The Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on

FAITH OR RIGHTS

Report and outlook

UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

FAITHS FOR RIGHTS



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Overview

In 2017, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights launched the "Faith for Rights" framework with an expert workshop in Beirut. This framework provides space for a cross-disciplinary reflection and action on the deep, and mutually enriching, connections between religions and human rights. The objective is to foster the development of peaceful societies, which uphold human dignity and equality for all and where diversity is not just tolerated but fully respected and celebrated.

Religious leaders are potentially very important human rights actors in view of their considerable influence on the hearts and minds of millions of people. The 2012 Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence outlined the religious leaders' core responsibilities against incitement to hatred. Expanding those responsibilities to the full spectrum of human rights, the faith-based and civil society actors participating at the OHCHR workshop in 2017 adopted the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights".

The Beirut Declaration considers that all believers – whether theistic, non-theistic, atheistic or other – should join hands and hearts in articulating ways in which "Faith" can stand up for "Rights" more effectively so that both enhance each other. Individual and communal expression of religions or beliefs thrive and flourish in environments where human rights are protected. Similarly, human rights can benefit from deeply rooted ethical and spiritual foundations provided by religions or beliefs. Rather than focusing on theological and doctrinal divides, the Beirut Declaration favours the identification of common ground among all religions and beliefs to uphold the dignity and equal worth of all human beings.

Linked to the Beirut Declaration are 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights", with corresponding follow-up actions. These include the commitments to prevent the use of the notion of "State religion" to discriminate against any individual or group; to revisit religious interpretations that appear to perpetuate gender inequality and harmful stereotypes or even condone gender-based violence; to stand up for the rights of all persons belonging to minorities; to publicly denounce all instances of advocacy of hatred that incites to violence, discrimination or hostility; to monitor interpretations, determinations or other religious views that manifestly conflict with universal human rights norms and standards; to refrain from oppressing critical voices and to urge States to repeal any existing anti-blasphemy or anti-apostasy laws; to refine the curriculums, teaching materials and textbooks; and to engage with children and youth who are either victims of or vulnerable to incitement to violence in the name of religion.

In 2019, former High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet stressed that the "Faith for Rights" framework aims at transforming messages of mercy, compassion and solidarity into inter-communal and faith-based projects towards social, developmental and environmental change. In 2024, High Commissioner Volker Türk highlighted that the "Faith for Rights" framework engages governments, religious authorities and a wide range of civil society actors in peer-exchanges about concrete efforts on the ground.

The #Faith4Rights toolkit, which has been piloted online and offline since 2020, aims at translating the "Faith for Rights" framework into practical peer-to-peer learning and capacity-building programmes. It contains 18 learning modules, mirroring each of the commitments on "Faith for Rights". These modules offer concrete ideas for learning exercises, for example how to unpack the 18 commitments, share personal stories, search for additional faith quotes or provide for inspiring examples of artistic expressions. The whole concept is interactive, result-oriented and conducive to critical thinking. The toolkit is open for adaptation by facilitators in order to tailor the modules to the specific context of the participants. This toolkit builds on a wealth of comparable tools by several UN agencies that have been integrated into the #Faith4Rights toolkit. Its annex proposes several cases to debate, which illustrate the intersectionality of the 18 commitments and enhance the skills of faith actors to manage religious diversity in real-life situations towards the aims of "Faith for Rights".

Video statement by the High Commissioner (October 2024)



It is essential that all actors of good will – whether they be States, religious leaders, faith-based actors or other members of civil society – work together to promote human dignity, social cohesion and respect. Peace and security; sustainable development; the universal human rights that are at the core of equality, justice and freedom – all these profoundly precious values are literally at stake.

Whether they are theistic or non-theistic believers – or indeed atheists – all human beings have equal rights, including the rights to practise their faith, to speak out, and to participate fully in society, without discrimination.

In the **18 commitments** on "**Faith for Rights**", religious leaders and faith-based actors pledged to stand up for the right of minorities to participate equally and effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life. To provide humanitarian assistance regardless of the recipients' creed and without adverse distinction of any kind. To publicly denounce all instances of religious hatred that incite violence, discrimination or hostility. To address hate speech through compassion and solidarity that transcend the boundaries between faiths. And to ensure that religions and beliefs are not instrumentalized for political benefit.

These commitments are vital. The world needs faith-based actors to come together and promote respect. We must knit together a renewed social contract based on trust, respect and compassion, to overcome religious hatred.

Last month, United Nations Member States adopted the **Pact for the Future**. In it, they promised to step up the fight against religious hatred which constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence. They also emphasised that to be effective, this work must include faith-based organizations and civil society.

Since 2017, my Office has been facilitating the "Faith for Rights" network, where participants share lessons learned and act jointly for human rights. In November, we will organize another hybrid week of the Faith for Rights "commUNity of practices". It will focus on promoting the essential principle of women's equality, and the commitment to combat the instrumentalization of religions, beliefs or their followers. In addition, live and online "Faith for Rights" courses are available from academics and practitioners in Abuja, Beirut, Cairo, Paris, Ottawa, Oxford, San José and Washington DC.

My friends, with turmoil and hatred being whipped up around us, inertia is not an option. We can – we must – make a difference, by working together for cohesive societies that are enriched by diversity, including in terms of religions and beliefs. Networks of faith-based actors can step up to promote mercy, compassion and solidarity. They can join hands with diverse communities to promote shared goals – social, developmental and environmental.

Humanity has a unique capacity for connection. We are skilled at communication; at managing change; and at achieving cooperation with groups that are not identical to our own. These are characteristics that have kept human beings alive, again and again, throughout history.

It is our turn now. We need to raise our voices more powerfully. We need to do everything we can to advance justice, freedom and equality.

Volker Türk
High Commissioner for Human Rights

Beirut opening statement (March 2017)

Video Message by Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein

Former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (from 2014 to 2018)

Expert meeting hosted by OHCHR's Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa in Beirut, 28-29 March 2017



I warmly welcome you to this expert meeting on "Faith for Rights", which provides space for a long-overdue cross-disciplinary reflection on the deep, and mutually enriching, connections between religions and human rights.

Our objective is to foster the development of peaceful societies, where diversity is not just tolerated but fully respected and celebrated. Societies which uphold human dignity and equality for all.

The UN Charter speaks of the world's "faith in fundamental human rights". You have come together to discuss faith for rights – based on our common values and hopes.

"Faith for rights" should also enhance the freedom of religion or belief, which is integral to the universal and interdependent freedoms that my Office upholds. I very much hope we can work together to promote this and all other human rights, and to combat violations.

Hatred, discrimination, oppression, injustice, marginalisation and extreme poverty: these are drivers of conflict, destruction and misery. All have common roots. The absence of justice. The absence of empathy and solidarity, which impel true care for all our fellow human beings.

They also have common solutions: respect for the dignity, equality, and human rights of all.

I believe religious leaders, with their considerable influence on the hearts and minds of millions of people, are potentially very important human rights actors. They can play a crucial positive role in helping to shape our present and future. In 2012, the Rabat Plan of Action laid out some of religious leaders' core responsibilities against incitement to hatred. Today I hope your discussions can build on that, to articulate the human rights responsibilities of religious leaders and look at how they could be appropriately supported.

I am convinced that rather than focusing on the tension zones between some religious interpretations and human rights, we can find common ground and shared goals.

I look to you to help us establish a vision and a roadmap to improve the lives of people across the world.

I ask you to stand up for human rights, at this time of great turmoil in world affairs, and to help safeguard the deep and essential principles of equality and human dignity which risk being swept away.

I wish you fruitful discussions. Thank you.

Background on the expert workshop in Beirut

The Beirut expert workshop on 28 and 29 March 2017 built upon the Rabat Plan of Action in light of its increased relevance given the aggravated trends of incitement on various grounds. The workshop participants drafted a holistic narrative of the human rights responsibilities of religious leaders of which the Rabat Plan of Action provides a central component. Finally, the experts considered options for civil society follow-up in terms of structured collaboration and projects.



The 30 participants of the Beirut workshop included both experts from the Middle East and North Africa region and from the international level. It was a fully gender-balanced meeting (with 50% women and 50% men participating) of faith-based and civil society actors working in the field of human rights, including relevant United Nations Special Rapporteurs and Treaty Body members. The participants are independent from Governments and have field activities in advocating for religious coexistence, minority rights, cohesive societies, women's rights/related topics and have a commitment to universal human rights norms and standards.

The two days event was divided into an opening session and three working groups in World Café format, which ensured that each member of the three working groups drafted and discussed the three components of the meeting's outcome:

1. The Beirut Declaration
   Moderator: Abdelwahab Hani (CAT member); rapporteur: Melhem Khalaf (CERD member)
2. The 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights"
   Moderator: Nazila Ghanea (Oxford University); rapporteur: Ahmed Shaheed (UN Special Rapporteur)
3. Options for civil society follow-up
   Moderator: Agnes Callamard (UN Special Rapporteur); rapporteur: Tahmina Rahman (Article 19)



On 29 March 2017, the participants unanimously adopted the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights". They also presented the outcome documents at a press conference, which was covered by several TV channels (Manar, Future, LBC, MTV, Al-Jadeed, Al-Jazeera and Al Lulua), radio stations (Voix du Liban and the National Lebanese Radio) as well as newspapers (e.g. The Daily Star Lebanon).

A page dedicated to "Faith for Rights" is also available online at: www.ohchr.org/en/faith-for-rights

Beirut Declaration on "Faith for Rights"

English version

"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." (Qur'an 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." (Qur'an 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." (Qur'an 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." (Qur'an 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." (Qur'an 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.



French version

Déclaration de Beyrouth sur « La foi pour les droits »

« Il y a autant de chemins vers Dieu que d'âmes sur la terre.» (Rumi)[1]



1. Nous, acteurs de la société civile et organisations concernés par la foi et engagés dans le domaine des droits de l'homme, réunis à Beyrouth les 28 et 29 mars 2017 au terme d'une série de réunions organisées par le Haut-Commissariat des Nations Unies aux droits de l'homme (HCDH)[2], exprimons notre profonde conviction que nos religions respectives et nos croyances partagent un engagement commun pour la **protection de la dignité et de l'égale valeur de tous les êtres humains**. Les valeurs humaines universelles et l'égale dignité constituent les racines communes de nos cultures. La foi et les droits sont des domaines intimement liés qui doivent se renforcer mutuellement. Le sentiment religieux et les croyances individuelles et collectives peuvent s'exprimer et se développer là où les droits de l'homme, qui reposent sur l'égale valeur de tous les êtres humains, sont protégés. Réciproquement, les droits de l'homme peuvent tirer profit des fondements éthiques et spirituels profondément enracinés dans toutes les religions ou croyances.

