

4  Article 29, paragraph 1, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

5  These include the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948); Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951); International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965); International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966); International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966); Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979); Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984); Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990); Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006); and International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (2006).

6  These include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (1981); Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992); Principles of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response Programmes (1994); UNESCO Declaration on Principles of Tolerance (1995); Final Document of the International Consultative Conference on School Education in Relation to Freedom of Religion or Belief, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination (2001); Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools (2007); United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007); The Hague Statement on "Faith in Human Rights" (2008); Camden Principles on Freedom of Expression and Equality (2009); Human Rights Council resolution 16/18 on Combating Intolerance, Negative Stereotyping and Stigmatization of, and Discrimination, Incitement to Violence and Violence against, Persons Based on Religion or Belief (and Istanbul Process, 2011); Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence (2012); Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes (2014); Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (2015); as well as the Fez Declaration on preventing incitement to violence that could lead to atrocity crimes (2015).

7  Under certain circumstances, in particular when non-State actors exercise significant/effective control over territory and population (e.g. as *de facto* authorities), they are also obliged to respect international human rights as duty bearers (see UN Docs. CEDAW/C/GC/30, para. 16; A/HRC/28/66, paras. 54-55).

8  See UN Doc. A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, annex, appendix, para. 36.

# 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights"

## English version

We, faith-based and civil society actors working in the field of human rights and gathered in Beirut on 28-29 March 2017, express the deep conviction that our respective religions and beliefs share a common commitment to **upholding the dignity and the equal worth of all human beings**. Shared human values and equal dignity are therefore common roots of our cultures. Faith and rights should be mutually reinforcing spheres. Individual and communal expression of religions or beliefs thrive and flourish in environments where human rights, based on the equal worth of all individuals, are protected. Similarly, human rights can benefit from deeply rooted ethical and spiritual foundations provided by religions or beliefs.

The **present declaration on "Faith for Rights" reaches out to persons belonging to religions and beliefs in all regions** of the world, with a view to enhancing cohesive, peaceful and respectful societies on the basis of a common action-oriented platform agreed by all concerned and open to all actors that share its objectives. We value that our declaration on Faith for Rights, like its founding precedent the Rabat Plan of Action, were both conceived and conducted under the auspices and with the support of the United Nations that represents all peoples of the world, and enriched by UN human rights mechanisms such as Special Rapporteurs and Treaty Body members.

The 2012 **Rabat Plan of Action**[1] articulates three specific core responsibilities of religious leaders: (a) Religious leaders should refrain from using messages of intolerance or expressions which may incite violence, hostility or discrimination; (b) Religious leaders also have a crucial role to play in speaking out firmly and promptly against intolerance, discriminatory stereotyping and instances of hate speech; and (c) Religious leaders should be clear that violence can never be tolerated as a response to incitement to hatred (e.g. violence cannot be justified by prior provocation).

In order to give concrete effect to the above three core responsibilities articulated by the Rabat Plan of Action, which has repeatedly been positively invoked by States, we formulate the following chart of **18 commitments on "Faith for Rights"**,[2] including corresponding follow-up actions:

I.  Our most fundamental responsibility is to **stand up and act for everyone's right to free choices** and particularly for everyone's freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief. We affirm our commitment to the universal norms[3] and standards[4], including Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which does not permit any limitations whatsoever on the freedom of thought and conscience or on the freedom to have or adopt a religion or belief of one's choice. These freedoms, unconditionally protected by universal norms, are also sacred and inalienable entitlements according to religious teachings.

> ➤ *"There shall be no compulsion in religion." (Qu'ran 2:256);*
> ➤ *"The Truth is from your Lord; so let he or she who please believe and let he or she who please disbelieve" (Qu'ran 18:29);*
> ➤ *"But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve..." (Joshua 24:15)*
> ➤ *"No one shall coerce another; no one shall exploit another. Everyone, each individual, has the inalienable birth right to seek and pursue happiness and self-fulfilment. Love and persuasion is the only law of social coherence." (Guru Granth Sahib, p. 74)*
> ➤ *"When freedom of conscience, liberty of thought and right of speech prevail—that is to say, when every man according to his own idealization may give expression to his beliefs—development and growth are inevitable." ('Abdu'l-Bahá)*
> ➤ *"People should aim to treat each other as they would like to be treated themselves – with tolerance, consideration and compassion." (Golden Rule)[5]*

II. We see the present declaration on "Faith for Rights" as a **common minimum standard for believers (whether theistic, non-theistic, atheistic or other)**, based on our conviction that interpretations of religion or belief should add to the level of protection of human dignity that human-made laws provide for.

III. As religions are necessarily subject to human interpretations, we commit to **promote constructive engagement on the understanding of religious texts**. Consequently, critical thinking and debate on religious matters should not only be tolerated but rather encouraged as a requirement for enlightened religious interpretations in a globalized world composed of increasingly multi-cultural and multi-religious societies that are constantly facing evolving challenges.

