Interfaith Peer-Engagement for Human Fraternity and Peace

Concept note for hybrid meeting jointly convened by the Vatican, Al-Azhar, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

With physical hubs at the British University in Egypt (**Cairo**), Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue (**Rome**), United Nations Palais des Nations (**Geneva**) **and online** (Teams link)

To be held on the International Day to Combat Hate Speech, **18 June 2026** (10:00-13:00 CET)

Objectives:

- **Facilitate a joint expression of faith in and commitment to human fraternity and peace in times of war**, symbolically on the International Day to Combat Hate Speech (18 June 2026), following up to United Nations General Assembly resolutions 75/200 and 75/309
- **Fill the ethical leadership gap left by politicians** and give voice to young faith actors to leverage the spiritual and moral weight of religions and beliefs for world peace and human fraternity.
- **Channel interfaith engagement into a cumulative process**, transcending dialogue into joint action and mutual support, particularly among young faith actors directly
- **Resonate with the Assisi prayer for peace in October 2026**, in commemoration for the 40th anniversary of the 1986 Assisi World Day of Prayer for Peace and 800 years commemoration of Francis of Assisi

Audience:

- **Young faith actors** (participants in the previous meetings convened by the three partners at Angkor Wat, Bangkok, Cairo, Dakar, Geneva, Rome and Wilton Park)
- **Teaching staff** of the inaugural peer-learning session in February 2026 with Al-Azhar, British University in Egypt, Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies, Vatican and UN Faith for Rights
- **UN Faith for Rights community of practices**

Modalities:

- **In-person meetings** will take place simultaneously in the three physical hubs, with **additional online participation** possible around the globe
- **No travel costs involved** since each hub will cover its local costs
- An **initial plenary** will gather remotely the hubs in Cairo, Rome and Geneva, which will then split into **three working groups** (in-person and online) to address the following questions:
  - What is the role of faith actors in times of war and polarization and how can dialogue be sustained during conflict?
  - How to use social media to counter hate speech and AI-generated fake content?
  - How to identify and address political instrumentalization of religions or beliefs for inciting to hatred and violence?
- A **concluding plenary session** across the three hubs will identify possible joint expressions of faith in and commitment to human fraternity and solidarity with all victims, rather than each community defending exclusively its followers

Tentative program on 18 June 2026:

Physical hubs at the British University in Egypt (Cairo), Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue (Rome), United Nations Palais des Nations (Geneva, room H.207) and online:

https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/34898534191576?p=tpPw5wcQQAOwssuQQN

10:00-11:00 CET **Opening plenary discussion** with interventions (t.b.c.) from:

Opening
- Prof. Mohammed Loutfi (British University in Egypt)

Scene-setters
- H.E. Cardinal George Jacob Koovakad (Vatican)
- Dr. Nazila Ghanea (UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief)
- Dr. Nicolas Levrat (UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues)
- Dr. Reham Salamah (Al Azhar Observatory for Combating Extremism)

Personal pledges (2 minutes each max.)
- H.E. Chris Trott (British Ambassador to the Holy See)
- Frère Dr. Emmanuel Pisani (Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies)
- Swami Vedanishthananda (Vedantic Centre Geneva)
- Dr. Kahina Bahloul (Fatima Mosque)
- Rabbi Alex Goldberg (University of Surrey and Faith in the City)
- Rachel Miner (Bellwether International)
- Dr. Tanya Elder (American University of Paris)
- Alison Hilliard (Wilton Park)
- Dr. Sarah Markiewicz (Inter-Parliamentary Union)
- Dr. Fadi Daou (Globethics)
- Rudelmar Bueno de Faria (ACT Alliance)
- Dr. Supachai Verapuchong (Bodhigaya Vijjalaya 980 Institute)
- Youth voice (Environment and Social Foundation, Thailand)
- Dr. Prashant Sharma (Dharma Alliance)
- Dr. Elodie Tranchez (Geneva Institute for Multilateralism Human Rights and Faith)
- Dr. Boumédiène Benyahia (Geneva Institute for Multilateralism Human Rights and Faith)
- Dr. Saba Haddad (Baha'i International Community)
- Leon Langdon (Humanists International)

11:00-12:00 CET **Three working groups** (hybrid) to address the following questions:
- What is the role of faith actors in times of war and polarization and how can dialogue be sustained during conflict?
- How to use social media to counter hate speech and AI-generated fake content?
- How to identify and address political instrumentalization of religions or beliefs for inciting to hatred and violence?

12:00-13:00 CET **Reporting back and concluding plenary session** across the three hubs:
- Prof. Ibrahim Salama (British University in Egypt)
- Dr. Michael Wiener (United Nations Faith for Rights)
- Dr. Charbel Attallah (Vatican Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue)

13:00-15:00 CET **Lunch break**

15:00-16:00 CET **Human Rights Council side event** (in Palais des Nations Concordia 5):
- Inputs from rapporteurs of the three working groups of the morning session
- Feedback from diplomats, civil society and faith-based actors, moderated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Context: Trajectory of Aligned Interfaith Initiatives

2017 Beirut Declaration and its 18 Commitments on "Faith for Rights" (March)

2019 Document on Human Fraternity For World Peace and Living Together (February)

2025 Preparing for Peace meetings in Wilton Park (February), Geneva (May) and Rome (June, IPU)

2025 Faith for Rights commUNity of practice meetings in Angkor Wat and Bangkok (October)

2025 Addressing Polarisation, Fundamentalisms and Protecting Human Rights (November)

2026 Inaugural Cairo Peer-learning on Complementarity of Religion and Human Rights (February)

2026 White Paper on multifaith and multistakeholder engagement in times of war and polarisation (March)

2026 West Africa conference & Dakar Plan of Action on the Role of Women in the Religious Sphere (May)

2026 Launch by the High Commissioner of the "Global Alliance for Human Rights" (11 June)

2026 Wilton Park meeting on activating joint action on the White Paper (10-12 June)

2027 Planned annual Human Fraternity Peer-learning Program for Young Faith Actors (March)