2. Nous considérons nos religions ou nos croyances respectives comme sources de protection de **l'ensemble des droits humains inaliénables** – incluant la préservation du don de la vie, les libertés de pensée, de conscience, de religion, de croyance, d'opinion et d'expression et la liberté de vivre à l'abri du besoin et de la peur, y compris de la violence sous toutes ses formes.

- *«Selon les Ecritures, celui qui sauve une seule vie sauve le monde entier.» (Talmud, Sanhédrin, 37a)*
- *«Et qui en sauve un est comme s'il avait sauvé tous les hommes.» (Coran 5:32)*
- *«Tu aimeras le Seigneur, ton Dieu, de tout ton cœur, de toute ton âme, de toute ta force, et de toute ta pensée ; et ton prochain comme toi-même.» (Luc 10:27)*
- *«Qu'ils adorent donc le Seigneur de cette Maison, qui les a nourris contre la faim et rassurés contre la crainte.» (Sourate Qoraïch, versets 3,4)*
- *«L'homme a été créé unique, pour enseigner que quiconque fait périr une seule personne, fait périr le monde dans sa totalité ; et celui qui sauve une seule vie, c'est comme s'il sauvait le monde.» (Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5)*
- *«Unissons-nous, parlons collectivement et ne faisons qu'un par nos pensées.» (Rig Veda 10:191:2)*
- *«De même que je me protège contre les désagréments les plus anodins, je cultiverai la pensée de protéger les êtres et d'être envers eux compatissant.» (Shantideva, Guide du mode de vie du Bodhisattva)*
- *«Unissons nos esprits et voyons quelle vie nous pouvons offrir à nos enfants.» (Chef Sitting Bull, Lakota)*

3. Sur la base de ce qui précède, nous sommes convaincus que, parmi tout ce qui fonde nos convictions, **nos religions et nos croyances constituent l'une des sources fondamentales** de la protection de la dignité humaine et des libertés de tous les individus et des communautés, sans aucune distinction. Avant même l'apparition du droit international, les textes religieux, éthiques et philosophiques ont défendu le caractère unique de l'être humain, le caractère sacré du droit à la vie et les obligations individuelles et collectives qui en découlent et qui sont enracinées dans les cœurs des croyants.

4. Nous nous engageons à diffuser **les valeurs humaines communes qui nous unissent**. Même si nous avons des divergences sur certaines questions théologiques, nous sommes déterminés à combattre toute forme d'exploitation de ces différences qui aurait pour objectif d'appeler à la violence, à la discrimination et à la haine religieuse.

- *«Pour chacun de vous tous, nous avons défini une voie, une vocation. Si Allah avait voulu, Il aurait fait de vous tous une seule communauté, mais Il veut vous éprouver avec ce qu'Il vous donne. Concurrencez donc dans les bonnes œuvres. C'est vers Allah qu'est votre retour à tous ; alors Il vous informera de ce en quoi vous divergiez. » (Coran 5:48)*
- *«Vous êtes tous les fruits d'un seul arbre, les feuilles d'une même branche.» (Bahá'u'lláh)*

5. Nous croyons que la liberté de religion ou de conviction ne peut exister sans les **libertés de pensée et de conscience**, qui précèdent toutes les libertés car elles sont liées à la nature profonde de l'homme et à son droit de choisir en toute liberté sa religion ou croyance. L'individu dans sa globalité est au cœur de toute foi et il s'épanouit à travers l'amour, le pardon et le respect.



6. Aussi nous lançons solennellement et tous ensemble depuis Beyrouth **le plus noble des combats, un combat pacifique mais puissant,** contre nos orgueils, nos propres intérêts et nos clivages artificiels. Nous ne pourrons promouvoir de façon crédible l'acceptation mutuelle et la fraternité entre les personnes de religions ou de croyances différentes ni leur donner les moyens de combattre les effets négatifs de la haine, de la méchanceté, de la manipulation, de la cupidité, de la cruauté et de toute autre forme d'inhumanité que lorsque nous assumerons réellement nos rôles respectifs d'acteurs religieux. Nous y parviendrons lorsque nous développerons une vision commune de nos responsabilités et passerons de la prédication à l'action. Toutes les communautés religieuses ou de croyances ont besoin d'un leadership déterminé, capable d'indiquer sans équivoque la direction à suivre en agissant pour l'égale dignité de chacun et animée par la vision de notre humanité commune et le respect de la liberté de conscience absolue de chaque être humain. Nous nous engageons à ne ménager aucun effort pour combler ce manque de direction commune en protégeant la liberté et la diversité au travers d'activités « La foi pour les droits ».

- *« Nous avons perfectionné chaque âme qui est faite d'attirance pour le mal et d'aspiration vers le bien. Y parvient celui ou celle qui s'élève sur le chemin de la justice. » (Coran 91, 7-9)*

7. La présente déclaration sur « La foi pour les droits » **s'adresse à des personnes de religions et de croyances du monde entier**. Elle a pour objectif de promouvoir des sociétés solidaires, pacifiques et respectueuses grâce à une plateforme commune tournée vers l'action, approuvée par toutes les parties concernées et ouverte à tous les acteurs qui partagent ses objectifs. Nous apprécions le fait que notre déclaration sur « La foi pour les droits », tout comme le Plan d'action fondateur de Rabat sur l'interdiction de l'appel à la haine nationale, raciale ou religieuse qui constitue une incitation à la discrimination, à l'hostilité ou à la violence (octobre 2012), aient tous deux été conçus et conduits sous les auspices et avec le soutien des Nations Unies, qui représentent tous les peuples du monde. Les textes ont été enrichis de façon bénéfique par les mécanismes de protection des droits de l'homme des Nations Unies, notamment par les rapporteurs spéciaux et les membres des organes conventionnels.

8. Bien que de nombreuses initiatives aient opportunément visé, au fil du temps, à établir un lien mutuellement bénéfique entre la foi et les droits, aucune de ces tentatives n'a pleinement atteint son objectif. Nous sommes donc convaincus qu'il est nécessaire de **donner aux acteurs religieux**, tant au niveau national qu'international, **les moyens d'assumer leurs responsabilités** en matière de défense de notre humanité commune contre les appels à la haine, contre ceux qui profitent de la déstabilisation des sociétés et contre les manipulateurs qui jouent sur la peur au détriment de la dignité humaine inaliénable et identique pour tous. Avec cette déclaration sur « La foi pour les droits », nous aspirons à unir nos efforts et nos cœurs pour tirer parti des tentatives précédentes de lier foi et droits en articulant nos bases communes. Nous avons également pour objectif d'établir comment la foi peut défendre plus efficacement les droits, de manière à ce que foi et droits s'enrichissent mutuellement.

- *«Voici, l'humain est perdu, sauf ceux qui adhèrent et sont intègres, ceux qui s'exhortent à la vérité, qui s'exhortent à la constance.» (Coran 103:3)*



9. Nous avons également l'intention, en nous appuyant sur cette déclaration, de **mettre en pratique ce que nous prêchons** en instaurant une coalition d'action à plusieurs niveaux. Cette coalition sera ouverte à tous les acteurs religieux indépendants et aux organisations confessionnelles qui s'approprient véritablement cette déclaration sur « La foi pour les droits » et qui s'engagent en sa faveur, par la mise en place de projets sur le terrain et dans des domaines qui permettent de réaliser ses objectifs. Nous élaborerons également une feuille de route pour des actions concrètes dans des domaines spécifiques qui seront réexaminées régulièrement par notre coalition mondiale « La foi pour les droits ».

10. Pour atteindre l'objectif susmentionné, nous nous engageons, en tant que croyants (théistes, non théistes, athées ou autres[3]), à pleinement adhérer à **cinq principes fondamentaux** :

a) Dépasser les dialogues interreligieux traditionnels pour faire émerger des **projets dans le domaine de « La foi pour les droits », orientés vers des actions concrètes au niveau local**. Si le dialogue est important, il ne constitue pas une fin en soi. L'utilité des bonnes intentions est souvent limitée lorsque ces dernières ne débouchent pas sur des actions. Notre objectif est d'obtenir des changements sur le terrain et cela passe logiquement par une action concertée.

- *«La foi est ancrée dans le cœur lorsqu'elle se traduit par des actions.» (Hadith)*

b) **Eviter les clivages théologiques et doctrinaux** pour agir dans les domaines où s'exprime la vision partagée, interconfessionnelle et intraconfessionnelle, définies par cette déclaration. Cette déclaration n'est pas conçue comme un outil visant à favoriser le dialogue entre les religions, mais plutôt comme une plateforme commune en vue d'actions conjointes de défense de la dignité humaine pour tous. Nous respectons la liberté d'expression et sommes bien conscients que le discours religieux pourra rester dans une certaine mesure polémique, mais nous sommes résolus à remettre en cause la manipulation des religions à des fins politiques ou lors de conflits. Nous voulons exprimer de façon unie et équilibrée la solidarité, la raison, la compassion, la modération, l'ouverture d'esprit et les projets collectifs qui s'appuient sur ces principes au niveau local.

c) **L'examen introspectif** est une vertu qui nous est chère. Nous nous exprimerons et nous agirons d'abord et avant tout sur nos propres faiblesses et sur les défis inhérents à nos communautés respectives. En ce qui concerne les questions plus générales, nous les aborderons de façon collective et cohérente, après des débats internes ouverts qui garantissent le respect de notre intégrité, laquelle constitue notre plus grande force.

d) **Parler d'une seule voix**, notamment pour combattre tout appel à la haine qui inciterait à la violence, à la discrimination ou qui encouragerait toute autre atteinte à l'égale dignité dont jouissent tous les êtres humains, indépendamment de leurs religions, croyances, sexes, opinions politiques ou autres, origines nationales ou sociales, ou tout autre statut. Il n'est pas suffisant de dénoncer l'incitation à la haine, aux injustices, à la discrimination religieuse ou toute forme d'intolérance religieuse. Nous avons le devoir de lutter contre les discours haineux grâce à une compassion et une solidarité réparatrices, qui soignent de la même façon les cœurs et les sociétés. Nos mots pour réparer doivent transcender les frontières religieuses ou de croyances, afin que les manipulateurs, xénophobes, populistes et extrémistes violents ne soient plus en mesure d'exploiter impunément nos divisions.

e) Nous sommes déterminés à **agir de façon totalement indépendante**, en nous conformant seulement à notre conscience lorsqu'il s'agira de rechercher des partenariats avec les autorités religieuses et séculaires, avec les organes gouvernementaux concernés et avec les acteurs non étatiques, là où des coalitions de « La foi pour les droits » seront mises en place librement, conformément à cette déclaration.