IV. We pledge to **support and promote equal treatment** in all areas and manifestations of religion or belief and to denounce all forms of discriminatory practices. We commit to **prevent the use of the notion of "State religion" to discriminate against any individual or group** and we consider any such interpretation as contrary to the oneness of humanity and equal dignity of humankind. Similarly, we commit to prevent the use of "doctrinal secularism" from reducing the space for religious or belief pluralism in practice.

> ➢ *"Then Peter began to speak: 'I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism'." (Acts 10:34)*

V. We pledge to **ensure non-discrimination and gender equality** in implementing this declaration on "Faith for Rights". We specifically commit to revisit, each within our respective areas of competence, those religious understandings and interpretations that appear to perpetuate gender inequality and harmful stereotypes or even condone gender-based violence. We pledge to ensure justice and equal worth of everyone as well as to affirm the right of all women, girls and boys not to be subjected to any form of discrimination and violence, including harmful practices such as female genital mutilation, child and/or forced marriages and crimes committed in the name of so-called honour.

> ➢ *"A man should respect his wife more than he respects himself and love her as much as he loves himself." (Talmud, Yebamot, 62,b)*
> ➢ *"Never will I allow to be lost the work of any one among you, whether male or female; for you are of one another." (Qu'ran 3, 195)*
> ➢ *"O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another." (Quran 49:13)*
> ➢ *"In the image of God He created him male and female. He created them." (Genesis 1, 27)*
> ➢ *"The best among you is he who is best to his wife" (Hadith)*
> ➢ *"It is a woman who is a friend and partner for life. It is woman who keeps the race going. How may we think low of her of whom are born the greatest. From a woman a woman is born: none may exist without a woman." (Guru Granth Sahib, p. 473)*
> ➢ *"The world of humanity is possessed of two wings - the male and the female. So long as these two wings are not equivalent in strength the bird will not fly. Until womankind reaches the same degree as man, until she enjoys the same arena of activity, extraordinary attainment for humanity will not be realized" ('Abdu'l-Bahá)*
> ➢ *"A comprehensive, holistic and effective approach to capacity-building should aim to engage influential leaders, such as traditional and religious leaders […]" (Joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on harmful practices, CEDAW/C/GC/31-CRC/C/GC/18, para. 70)*

VI. We pledge to **stand up for the rights of all persons belonging to minorities** within our respective areas of action and to defend their freedom of religion or belief as well as their right to participate equally and effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life, as recognized by international human rights law, as a minimum standard of solidarity among all believers.

VII.  We pledge to **publicly denounce all instances of advocacy of hatred that incites to violence, discrimination or hostility**, including those that lead to atrocity crimes. We bear a direct responsibility to denounce such advocacy, particularly when it is conducted in the name of religion or belief.

> ➤ *"Now this is the command: Do to the doer to make him do." (Ancient Egyptian Middle Kingdom);*
> ➤ *"Repay injury with justice and kindness with kindness." (Confucius)*
> ➤ *"What is hateful to you, don't do to your friend." (Talmud, Shabat, 31,a)*
> ➤ *"Whatever words we utter should be chosen with care for people will hear them and be influenced by them for good or ill." (Buddha)*
> ➤ *"By self-control and by making dharma (right conduct) your main focus, treat others as you treat yourself." (Mahābhārata)*
> ➤ *"You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against your kinsfolk. Love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18)*
> ➤ *"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." (Matthew 7:12)*
> ➤ *"Ascribe not to any soul that which thou wouldst not have ascribed to thee, and say not that which thou doest not." (Bahá'u'lláh)*

VIII.  We therefore pledge to establish, each within our respective spheres, policies and methodologies to **monitor interpretations, determinations or other religious views that manifestly conflict with universal human rights norms and standards**, regardless of whether they are pronounced by formal institutions or by self-appointed individuals. We intend to assume this responsibility in a disciplined objective manner only within our own respective areas of competence in an introspective manner, without judging the faith or beliefs of others.

> ➤ *"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." (Bible, Matthew 7:1-2)*
> ➤ *"Habituate your heart to mercy for the subjects and to affection and kindness for them… since they are of two kinds, either your brother in religion or one like you in creation…So, extend to them your forgiveness and pardon, in the same way as you would like Allah to extend His forgiveness and pardon to you"—(Letter from Caliph Ali to Malik Ashtar, Governor of Egypt)*
> ➤ *"The essential purpose of the religion of God is to establish unity among mankind. The divine Manifestations were Founders of the means of fellowship and love. They did not come to create discord, strife and hatred in the world. The religion of God is the cause of love, but if it is made to be the source of enmity and bloodshed, surely its absence is preferable to its existence; for then it becomes satanic, detrimental and an obstacle to the human world." ('Abdu'l-Bahá)*

IX.  We also pledge to refrain from, advocate against and jointly **condemn any judgemental public determination by any actor who in the name of religion aims at disqualifying the religion or belief of another individual** or community in a manner that would expose them to violence in the name of religion or deprivation of their human rights.

X.  We pledge **not to give credence to exclusionary interpretations claiming religious grounds** in a manner that would instrumentalize religions, beliefs or their followers to incite hatred and violence, for example for electoral purposes or political gains.