11. Notre **principal outil et atout est de pouvoir toucher des centaines de millions de croyants,** préventivement et de manière structurée, pour transmettre les convictions que nous partageons et qui sont inscrites dans cette déclaration. En parlant d'une seule voix pour la défense de la dignité égale de tous face aux défis communs que l'humanité doit surmonter, nous nous mettons autant au service de la foi que des droits. Plus qu'à la simple tolérance, les êtres humains ont droit au plein et à l'égal respect, indépendamment de leurs croyances ou non croyances. Il est de notre responsabilité de respecter cet engagement dans nos sphères respectives de compétence. Nous encouragerons également les croyants à assumer leurs responsabilités individuelles pour la défense des valeurs profondément ancrées de justice, d'égalité et de responsabilité envers les nécessiteux et les défavorisés, quelles que soient leurs religions ou croyances.

- *«Respecte l'être humain, car s'il n'est pas ton frère dans la religion, il est ton frère dans l'humanité.» (Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib)*
- *«Sur le long voyage de la vie humaine, la foi est le meilleur des compagnons.» (Bouddha)*

12. Nous entendons atteindre cet objectif qui **place les individus au cœur de notre démarche, d'une façon concrète et sur le terrain**, dans tous les endroits du monde où des coalitions d'acteurs religieux ont choisi d'adhérer à cette déclaration et d'agir en fonction. Nous soutiendrons nos actions réciproques, notamment lors d'une Marche annuelle hautement symbolique de « La foi pour les droits » qui, le 10 décembre de chaque année, exprimera de la plus belle des façons notre unité dans le monde entier.

13. Au travers de cette déclaration, l'expression d'une vision commune aux différents acteurs religieux, sur la base du Plan d'action de Rabat de 2012 et des réunions de suivi, permettrait d'atteindre un point charnière pour **désarmer les forces du mal** et aider à lutter contre l'imbrication contre nature, présente dans de trop nombreux cœurs, entre ignorance, peur et haine. La violence au nom de la religion remet en cause les fondements essentiels de cette dernière qui sont la miséricorde et la compassion. Nous voulons transformer les messages de miséricorde et de compassion en actions de solidarité au travers de projets confessionnels intercommunautaires et sociaux, mais également environnementaux et de développement aux niveaux local, national, régional et mondial.

14. Nous approuvons pleinement les valeurs universellement reconnues qui sont énoncées dans les instruments internationaux relatifs aux droits de l'homme et qui constituent des normes communes, partagées par notre humanité. Nous fondons nos engagements d'abord et avant tout sur cette déclaration « La foi pour les droits » et sur notre conviction que les religions et les croyances partagent des valeurs fondamentales communes de respect de la dignité humaine, de la justice et de l'équité. Nos engagements reposent aussi sur le fait que nous acceptons que « **l'individu a des devoirs** envers la communauté dans laquelle seul le libre et plein développement de sa personnalité est possible »[4]. Il est de notre devoir de prêcher par l'exemple, de nous engager pleinement, de nous exprimer et d'agir sur le terrain pour la défense de la dignité humaine bien avant que cette dernière soit réellement menacée.

- *«Oh, ceux qui adhèrent, pourquoi dites-vous ce que vous ne faites pas ? C'est un grand vice auprès d'Allah de dire ce que vous ne faites pas.» (Coran 61:2-3)*
- *«Mais toi, tu dois parler pour défendre ceux qui n'ont pas la parole et pour prendre le parti des laissés pour compte. Parle en leur faveur : gouverne avec justice, défends la cause des pauvres et des malheureux.» (Proverbes 31:8-9)*

15. Les **préceptes religieux et les cadres juridiques internationaux existants** confèrent des responsabilités aux acteurs religieux. Responsabiliser les acteurs religieux impose de mettre en œuvre des actions dans des domaines tels que la législation, les réformes institutionnelles, les politiques publiques de soutien et la formation, ces actions devant être adaptées aux besoins des acteurs religieux locaux qui constituent souvent l'une des principales ressources en matière d'éducation et de changement social dans leurs champs d'action respectifs. Les conventions et les pactes internationaux ont permis de définir des termes juridiques de référence, comme les notions de génocide, de réfugié, de discrimination religieuse et de liberté de religion ou de croyances[5]. Tous ces concepts trouvent un écho dans les différentes religions et croyances. De plus, de nombreuses déclarations et résolutions[6] fournissent des éléments pour la définition du rôle et des responsabilités des acteurs religieux que nous adoptons et consolidons dans cette déclaration.

16. Nous reconnaissons, en tant qu'êtres humains, qu'il **est de notre responsabilité envers tous les individus** de corriger la façon dont les religions sont dépeintes et le plus souvent manipulées. Nous sommes responsables de nos actions, d'autant plus si nous n'agissons pas ou si nous n'agissons pas correctement et en temps utile.

- *«Nous demanderons à chacun d'entre vous ce que vous avez dit et réalisé, et vous devrez en rendre compte.» (Coran, As-Saffat, 24)*
- *«L'œuvre de chacun sera manifestée.» (Bible, 1 Corinthiens 3:13)*

17. Les Etats assument la responsabilité principale de promouvoir et de protéger les droits de tous, individuellement et collectivement, à jouir d'une vie digne, à l'abri de la peur et du besoin et à bénéficier de la liberté de choix dans tous les aspects de leur vie. En tant qu'acteurs religieux ou individuellement, en tant que croyants, nous avons quant à nous la responsabilité de **défendre notre humanité partagée et l'égale dignité de tous les êtres humains** en toutes circonstances, dans nos propres champs d'action que sont la prédication, l'enseignement, l'accompagnement spirituel et l'engagement social.

- *«Que celui d'entre vous qui voit une chose répréhensible la corrige de sa main. S'il ne le peut pas de sa main, qu'il la corrige avec sa langue. S'il ne le peut avec sa langue, que ce soit avec son cœur et c'est là le degré le plus faible de la foi.» (Hadith)*



18. Les **communautés religieuses, leurs responsables et les fidèles** ont un rôle et assument des responsabilités, indépendamment des autorités publiques, en vertu des instruments juridiques tant nationaux qu'internationaux. Selon l'article 2 (1) de la Déclaration des Nations Unies de 1981 sur l'élimination de toutes formes d'intolérance et de discrimination fondées sur la religion ou la conviction, « nul ne peut faire l'objet de discrimination de la part d'un Etat, d'une institution, d'un groupe ou d'un individu quelconque en raison de sa religion ou de sa conviction ». Cette disposition établit clairement les responsabilités des institutions religieuses, des dirigeants et même des individus dans les communautés religieuses ou de croyances.

19. Tout comme la notion de contrôle effectif[7] constitue le fondement des responsabilités des acteurs non étatiques en période de conflits, il existe une justification similaire, juridique et éthique, dans le cas des responsables religieux qui exercent en permanence **une grande influence sur les cœurs et les esprits des fidèles**.

20. La parole est essentielle pour l'épanouissement des individus et des communautés. Elle constitue un **moyen décisif pour porter les bons comme les mauvais messages de l'humanité**. La guerre commence dans les esprits et se propage au travers de discours souvent alimentés par des incitations dissimulées à la haine. Les discours positifs sont aussi des outils curatifs qui contribuent à la réconciliation et à l'édification de la paix dans les cœurs et dans les esprits. Le discours constitue l'une des responsabilités fondamentales que nous nous

engageons à assumer et à mettre en œuvre en nous épaulant mutuellement au travers de cette déclaration, sur la base des paramètres articulés par le Plan d'action de Rabat.

21. Selon le Pacte international relatif aux droits civils et politiques (article 20, paragraphe 2), les Etats sont tenus d'interdire toute forme d'appel à la haine nationale, religieuse ou raciale qui constituerait une incitation à la discrimination, à l'hostilité ou à la violence. Cela comprend **l'incitation à la haine par certaines autorités religieuses au nom de la religion**. En raison du positionnement de l'orateur, du contexte, du contenu et de la portée des sermons, de telles déclarations par des chefs religieux peuvent s'apparenter à de l'incitation à la haine. Interdire ces appels à la haine ne suffit pas. Plaider en faveur de la réconciliation constitue également un devoir, y compris pour les chefs religieux, notamment lorsque la haine est professée au nom des religions ou des croyances.



22. Les orientations les plus nettes et les plus récentes dans ce domaine sont énoncées dans le Plan d'action de Rabat de 2012[8] qui développe les **trois responsabilités spécifiques et fondamentales des autorités religieuses** : (a) les autorités religieuses doivent s'abstenir de propager des messages d'intolérance ou d'utiliser des expressions qui peuvent inciter à la violence, à l'hostilité ou à la discrimination ; (b) les autorités religieuses ont également un rôle fondamental à jouer en dénonçant résolument et immédiatement l'intolérance, les stéréotypes discriminatoires et les cas de discours haineux ; et (c) les autorités religieuses doivent clairement préciser que la violence ne peut en aucun cas être considérée comme une réponse acceptable à l'appel à la haine (ainsi, des provocations préalables ne justifient nullement la violence).



Notes

[1] Toutes les citations de textes religieux ou spirituels ont été proposées par les participants au groupe de travail de Beyrouth en fonction de leurs propres religions ou croyances et elles ne sont présentées qu'à titre d'illustration, ne visant aucunement l'exhaustivité.

[2] Le HCDH a organisé des réunions internationales, des séminaires d'experts et des ateliers régionaux, à Genève (octobre 2008), Vienne (février 2011), Nairobi (avril 2011), Bangkok (juillet 2011), Santiago du Chili (octobre 2011), Rabat (octobre 2012), Genève (février 2013), Amman (novembre 2013), Manama (2014), Tunis (octobre 2014 et avril 2015), Nicosie (octobre 2015), Beyrouth (décembre 2015) et Amman (janvier 2017).

[3] Voir Comité des droits de l'homme des Nations Unies, Commentaire général No. 22 (1993), Document des Nations Unies : CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.4, para. 2.

[4] Article 29, paragraphe 1 de la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme (1948).

[5] Ceux-ci incluent la Convention pour la prévention et la répression du crime de génocide (1948), la Convention relative au statut des réfugiés (1951), la Convention internationale sur l'élimination de toutes les formes de discrimination raciale (1965), le Pacte international relatif aux droits civils et politiques (1966), le Pacte international relatif aux droits économiques, sociaux et culturels (1966), la Convention sur l'élimination de toutes les formes de discrimination à l'égard des femmes (1979), la Convention contre la torture et autres peines ou traitements cruels, inhumains ou dégradants (1984), la Convention relative aux droits de l'enfant (1989), la Convention internationale sur la protection des droits de tous les travailleurs migrants et des membres de leur famille (1990), la Convention relative aux droits des personnes handicapées (2006) et la Convention internationale pour la protection de toutes les personnes contre les disparitions forcées (2006).

[6] Celles-ci incluent la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme (1948), la Déclaration sur l'élimination de toutes formes d'intolérance et de discrimination fondées sur la religion ou la conviction (1981), la Déclaration des droits des personnes appartenant à des minorités nationales ou ethniques, religieuses et linguistiques (1992), le Code de conduite pour le Mouvement international de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge et pour les organisations non gouvernementales (ONG) lors des opérations de secours en cas de catastrophe (1994), la Déclaration de principes de l'UNESCO sur la tolérance (1995), le Document final de la Conférence internationale consultative sur l'éducation scolaire en relation avec la liberté de religion ou de conviction, la tolérance ou la non-discrimination (2001), les Principes directeurs de Tolède sur l'enseignement relatif aux religions et aux convictions dans les écoles publiques (2007), la Déclaration des Nations Unies sur les droits des peuples autochtones (2007), la Déclaration de La Haye relative à la foi et aux droits de l'homme (2008), les Principes de Camden sur la liberté d'expression et l'égalité (2009), la Résolution 16/18 du Conseil des droits de l'homme sur la lutte contre l'intolérance, les stéréotypes négatifs, la stigmatisation, la discrimination, l'incitation à la violence et la violence visant certaines personnes en raison de leur religion ou de leur conviction (et le Processus d'Istanbul, 2011), le Plan d'action de Rabat sur l'interdiction de l'appel à la haine nationale, raciale ou religieuse qui constitue une incitation à la discrimination, à l'hostilité ou à la violence (2012), le Cadre d'analyse des atrocités criminelles (2014), le Plan d'action du Secrétaire général pour la prévention de l'extrémisme violent (2015) ainsi que la Déclaration de Fez sur la prévention de l'incitation qui pourrait conduire à des crimes odieux (2015).

[7] Dans certaines circonstances, lorsque des acteurs non étatiques exercent un contrôle significatif et effectif sur un territoire et une population (par exemple en tant qu'autorités de fait), ils sont assujettis à des obligations et sont eux aussi obligés de respecter les droits internationaux de l'homme (voir les documents des Nations Unies : CEDAW/C/GC/30, para. 16 et A/HRC/28/66, para. 54 et 55).

[8] Voir Document des Nations Unies : A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, annexe, appendice, para. 36.

[Ce texte a été traduit en français par Madame Marie Naudon, volontaire auprès de « UN Volunteers », plateforme de travail coopératif au sein des Nations Unies. Nous lui exprimons notre sincère gratitude pour son travail de qualité.]



Arabic version

إعلان بيروت:"الإيمان من أجل الحقوق"

"الطرق إلى الله بعدد نفوس الخلائق" (جلال الدين الرومي)[1]



1. نحن أطراف المجتمع المدني والمنظمات المعنية بالدين والمعتقد العاملون في مجال حقوق الانسان، المجتمعون في بيروت يوميّ 28 و29 مارس 2017 تتويجًا لمسار متواصل من المشاورات التي أطلقهتا المفوضية السامية للأمم المتحدة لحقوق الإنسان[2]، نعرب عن قناعتنا العميقة بأنّ كافّة الأديان والمعتقدات تتقاسم التزامًا جوهرياً بصون الكرامة والقيمة المتساويين لجميع البشر. وبالتالي، فإنّ الإنسانية المشتركة والكرامة المتساوية تُشكّلان معًا جذور حضارتنا. كما أنّ الايمان والحقوق مجالان ينبغي ان يعزّز أحدهما الآخر. فالتعبير الفردي والمجتمعي عن الأديان والمعتقدات ينمو ويزدهر في بيئات تصان فيها حقوق الإنسان، انطلاقاً من القيمة المتساوية لجميع البشر. وعلى نحو مماثل، تتعزز حقوق الإنسان بالأسس الأخلاقية والروحية المتجذّرة في الوجدان والتي ترسخها الأديان و المعتقدات.

2. نحن على قناعة بأنّ الأديان والمعتقدات تصون **كافة الاستحقاقات البشرية غير القابلة للتصرّف** بدءًا بالحفاظ على الحق في الحياة، وحريّة التفكير، والضمير، والدين، والمعتقد والتعبير وصولاً إلى التحرّر من العوز والخوف، بما في ذلك التحرّر من العنف ومن التمييز بكل أشكالهما.

- " من يحفظ نفسا واحدة فهو في التعاليم حفظ العالم كله" (التلمود 37 أ)
- "ومن أحياها فكأنما أحيا الناس جميعًا" (القرآن، المائدة: 32)
- "تُحِبُّ الرَّبَّ إِلهَكَ مِنْ كُلِّ قَلْبِكَ، وَمِنْ كُلِّ نَفْسِكَ، وَمِنْ كُلِّ قُدْرَتِكَ، وَمِنْ كُلِّ فِكْرِكَ، وَقَرِيبَكَ مِثْلَ نَفْسِكَ". (إنجيل لوقا، 10:27).
- "فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَٰذَا الْبَيْتِ الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُم مِّن جُوعٍ وَآمَنَهُم مِّنْ خَوْفٍ" (القرآن، قريش: 3،4).
- "خلق الإنسان ... مفرداً لكي يُعرف أن بالنسبة لمن يقتل شخصًا واحداً يكن معلومًا أنّه قد قتل أمّة بأسرها، لكن بالنسبة لمن أبقى على حياة شخص واحد فسيُحسب كما لو أنّه قد أبقى على حياة أمة بأسرها". (مشنا سنهدرين 4:5).
- "فلنتحد، نتكلم كجماعة ولتكن أفكارنا واحدة" (ريجفدا 10:191:2).
- "كما أحرص على حماية نفسي من الأشياء السيّئة مهما كانت صغيرة، علي أن أفعل الأمر نفسه تجاه الآخرين فأُظهر تعاطفًا واهتمامًا (الانخراط في سلوك البوديساتفا – شانتيديفا).
- فلنُوحّد عقولنا لنرى أي حياة يمكن أن نصنع لأولادنا (الثور الجالس من قبيلة لاكوتا).

3. استناداً لما تقدم ، ضمن جملة مصادر إيمانية أخرى، نؤكّد على قناعتنا بأنّ **الأديان والمعتقدات هي أحد المصادر الأساسية** لحماية كرامة جميع الأفراد والمجتمعات وحرياتهم دون تمييز من أي نوع كان. لقد سبقت الأديان والمعتقدات والاخلاق والفلسفات القانون الدولي في تكريس فكرة وحدانيّة النوع البشري وقدسيّة الحق في الحياة والواجبات الفردية والجماعيّة المقابلة لهذه الحقوق والتي باتت مترسّخة في قلوب المؤمنين بشكل عميق.

4. نتعهّد بالدعوة لنشر القيم الانسانية المشتركة التي تُوحّدنا. وفي حين أنّنا قد نختلف على بعض المسائل العقائدية، إلاّ أنّنا نلتزم بمحاربة أي نوع من الاستغلال لهذه الخلافات لتأجيج العنف، والتمييز، والكراهية الدينية.



- "لِكُلٍّ جَعَلْنَا مِنكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا وَلَوْ شَاء اللّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِن لِّيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَآ آتَاكُم فَاسْتَبِقُوا الخَيْرَاتِ إِلَى الله مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ" (القرآن، المائدة: 48)
- "كُلُّكم أثمارُ شجرةٍ واحدةٍ وأوراقُ غصنٍ واحد" (بهاء الله).

5. نحن على قناعة بأنه لا حرية دينية ولا حرية معتقد ما لم تحترم حرية الفكر والضمير التي تسبق كافة الحريات لأنها ترتبط بكينونة الإنسان وحقّه في الاختيار وحقّه في حرية الدين والمعتقد. فالإنسان بكلّيته هو أساس كل إيمان، وهو يسمو بالمحبة والتسامح والإحترام.

وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ لَآمَنَ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كُلُّهُمْ جَمِيعًا أَفَأَنْتَ تُكْرِهُ النَّاسَ حَتَّىٰ يَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ (القرآن، يونس: 99)

6. نحن نطلق معًا بموجب إعلان بيروت والتعهدات الثمانية عشر حول "الايمان من أجل الحقوق" **أنبل نضال قوي ولكن سلمي** ، لمواجهة أنانيتنا، ومصالحنا السلمية والانقسامات المصطنعة. وعندما نقوم نحن باعتبارنا فاعلين دينيين بأدوارنا، ونُعرب عن رؤية مشتركة لمسؤولياتنا وتحويل الدعوة إلى فعل، عندها فقط سنُروّج بمصداقيّة للقبول المتبادل والأخوّة بين الأشخاص الذين لديهم إيمان أو معتقد مختلف ونمكّنهم من مكافحة أي نوازع سلبيّة مرتبطة بالحقد، أوالشر، أوالتلاعب، أوالجشع، أوالقسوة أو أي مظاهر أخرى لانعدام الإنسانية. إن كافّة المجموعات القائمة على الإيمان والمعتقد تحتاج إلى قيادة حازمة تمهّد هذا الطريق بشكل لا لبس فيه من خلال العمل لضمان الكرامة المتساوية بين الجميع، مدفوعين بإنسانيتنا واحترامنا المشتركين للحرية المطلقة للعقيدة التي يتمتّع بها كل كائن بشري. ونتعهّد ببذل قصارى جهدنا من أجل ملء فراغ القيادة المشتركة لجماعة المؤمنين بالحقوق من خلال حماية الحرية والتنوّع عبر نشاطات "الإيمان من أجل الحقوق".

- "ونفس وما سوّاها فألهمها فُجُورهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا، قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَن زَكَّاهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ مَن دَسَّاهَا" (القرآن، الشمس: 7 – 9).

7. إن إعلان التعهدات الثمانية عشر حول "الإيمان من أجل الحقوق" موجّه **إلى أتباع الديانات والمعتقدات في مختلف بقاع العالم**، بهدف تعزيز المجتمعات المتماسكة والسلميّة والتي تحترم الاختلاف. ويمثل هذا الاعلان أرضية مشتركة قائمة على الفعل الإيجابي، ومحل توافق بين كل الأطراف المعنية وتظل مفتوحة لجميع الجهات التي تستهدف نفس غايات هذا الاعلان. ونحن نقدّر أن إعلان "الإيمان من أجل الحقوق"، مثل "برنامج عمل الرباط" بشأن حظر التحريض على التمييز أو العداء أو العنف (أكتوبر 2012)، قد صُمّما ونُفّذا برعاية ودعم من الأمم المتحدة التي تمثّل جميع شعوب العالم، وتم إثراءهما من قبل آليات حقوق الإنسان المعتمدة في الأمم المتحدة على غرار المقررين الخاصين وأعضاء هيئات المعاهدات.