XI.  We equally commit **not to oppress critical voices** and views on matters of religion or belief, however wrong or offensive they may be perceived, in the name of the "sanctity" of the subject matter and we urge States that still have anti-blasphemy or anti-apostasy laws to repeal them, since such laws have a stifling impact on the enjoyment of freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief as well as on healthy dialogue and debate about religious issues.

XII.   We commit to further **refine the curriculums, teaching materials and textbooks** wherever some religious interpretations, or the way they are presented, may give rise to the perception of condoning violence or discrimination. In this context, we pledge to promote respect for pluralism and diversity in the field of religion or belief as well as the right not to receive religious instruction that is inconsistent with one's conviction. We also commit to **defend the academic freedom and freedom of expression**, in line with Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, within the religious discourse in order to promote that religious thinking is capable of confronting new challenges as well as facilitating free and creative thinking. We commit to support efforts in the area of religious reforms in educational and institutional areas.

> ➤ *"The only possible basis for a sound morality is mutual tolerance and respect." (A.J. Ayer)*

XIII.  We pledge to build on experiences and lessons learned in **engaging with children and youth,** who are either victims of or vulnerable to incitement to violence in the name of religion, in order to design methodologies and adapted tools and narratives to enable religious communities to deal with this phenomenon effectively, with particular attention to the important role of parents and families in detecting and addressing early signs of vulnerability of children and youth to violence in the name of religion.

> ➤ *"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity." (1 Timothy 4:12)*

XIV.   We pledge to promote, within our respective spheres of influence, the imperative necessity of ensuring **respect in all humanitarian assistance activities** of the *Principles of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response Programmes,*[6] especially that aid is given regardless of the recipients' creed and without adverse distinction of any kind and that aid will not be used to further a particular religious standpoint.

XV.    We pledge **neither to coerce people nor to exploit persons in vulnerable situations** into converting from their religion or belief, while fully respecting everyone's freedom to have, adopt or change a religion or belief and the right to manifest it through teaching, practice, worship and observance, either individually or in community with others and in public or private.

XVI.   We commit to **leverage the spiritual and moral weight of religions and beliefs** with the aim of strengthening the protection of universal human rights and developing preventative strategies that we adapt to our local contexts, benefitting from the potential support of relevant United Nations entities.

> ➤ *"Love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these" (Mark 12, 31)*
> ➤ *"But love your enemies, do good to them and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great" (Luke 6, 35)*
> ➤ *"The God-conscious being is always unstained, like the sun, which gives its comfort and warmth to all. The God-conscious being looks upon all alike, like the wind, which blows equally upon the king and the poor beggar." (Guru Granth Sahib p. 272)*
> ➤ *"The religion of God and His divine law are the most potent instruments and the surest of all means for the dawning of the light of unity amongst men. The progress of the world, the development of nations, the tranquility of peoples, and the peace of all who dwell on earth are among the principles and ordinances of God."(Bahá'u'lláh)*

XVII.  We commit to support each other at the implementation level of this declaration through **exchange of practices**, mutual capacity enhancement and regular activities of skills updating for religious and spiritual preachers, teachers and instructors, notably in areas of communication, religious or belief minorities, inter-community mediation, conflict resolution, early detection of communal tensions

and remedial techniques. In this vain, we shall explore means of developing sustained **partnerships with specialised academic institutions** so as to promote interdisciplinary research on specific questions related to faith and rights and to benefit from their outcomes that could feed into the programs and tools of our coalition on Faith for Rights.

XVIII. We pledge to **use technological means more creatively and consistently** in order to disseminate this declaration and subsequent Faith for Rights messages to enhance cohesive societies enriched by diversity, including in the area of religions and beliefs. We will also consider means to produce empowering capacity-building and outreach tools and make them available in different languages for use at the local level.

Endnotes

[1] See UN Doc. A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, annex, appendix, para. 36.

[2] See Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: "(1) Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching. (2) No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice. (3) Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others. (4) The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions."

[3] These include the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948); Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951); International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965); International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966); International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966); Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979); Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984); Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990); Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006); and International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (2006).

[4] These include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (1981); Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992); Principles of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response Programmes (1994); UNESCO Declaration on Principles of Tolerance (1995); Final Document of the International Consultative Conference on School Education in Relation to Freedom of Religion or Belief, Tolerance and Non-Discrimination (2001); Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools (2007); United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007); The Hague Statement on "Faith in Human Rights" (2008); Camden Principles on Freedom of Expression and Equality (2009); Human Rights Council resolution 16/18 on Combating Intolerance, Negative Stereotyping and Stigmatization of, and Discrimination, Incitement to Violence and Violence against, Persons Based on Religion or Belief (and Istanbul Process, 2011); Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence (2012); Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes (2014); Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (2015); as well as the Fez Declaration on preventing incitement to violence that could lead to atrocity crimes (2015).

[5] All quotations from religious or belief texts were offered by participants of the Beirut workshop in relation to their own religion or belief and are merely intended to be illustrative and non-exhaustive.

[6] See www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/publications/icrc-002-1067.pdf.