8. لقد سعت العديد من المبادرات التي لقيت ترحيبًا على مر الزمن إلى ربط الإيمان بالحقوق بما يعود بالفائدة على الطرفين، ولكنها لم تحقق أهدافها المرجوة بالكامل. وبالتالي ازدادت قناعتنا بأنّه **يجب تمكين الأطراف الفاعلين الدينيين**، سواء على المستوى الوطني أو الدولي، ليتحمّلوا مسؤوليّاتهم في الدفاع عن إنسانيتنا المشتركة ضد التحريض على الكراهية وضد من يتاجرون بالخوف والمنتفعين من بث بذور الفرقة في المجتمعات، فضلاً عن المتلاعبين الذين يمارسون الترهيب على حساب كرامة الإنسان المتساوية وغير القابلة للتصرّف. وبموجب إعلان "الإيمان من أجل الحقوق" هذا، نهدف إلى التكاتف والعمل يداً واحدة وقلبًا واحداً للاستفادة من المحاولات السابقة لتقريب الإيمان والحقوق من خلال **وضع أسس مشتركة** بين جميع البشر **وتحديد سبل يمكن من خلالها للإيمان الدفاع عن الحقوق** بشكل أكثر فعاليّة، بما يجعلهما يُعزّزان بعضهما البعض.

- "إِنَّ الإِنسَانَ لَفِي خسْرٍ. إِلاَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ". (القرآن، العصر، آية 3).

9. واستناداً إلى الإعلان الراهن، فاننا نعتزم أيضًا **تطبيق ما ندعو إليه** من خلال تأسيس تحالف متعدّد المستويات، مُنفتح على جميع الأطراف الدينيين المستقلّين والمنظّمات القائمة على الإيمان الذين يظهرون بصدق قبولهم بإعلان "الإيمان من أجل الحقوق" والتزامهم به من خلال تنفيذ

مشاريع على الأرض في مجالات تُساهم في تحقيق هذه الغاية. كما أنّنا سنضع خارطة طريق للعمل الملموس في ميادين محدّدة، على أن تتم مراجعتها بانتظام من قبل تحالفنا العالمي حول "الإيمان من أجل الحقوق".

10. بغية تحقيق الهدف المذكور أعلاه، نتعهّد، كمؤمنين (سواء في ذلك العقائد التوحيدية او اللا التوحيدية او اللا دينية او غير ذلك) بالتقيّد التامّ **بخمسة مبادئ أساسية**:[3]



أ) تحويل الحوارات التقليدية ما بين الأديان إلى **مشاريع عمل ملموسة مرتبطة "بالإيمان من أجل الحقوق" وقائمة على المستوى المحلّي**. ورغم أن الحوار مهم، إلا أنّه ليس هدفًا بحدّ ذاته. فقيمة النوايا الحسنة محدودة من دون العمل المواكب لها. فالتغيير على الأرض هو الهدف، والعمل المشترك هو الوسيلة المنطقية لتحقيقه.

- "الإيمان ما وقر في القلوب وصدقه العمل" (حديث نبوي)

ب) **تجنّب الخلافات الدينية والعقائدية** داخل وبين الأديان والمذاهب من أجل العمل في مجالات تتأسس على رؤية مشتركة تجمع ولا تفرّق وتبني ولا تهدم كما هو محدّد في إعلان "الإيمان من أجل الحقوق" هذا. لم يصمّم هذا الإعلان ليكون أداة للحوار بين الأديان بل منصّة للعمل معًا من أجل الدفاع عن الكرامة المتساوية لجميع البشر. وفي حين أنّنا نحترم حرية التعبير ولا ننكر استمرارية بعض الخلافات عند مستويات مختلفة من الحوار الديني، فإنّنا نعتزم مكافحة التلاعب بالأديان لتسخيرها كأدوات في مجال السياسة والنزاعات. ونعتزم أن نكون صوتًا أمينًا مشتركًا للوحدة، والمنطق، والتعاطف، والاعتدال، والتنوير والحرص على العمل الجماعي على مستوى قواعدنا الشعبية.

ج) **الانشغال بمواطن قصورنا نحن قبل غيرنا** هو فضيلة نعتزّ بها. سنقوم جميعنا بمواجهة نقاط ضعفنا والتحدّيات التي نواجهها في مجتمعاتنا ونعمل على حلّها في المقام الأوّل. كما سنتطرّق إلى المزيد من المسائل العالمية معًا وبشكل جماعي ومنتظم بعد مداولات داخليّة شاملة تحافظ على نقطة قوتنا الأثمن ألا وهي النزاهة.

د) **التحدّث بصوت واحد**، لا سيما ضد مظاهر الكراهية التي تشمل التحريض على العنف، والتمييز أو أي انتهاك آخر للكرامة المتساوية التي يستحقها ويتمتع بها كل البشر بغض النظر عن دينهم، أو معتقداتهم، أو جنسهم، أو آرائهم السياسية أو انتمائهم القومي أو الاجتماعي أو أي وضع آخر. ولا يعتبر كافيًا شجب التحريض على الكراهية، والظلم، والتمييز على أساس الدين أو أي شكل من التعصّب الديني. فمن واجبنا تقويم خطاب الحقد من خلال التدخّل الإيجابي التصحيحي والتضامن الذي يشفي القلوب والمجتمعات على السواء. ويجب أن تتجاوز عبارات التقويم حدود الإيمان أو الاعتقاد الخاص بكل منا. وبالتالي هذه الحدود يجب ألا تترك ساحة حرة للمتلاعبين، والمعادين للأجانب، والشعبويين والمتطرفين العنيفين.

هـ) **نحن مُصمّمون على العمل بطريقة مستقلّة بالكامل**، عبر الاحتكام فقط إلى ضمائرنا خلال سعينا إلى تأسيس شراكات مع السلطات الدينيّة والعلمانية والهيئات الحكومية ذات الصلة والجهات الفاعلة من الدول ومن غير الدول حيثما تمّ تأسيس تحالفات "الإيمان من أجل الحقوق" بحرية تماشيًا مع الإعلان الراهن.

11. **إنّ أداتنا ومصدر قوّتنا الأساسيين يتمثلان في قدرتنا على النفّاذ إلى مئات الملايين من المؤمنين** بطريقة وقائية منظّمة لنقل قناعاتنا المشتركة التي يرسّخها إعلان "الإيمان من أجل الحقوق". إن التحدّث بصوت واحد دفاعًا عن الكرامة المتساوية لجميع الناس فيما يتعلّق بمسائل تطرح تحدّيات مشتركة للإنسانية يخدم بالتوازي قضيتي الإيمان والحقوق. وهو إعلان يؤكّد حق جميع البشر في التمتّع بالاحترام الكامل والمتساوي وليس فقط القبول بهم بغض النظر عما يعتقدونه أو لا يعتقدونه. ومن واجبنا التمسك بهذا الالتزام ضمن مجالات اختصاصاتنا. كما نشجّع جميع المؤمنين على

تحمّل مسؤوليّاتهم الفرديّة دفاعًا عن قيمهم التي يتمسّكون بها والمتعلّقة بالعدل والمساواة ومسؤولياتهم تجاه المحتاجين والمحرومين بغضّ النظر عن دينهم أو معتقدهم.

- "الناس صنفان إما أخ لك في الدين أو نظير لك في الخلق " (الإمام علي بن أبي طالب).
- "في رحلة الإنسان الطويلة، الإيمان هو أفضل رفيق" (بوذا).

12. نحن نسعى بشكل ملموس إلى تحقيق هذا الهدف الذي **يهمّ الافراد على المستوى الشعبي** في كافة أنحاء العالم حيثما اختار الفاعلون الدينيون تبنّي هذا الإعلان والعمل بموجبه. سندعم أعمال بعضنا البعض، بما في ذلك من خلال مسيرة "الإيمان من أجل الحقوق" السنويّة والتي تحمل معاني سامية كبيرة عبر عمل رمزي غني بالتعبير عن وحدتنا في التنوّع كل يوم 10 ديسمبر من كل سنة في كل أنحاء العالم.

13. سيمثّل إيصال الرؤية المشتركة للأطراف الدينية التي تتبنى هذا الإعلان، على أساس خطّة عمل الرباط لعام 2012 واجتماعات المتابعة اللاحقة عليه، نقطة تحوّل **لتجريد قوى الظلام من أسلحتها**. وبذلك نساهم في فض الحلقة المتشابكة بين الخوف والكراهية. وكلاهما مع الجهل يؤجج العنف بإسم الدين ويناقض بذلك أسسه الحقيقية وهي الرحمة والتعاطف. نحن نعتزم تحويل رسائل الرحمة والتعاطف إلى أفعال تضامن من خلال مشاريع اجتماعية تنموية وبيئية مشتركة على كافة المستويات المحلية والاقليمية والدولية.

14. **نحن نتبنّى بالكامل القيم المعترف بها عالميًّا** كما وردت في المواثيق العالمية لحقوق الإنسان باعتبارها المعايير الموحدة لإنسانيتنا المشتركة. ونرسّخ التزامنا بإعلان "الإيمان من أجل الحقوق" هذا بالدرجة الأولى في قناعتنا بأنّ كافة الأديان والمعتقدات تتشارك القيم الأساسية الخاصّة باحترام كرامة الإنسان والعدالة والإنصاف.كما نرسّخ التزامنا هذا بقبولنا بواقع أنّه "**لكل فرد واجبات** تجاه المجتمع حيث يمكن تطوير الشخصيّة بشكل حرّ وكامل".[4] فواجبنا تجاه مجتمع المؤمنين وغير المؤمنين هو ممارسة ما نبشّر به، والانخراط التام في حركة مجتمعاتنا والتحدّث علنًا والعمل على أرض الواقع دفاعًا عن كرامة الإنسان قبل أن تتعرّض لتهديد حقيقي بوقت طويل.

- "يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لا تَفْعَلُونَ. كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِندَ اللَّهِ أَن تَقُولُوا مَا لا تَفْعَلُونَ" (القرآن، الصف: 2-3).
- اِفْتَحْ فَمَكَ لأَجْلِ الأَخْرَسِ فِي دَعْوَى كُلِّ يَتِيمٍ. إفتح فمك، إقضِ بالعدل وحامِ عن الفقير والمسكين" (سفر الأمثال 31: 8-9).

15. إن **التعاليم الدينيّة والأطر القانونيّة الدوليّة القائمة** تؤكد وجود مسؤوليات على الأطراف الدينيّة. ولذلك فإن تمكين الأطراف الفاعلة الدينية يتطلّب خطوات ميدانية في مجالات متعدّدة على غرار التشريع، والإصلاحات المؤسسية، والسياسات العامّة الداعمة والتدريب الذي يُراعي حاجات الأطراف الفاعلة الدينية على المستوى المحلّي التي غالبًا ما تكون هي أحد المصادر الرئيسية للتعليم والتغيير الاجتماعي في مجالات عملها. ولقد حدّدت المواثيق والاتفاقيات الدولية مفاهيم قانونية رئيسية مثل الإبادة الجماعيّة، اللاجئين، التمييز الديني وحريّة الدين أو المعتقد[5]. ولكل هذه المفاهيم صدى مماثل في مختلف الأديان والمعتقدات. وفضلاً عن ذلك، فان العديد من الإعلانات والقرارات[6] الدولية توفر عناصر أدوار ومسؤوليات الأطراف الفاعلة الدينية التي نعتمدها ونكرّسها في إعلان "الإيمان من أجل الحقوق" هذا.

16. نتيجة لذلك، نشهد بأنّنا **مسؤولون تجاه الناس جميعا** عن تصحيح الطريقة التي تصوّر الأديان والتي غالبًا ما يتمّ التلاعب بها. نحن مسؤولون عن أعمالنا ومسؤولون أكثر إذا لم نتصرّف أو لم نتّخذ خطوات صحيحة وتصحيحية في الوقت المناسب.

- " وَقِفُوهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ مَسْؤولُونَ" (القرآن، الصافات: 24)
- " فَعَمَلُ كُلِّ وَاحِدٍ سَيَصِيرُ ظَاهِرًا" (الإنجيل، الرسالة الأولى إلى أهل كورنثوس ، الإصحاح 3:13)

17. في حين تتحمّل الدول المسؤولية الأساسية المتمثّلة في دعم وحماية كل الحقوق لكل الناس على الصعيد الفردي والجماعي، من أجل الاستمتاع بحياة كريمة لا خوف فيها ولا عوز، والتمتع بحرية الاختيار في جميع مجالات حياتهم، فانه يقع على عاتقنا نحن كأطراف دينية فاعلة أو كمؤمنين أفراد مسؤولية **حماية إنسانيتنا المشتركة والكرامة المتساوية لكل إنسان** في كافة الظروف ضمن مجالاتنا الخاصّة بالدعوة، والتعليم، والإرشاد الروحي، والمشاركة الاجتماعية.

- "من رأى منكم منكراً فليغيره بيده، فإن لم يستطع فبلسانه، فإن لم يستطع فبقلبه، وذلك أضعف الإيمان" (حديث).

18. إن **المجتمعات الدينية وقادتها وأتباعها** يضطلعون بأدوار هامة وتقع على عاتقهم مسؤوليات مستقلّة عن السلطات العمومية بموجب مرجعيات قانونية وطنيّة ودولية على السواء. فالمادة 2 (1) من إعلان الأمم المتحدة لعام 1981 بشأن القضاء على جميع أشكال التعصّب والتمييز القائمين على أساس الدين أو المعتقد تنص على وجود أن "لا يتعرّض أحد للتمييز من قبل أية دولة أو مؤسسة أو مجموعة أشخاص أو شخص على أساس الدين أو المعتقد". وتحدّد أحكام هذه المادة المسؤوليات المباشرة للمؤسّسات والقادة الدينيين وحتّى كل فرد ضمن المجتمعات الدينية أو العقائدية.

19. بقدر ما يوفّر مفهوم السيطرة الفعّالة[7] أساس مسؤوليات الأطراف غير الحكومية في أوقات النزاع، فإنّنا نرى مبرّراً قانونيا وأخلاقيا مناظراً في حالة القادة الدينيين الذين يمارسون **درجة مرتفعة من النفوذ على قلوب وأذهان أتباعهم** في كافة الأوقات.

20. إن الكلمة الطيبة بكافة أشكالها ووسائطها هي أداة أساسية من أجل الانفتاح والنماء الفردي والجماعي. فالخطاب يشكّل أحد أكثر **الأدوات** أهمية **للجانبيْن الخيّر والشرير للإنسان**. تبدأ الحرب في الأذهان وتطوّرها أفكار غالبًا ما تؤججها الدعوة إلى الكراهية. كما أن الخطاب الإيجابي يشكّل أداة شفاء ومصالحة وبناء للسلام في القلوب والأذهان. إن الخطاب هو أحد أكثر المجالات إستراتيجيةً على صعيد المسؤولية التي نلتزم بتحمّلها وندعم بعضنا البعض من أجل تطبيقها من خلال إعلان "الإيمان من أجل الحقوق" هذا انطلاقا من المسؤوليات التي حدّدتها خطّة عمل الرباط لعام 2012.

21. بموجب العهد الدولي الخاص بالحقوق المدنيّة والسياسيّة (المادة 20، الفقرة 2)، يتوجّب على الدول حظر أي دعوة إلى الكراهية القوميّة أو العنصريّة أو الدينيّة التي تشكّل تحريضًا على التمييز أو العداوة أو العنف. ويشمل ذلك **التحريض على الكراهية من قبل بعض القادة الدينيين بإسم الدين**. وبسبب موقف المتحدّث، وسياق الخطب ومحتواها ونطاقها، فقد ترتقي هذه البيانات التي يطلقها القادة الدينيون إلى مرتبة التحريض على الكراهية، غير أنّ حظر مثل هذا التحريض ليس كافيًا. فالدعوة التصحيحية إلى المصالحة هي واجب أيضًا، كذلك بالنسبة إلى القادة الدينيين، لا سيما حين تتمّ الدعوة إلى الكراهية بإسم الأديان أو المعتقدات.

22. إن التوجيه الأوضح والأحدث في هذا المجال وفّرته خطة عمل الرباط[8] لعام 2012 والتي حدّدت **ثلاث مسؤوليّات أساسية للقادة الدينيين**: (أ) على القادة الدينيين الامتناع عن استخدام وسائل التعصب والتعبيرات التي قد تحرّض على العنف أو العداوة أو التمييز؛ (ب) للقادة الدينيين أيضًا دور مهم يضطلعون به في التحدّث بشكل حازم وصريح ضد التعصب والقوالب النمطيّة التمييزية وحالات خطاب الكراهية؛ و(ج) على القادة الدينيين أن يكونوا واضحين في تأكيد إنه لا يمكن أبداً السماح بالعنف كردّ فعل على التحريض على الكراهيّة (أي لا يمكن تبرير العنف بالاستفزاز المسبق).



[1] عرضت جميع الاقتباسات من النصوص الدينية أو المعتقدية من قبل المشاركين في ورشة العمل بيروت فيما يتعلق بدينهم أو معتقدهم ولايقصد بها سوى أن تكون توضيحية وغير حصرية

[2] نظمت المفوضية السامية للأمم المتحدة لحقوق الإنسان اجتماعات دولية مرتبطة بمكافحة خطاب الكراهية عبر منتديات للخبراء وورش عمل إقليمية بما في ذلك جنيف (أكتوبر 2008)، فيينا (فبراير 2011)، نيروبي (أبريل 2011)، بانكوك (يوليو 2011). سانتياغو (أكتوبر 2011). وهو ما أسفر عن "برنامج عمل الرباط" حول مكافحة خطاب الكراهية في الرباط (أكتوبر 2012).وأعقب ذلك اجتماعات لمتابعة هذا البرنامج في جنيف (فبراير 2013)، عمّان (نوفمبر 2013)، المنامة (2014)، تونس (أكتوبر 2014 وأبريل 2015)، نيقوسيا (أكتوبر 2015)، بيروت (ديسمبر 2015) وعمّان (يناير 2017).

[3] انظر لجنة حقوق الإنسان في الأمم المتحدة، التعليق العام رقم 22 (1993)، مستند الأمم المتحدة رقم: CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/ ملحق 4، الفقرة 2.

[4] المادة 29، الفقرة 1 من الإعلان العالمي لحقوق الإنسان.

[5] اتفاقية منع جريمة الإبادة الجماعية والمعاقبة عليها (1948)؛ الاتفاقية الخاصة بوضع اللاجئين (1951)؛ العهد الدولي الخاص بالحقوق المدنية والسياسية (1966)؛ العهد الدولي الخاص بالحقوق الاقتصادية والاجتماعية والثقافية (1966)؛ اتفاقية حقوق الطفل (1989)؛ الاتفاقية الدولية لحماية حقوق جميع العمال المهاجرين وأفراد أسرهم (1990).

[6] تتضمن الإعلان العالمي لحقوق الإنسان (1948)؛ إعلان بشأن القضاء على جميع أشكال التعصب والتمييز القائمين على أساس الدين أو المعتقد (1981)؛ إعلان بشأن حقوق الأشخاص المنتمين إلى أقليات قومية أو إثنية وإلى أقليات دينية ولغوية (1992)؛ مبادئ السلوك لحركة الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر الدولية والمنظمات غير الحكومية في برامج الاستجابة في حالات الكوارث (1994)؛ إعلان اليونسكو حول المبادئ المتعلقة بالتسامح (1995)؛المستند الأخير للمؤتمر الاستشاري الدولي المعني بالتعليم المدرسي وصلته بحرية الدين أو العقيدة والتسامح وعدم التمييز (2001)؛ إعلان الأمم المتحدة بشأن حقوق الشعوب الأصلية (2007)؛ إعلان لاهاي بشأن "الإيمان بحقوق الإنسان" (2008)؛ مبادئ كامدن حول حرية التعبير والمساواة (2009)؛ قرار مجلس حقوق الإنسان 18/16 حول مكافحة التعصب والقولبة النمطية السلبية والوصم والتمييز والتحريض على العنف وممارسته ضد أشخاص بسبب الدين أو المعتقد (عملية اسطنبول 1990)؛ خطة عمل الرباط بشأن حظر الدعوة إلى ***الكراهية*** القومية أو العنصرية أو ***الدينية*** التي تشكل تحريضاً على التمييز أو العداء أو العنف (2012)؛ إعلان فيينا "معاً ضد العنف باسم الدين" (2014)؛ الإطار التحليلي الخاص بالجرائم الوحشية (2014)؛ خطة عمل الأمين العام لمنع التطرف العنيف (2015)؛ إلى جانب إعلان فاس لمنع التحريض على العنف الذي قد يؤدي إلى جرائم وحشية (2015).

[7] في ظل ظروف معينة، لا سيما عندما يمارس الفاعلون من غير الدول سلطة كبيرة/ فعالة على الأرض والسكان (كسلطات الأمر الواقع)، يلتزمون أيضاً باحترام حقوق الإنسان الدولية كالمكلفين بالمسؤوليات (راجع اتفاقية القضاء على جميع أشكال التمييز ضد المرأة C/GC/30/، الفقرة 16؛ A/اللجنة المعنية بحقوق الإنسان/66/28، فقرة 55-54).

[8] راجع مستند الأمم المتحدة A /اللجنة المعنية بحقوق الإنسان/17/22/ ملحق 4، الملحقات، الفقرة 36.

The 18 commitments on “Faith for Rights”

التعهدات الثمانية عشر حول"الإيمان من أجل الحقوق"

1 Conscience

2 Interaction

3 Interpretation

4 Secularism

5 Gender

6 Minorities

7 Hatred

8 Monitoring

18 Tools

We commit...

عهدنا ...

Faith for Rights

الإيمان من أجل الحقوق

9 Disqualification

17 Research

16 Spirituality

15 Non-coercion

14 Neutrality

13 Youth

12 Education

11 Criticism

10 Instrumentalization

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." (Qur'an 2:256);*
- *"The Truth is from your Lord; so let he or she who please believe and let he or she who please disbelieve" (Qur'an 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." (Qur'an 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.

The 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights": www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/FreedomReligion/Pages/FaithForRights.aspx

1 ...to stand up and act for everyone's right to **free choices**, particularly for everyone's freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief	2 ...to use the declaration on "Faith for Rights" as a **common minimum standard** of interaction between theistic, non-theistic, atheistic or other believers	3 ...to promote constructive engagement on the **understanding of religious texts** through critical thinking and debate on religious matters	4 ...to prevent the notions of "**State religion**" and "**doctrinal secularism**" from being used to discriminate or reduce the space for diversity of religions and beliefs	5 ...to ensure non-discrimination and **gender equality**, particularly regarding harmful stereotypes and practices or gender-based violence	6 ...to stand up for the rights of all persons belonging to **minorities** and to defend their freedom of religion or belief, particularly in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life	7 ...to publicly denounce all instances of advocacy of **hatred that incites** to violence, discrimination or hostility in the name of religion or belief	8 ...to monitor our own interpretations, determinations or other **religious views that manifestly conflict** with universal human rights norms and standards
18 ...to use technological means more creatively and consistently in order to **produce capacity-building and outreach tools** and make them available for use at the local level	**We commit...** **Faith *for* Rights**						9 ...to condemn any **judgemental public determination** by any actor who in the name of religion disqualifies the religion or belief of another individual or community
17 ...to develop sustained partnerships with specialised **academic institutions** to promote interdisciplinary research, programs and tools on the implementation of the 18 commitments	16 ...to leverage the **spiritual and moral weight** of religions and beliefs in order to strengthen the protection of universal human rights and develop preventative strategies	15 ...not to coerce people 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	14 ...to ensure that **humanitarian aid** is given regardless of the recipients' creed and that aid will not be used to further a particular religious standpoint	13 ...to engage with **children and youth**, who are either victims of or vulnerable to incitement to violence in the name of religion	12 ...to **review the curriculums** and teaching materials wherever some religious interpretations seem to encourage or tolerate violence or discrimination	11 ...not to oppress **critical voices** on religious matters in the name of "sanctity", and to advocate for repealing any anti-blasphemy and anti-apostasy laws	10 ...not to tolerate **exclusionary interpretations** on religious grounds which instrumentalize religions, beliefs or their followers for electoral purposes or political gains

French version

Les 18 engagements concernant « La foi pour les droits »

Nous, acteurs de la société civile et organisations concernés par la foi et engagés dans le domaine des droits de l'homme, réunis à Beyrouth les 28 et 29 mars 2017, exprimons la profonde conviction que nos religions et croyances respectives partagent un engagement commun destiné à **promouvoir la dignité et l'égalité de tous les êtres humains.** Les valeurs d'humanité et d'égalité en dignité que nous partageons sont par conséquent les racines communes de nos cultures. La foi et les droits doivent être des domaines qui se renforcent mutuellement. Les expressions individuelles et communes des religions ou croyances prospèrent et fleurissent dans des environnements où les droits de l'homme, basés sur l'égalité entre tous les individus, sont protégés. De la même manière, les droits de l'homme peuvent bénéficier de fondements éthiques et spirituels profondément enracinés dans les religions et croyances.

La **présente déclaration relative à «La foi pour les droits» s'adresse à toutes les personnes appartenant à toutes les religions et croyances de toutes les régions** du monde, avec pour objectif de favoriser des sociétés inclusives, pacifiques et respectueuses sur la base d'une plateforme commune orientée vers des actions acceptées par tous les acteurs qui partagent ses objectifs. Nous valorisons le fait que notre déclaration relative à « La foi pour les droits », tout comme son acte fondateur, le Plan d'action de Rabat de 2012, ont été conçus et menés sous les auspices et avec le soutien des Nations Unies, qui englobent tous les peuples du monde et enrichis par les mécanismes de l'ONU relatifs aux droits de l'homme, notamment des rapporteurs spéciaux et des membres des organes de traités des droits de l'homme.

Le **Plan d'action de Rabat**[1] de 2012 définit trois responsabilités clés spécifiques des dirigeants religieux : (a) les dirigeants religieux doivent s'abstenir d'utiliser des messages d'intolérance ou des expressions susceptibles d'inciter à la violence, à l'hostilité ou à la discrimination ; (b) les dirigeants religieux jouent également un rôle crucial dans l'expression prompte et ferme contre l'intolérance, les stéréotypes discriminatoires et les discours haineux ; et (c) les dirigeants religieux doivent clairement affirmer que la violence ne peut jamais être tolérée comme une réponse à l'incitation à la haine. La violence ne peut pas être justifiée par une provocation préalable.

Afin de concrétiser de façon tangible les trois responsabilités clés mentionnées ci-dessus et définies par le Plan d'action de Rabat que les États ont évoqué à plusieurs reprises de manière positive, nous formulons la charte suivante de **18 engagements relatifs à «La foi pour les droits»**[2], ainsi que les actions de suivi correspondantes :

I. Notre responsabilité la plus fondamentale consiste **à agir pour protéger le droit de chacun à choisir librement**, notamment la liberté de pensée, de conscience, de religion ou de croyance. Nous affirmons notre engagement en faveur des normes[3] et des standards[4] universels, y compris, l'Article 18 du Pacte international relatif aux droits civils et politiques, qui ne permet aucune dérogation à la liberté de pensée, de conscience ou à la liberté d'avoir ou d'adopter une religion ou une croyance de son choix. Ces libertés, protégées inconditionnellement par des normes universelles, sont également des droits sacrés et inaliénables selon les enseignements religieux.

   - *« Point de contrainte en religion. » (Coran 2:256)*
   - *« La vérité vient de votre seigneur ; ainsi toute personne choisit de croire ou de ne pas croire. » (Coran 18:29)*
   - *« Et s'il est mauvais à vos yeux de servir l'Eternel, choisissez aujourd'hui qui vous servirez…» (Josué 24,15)*
   - *« Personne ne doit contraindre un autre ; personne ne doit exploiter un autre. Chacun, chaque individu a le droit inaliénable de chercher et de poursuivre le bonheur et l'épanouissement personnel. L'amour et la persuasion sont les seules lois de cohérence sociale. » (Guru Granth Sahib, p. 74)*
   - *« Si la liberté de conscience, la liberté de penser et le droit de parler sont dominants, il faut dire que chaque personne selon sa propre idéalisation peut exprimer ses croyances. Le développement et la croissance sont inévitables. » ('Abdu'l-Bahá)*
   - *« Les gens devraient chercher à se traiter comme ils voudraient être traités eux-mêmes - avec tolérance, considération et compassion. » (Règle d'or)*[5]

II. Nous considérons la présente déclaration relative à « La foi pour les droits » **comme un standard commun minimum pour les croyants (qu'ils soient théistes, non-théistes, athées ou autres)**, motivé par notre conviction que les interprétations des religions ou des croyances devraient renforcer la protection de la dignité humaine déjà prévue dans les lois faites par les hommes.

III. Comme les religions sont nécessairement sujettes aux interprétations humaines, nous nous engageons à **promouvoir un engagement constructif dans la compréhension des textes religieux**. Par conséquent, la réflexion critique et le débat sur les questions religieuses ne devraient pas seulement être tolérés, mais doivent même être encouragés comme une exigence pour toute interprétation religieuse éclairée dans un monde global, composé de sociétés de plus en plus multiculturelles et multi-religieuses qui sont confrontées à des défis en constante évolution.

IV. Nous promettons de soutenir **et de promouvoir un traitement égal** dans tous les domaines et manifestations de religion ou croyance et de dénoncer toutes les formes de pratiques discriminatoires. Nous nous engageons à **éviter l'utilisation de la notion de « religion d'État » qui pourrait favoriser une discrimination entre les individus ou les groupes** et nous considérons toute interprétation de « religion d'État » comme contraire à l'unité de l'humanité et à l'égale dignité entre tous les individus. De manière similaire, nous nous engageons à éviter qu'un « sécularisme doctrinal » réduise dans la pratique l'espace pour le pluralisme des religions ou des croyances.

- *« Alors Pierre, ouvrant la bouche, dit : En vérité je reconnais que Dieu ne fait point de favoritisme.» (Actes 10:34)*

V. Nous promettons de **garantir la non-discrimination et l'égalité des sexes** lors de la mise en œuvre de cette déclaration relative à « La foi pour les droits ». Nous nous engageons notamment à revisiter, dans le cadre de nos domaines respectifs de compétence, ces compréhensions et interprétations religieuses qui semblent perpétuer des inégalités entre hommes et femmes et des stéréotypes malveillants ou qui justifieraient même une violence fondée sur le sexe. Nous promettons de garantir la justice et l'égalité de tous et affirmons également le droit de toutes les femmes, filles et garçons, de n'être soumis à aucune forme de discrimination et de violence, y compris les pratiques néfastes, comme la mutilation génitale féminine, les mariages forcés et mariages d'enfants et les crimes commis au nom dudit honneur.

- *« Un homme doit respecter sa femme autant qu'il se respecte lui-même et l'aimer autant qu'il s'aime lui-même.» (Talmud, Yebamot, 62,b)*
- *« Je ne laisse pas perdre le bien que quiconque parmi vous a fait, homme ou femme, car vous êtes faits les uns des autres.» (Coran 3 : 195)*
- *« Ô hommes, nous vous avons été créés d'un mâle et d'une femelle, et nous avons fait de vous des peuples et des tribus, pour que vous vous connaissiez.» (Coran 49 :13)*
- *« Dieu créa l'homme à son image, il le créa à l'image de Dieu, il créa l'homme et la femme.» (Genèse 1 : 27)*
- *« Le meilleur de vous est celui qui est bon envers sa femme.» (Hadith)*
- *"C'est la femme qui est l'amie et la partenaire de vie. C'est la femme qui permet la perpétuation de l'espèce. Comment pouvons-nous la dénigrer, elle qui a mis au monde les plus grands. D'une femme une femme est née : rien ne peut exister sans une femme. » (Guru Granth Sahib, p. 473)*
- *« Le monde de l'humanité possède deux ailes - le mâle et la femelle. Aussi longtemps que ces deux ailes ne sont pas fortes de manière équivalente, l'oiseau ne peut voler. Tant que la femme n'atteindra pas le même degré que l'homme, qu'elle ne disposera pas de la même arène d'activité, aucune réalisation extraordinaire pour l'humanité ne sera réalisée. » ('Abdu'l-Bahá)*
- *« Pour être efficace, toute approche globale de renforcement des capacités devrait cibler les dirigeants influents, notamment les chefs traditionnels et religieux […] » Recommandation générale/Observation générale conjointe No 31 du Comité pour l'élimination de la discrimination à l'égard des femmes et No 18 du Comité des droits de l'enfant sur les pratiques préjudiciables, CEDAW/C/GC/31-CRC/C/GC/18, para. 70).*

VI. Nous promettons de protéger **les droits de toutes les personnes appartenant à des minorités** dans le cadre de nos domaines respectifs d'action, et de défendre leur liberté de religion ou de croyance ainsi que leur droit à participer également et effectivement à la vie culturelle, religieuse, sociale, économique et publique, conformément au droit international des droits de l'homme, comme un standard minimum de solidarité parmi tous les croyants.

VII. Nous promettons de **dénoncer publiquement toutes les instances d'incitation à la haine qui attisent la violence, la discrimination ou l'hostilité**, y compris celles qui conduisent à des crimes atroces. Nous portons une responsabilité directe dans la dénonciation d'une telle incitation, particulièrement si elle est menée au nom d'une religion ou d'une croyance.

- *« Maintenant, tel est le commandement : traite les autres comme tu voudrais être traité. » (Empire du Milieu Ancienne Egypte)*
- *« Réparer l'offense avec justice et la bonté avec bonté. » (Confucius)*
- *"Les mots prononcés devraient être utilisés avec soin car les gens les entendront et pourront être influencés par eux en bien ou en mal. » (Bouddha)*
- *« Grâce à la maitrise de soi et au dharma (bonne conduite) qui devrait être ton principal objectif, traite les autres comme tu te traites toi-même. » (Mahabharata)*
- *« Tu ne te vengeras pas et tu ne garderas point de rancune contre les enfants de ton peuple. Tu aimeras ton prochain comme toi-même. » (Lévitique 19 :18)*
- *"Tout ce que vous voulez que les hommes fassent pour vous, faites-le de même pour eux, car c'est la loi et les prophètes." (Matthieu 7 :12)*
- *« N'attribuez pas à n'importe quelle âme ce que vous ne voudriez pas vous voir attribuer et ne dites pas ce que vous ne faites pas. » (Bahá'u'lláh)*

VIII. Par conséquent, nous promettons d'établir, chacun dans le cadre de nos sphères respectives, des politiques et méthodologies permettant le **suivi des interprétations, déclarations ou autres opinions religieuses qui sont manifestement en conflit avec les normes et standards universels des droits de l'homme**, qu'elles soient prononcées par des institutions officielles ou par des individus auto-désignés. Nous souhaitons assumer cette responsabilité d'une manière objective et disciplinée, uniquement dans le cadre de nos domaines respectifs de compétence et de manière introspective, sans juger la foi ou les croyances d'autrui.

- *« Ne jugez point, ou vous serez vous-même jugés. Car comme vous jugez autrui, vous serez jugés et la même mesure que vous utilisez sera utilisée pour vous. » (Bible, Matthieu 7 :1-2)*
- *« Habituez votre cœur à la miséricorde pour les autres et à l'affection et la bonté pour eux… étant qu'ils sont de deux natures, soit votre frère en religion ou une personne comme vous dans la création… Par conséquent, accordez-leur votre indulgence et votre pardon de la même manière que vous aimeriez qu'Allah vous accorde son indulgence et son pardon. » (Lettre de Caliph Ali à Malik Ashtar, Gouverneur de l'Egypte)*
- *« L'objectif essentiel de la religion de Dieu est d'établir une unité parmi l'humanité. Les manifestations divines étaient les fondateurs de l'amitié et de l'amour. Elles ne sont pas intervenues pour créer la discorde, le conflit et la haine dans le monde. La religion de Dieu est la cause de l'amour, mais si elle devient la source de l'hostilité et de l'effusion de sang, son absence est sûrement préférable à son existence ; car elle devient satanique, nuisible et un obstacle au monde humain. » ('Abdu'l-Bahá)*

IX. Nous promettons également de nous abstenir, de lutter contre et de **condamner conjointement toute déclaration publique de tout acteur qui, au nom de la religion, vise à disqualifier la religion ou la croyance d'un autre individu** ou d'une autre communauté, d'une manière qui pourrait les exposer à la violence au nom de la religion ou à une privation de leurs droits.

X. Nous promettons **de n'accorder aucun crédit aux messages d'exclusion qui seraient basés sur des motifs religieux** d'une manière qui instrumentaliserait les religions, croyances ou leurs partisans et pourrait inciter à la haine et à la violence, par exemple à des fins électorales ou gains politiques.

XI. Nous nous engageons également **à ne pas opprimer les voix et opinions dissidentes** sur les questions de religions et de croyances, qu'elles soient perçues comme fausses ou offensantes, au nom du caractère « sacré » du thème et nous encourageons les États qui ont encore des lois contre le blasphème ou l'apostasie à les abroger, étant donné que ces lois ont une influence négative sur la liberté de pensée, de conscience, de religion ou de croyance ainsi que sur tout dialogue ou débat sain sur les questions religieuses.

XII. Par ailleurs, nous nous engageons à **revoir les curriculums, matériels pédagogiques et manuels** lorsque certaines interprétations religieuses ou la manière dont elles sont présentées peuvent donner à penser qu'elles incitent à la violence ou la discrimination. Nous promettons également de

promouvoir le respect du pluralisme, de la diversité dans le domaine religieux ainsi que le droit de ne pas recevoir d'instruction religieuse incompatible avec les croyances personnelles. De plus, nous nous engageons **à défendre la liberté académique et la liberté d'expression**, conformément à l'Article 19 du Pacte international relatif aux droits civils et politiques, et ce dans le cadre du discours religieux afin de promouvoir le fait que la pensée religieuse est capable de se confronter à de nouveaux défis, ainsi que de faciliter la pensée libre et créative. Nous nous engageons à soutenir les efforts en matière de réforme religieuse dans les domaines éducatifs et institutionnels.

- *« Le seul principe de base possible pour une morale solide est la tolérance et le respect mutuels.» (A. J. Ayer)*

XIII. Nous promettons de mettre à profit les expériences et leçons apprises de **l'engagement avec les enfants et les jeunes** victimes ou vulnérables à la violence au nom de la religion, afin de définir les méthodologies, outils et récits adaptés permettant aux communautés religieuses de traiter ce phénomène de manière efficace, avec une attention particulière accordée au rôle important des parents et familles dans la détection et prise en charge précoce des signes de vulnérabilité des enfants et des jeunes à la violence au nom de la religion.

- *« Ne laisse personne te mépriser à cause de ta jeunesse ; mais sois un modèle pour les fidèles, en parole, en conduite, en charité, en foi, en pureté. » (1 Timothée 4 :12)*

XIV. Nous promettons de promouvoir, dans le cadre de nos sphères respectives d'influence, la nécessité impérative de garantir **le respect dans toutes les activités d'assistance humanitaire** *des Principes de conduite pour le mouvement international de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge et des ONG dans les programmes d'intervention en cas de catastrophes*[6], en particulier que l'aide soit accordée indépendamment de la croyance des bénéficiaires, sans distinction défavorable d'aucune sorte et que l'aide ne soit pas utilisée pour promouvoir un point de vue religieux particulier.

XV. Nous promettons **de ne forcer personne ou d'exploiter des personnes dans des situations vulnérables** à se convertir à une autre religion ou croyance, tout en respectant complètement la liberté de chacun à pratiquer, adopter ou changer de religion ou de croyance et le droit de l'exprimer par l'enseignement, la pratique, le culte et le respect, que ce soit en tant qu'individu ou en communauté avec d'autres, en public ou en privé.

XVI. Nous nous engageons à **optimiser le poids spirituel et moral des religions et croyances** dans l'objectif de renforcer la protection de droits universels de l'homme et de développer des stratégies préventives que nous adapterons aux contextes locaux, tout en bénéficiant du soutien potentiel des entités compétentes des Nations Unies.

- *« Tu aimeras ton prochain comme toi-même. Il n'y a pas d'autre commandement plus grand que celui-là. » (Marc 12 : 31)*
- *« Mais aimez vos ennemis, faites du bien, et prêtez sans rien espérer. Et votre récompense sera grande. » (Luc 6 : 35)*
- *"L'être conscient de Dieu est toujours pur, comme le soleil qui donne confort et chaleur à tous. L'être conscient de Dieu veille sur tous avec la même attention, comme le vent qui souffle d'une façon égale sur le roi et le pauvre mendiant. » (Guru Granth Sahib p. 272)*
- *« La religion de Dieu et sa loi divine sont les instruments les plus puissants et les plus sûrs de tous les moyens pour éclairer l'unité entre les hommes. Le progrès du monde, le développement des nations, la tranquillité des peuples et la paix de tous ceux qui résident sur terre sont parmi les principes et ordonnances de Dieu. » (Bahá'u'lláh)*

XVII. Nous nous engageons à nous soutenir mutuellement au niveau de la mise en œuvre de cette déclaration par un **échange de pratiques**, un renforcement mutuel des capacités et des activités régulières d'actualisation des compétences pour les prédicateurs spirituels et religieux, les enseignants et instructeurs, notamment dans les domaines de la communication, les minorités religieuses ou de croyances, la médiation intercommunautaire, la résolution des conflits, la détection précoce des tensions communautaires et les mesures correctives. A cette fin, nous nous engageons à

explorer les moyens de développer des **partenariats durables avec des institutions académiques spécialisées,** afin de promouvoir la recherche interdisciplinaire sur des questions spécifiques liées à la foi et aux droits et à bénéficier de leurs résultats qui pourraient être intégrés dans des programmes et outils de notre coalition « La foi pour les droits ».

XVIII. Nous nous engageons à utiliser **les moyens technologiques de manière plus créative et constante** afin de diffuser cette déclaration et les messages suivants sur la foi pour les droits pour permettre la cohésion sociale enrichie par la diversité, y compris dans les domaines de la religion et de la croyance. Nous souhaitons également considérer les moyens permettant de stimuler le renforcement des capacités et de diffuser les outils en les proposant en différentes langues pour une utilisation au niveau local.

Notes

[1] Voir Document des Nations Unies : A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, annexe, appendice, paragraphe 36.

[2] Voir Article 18 du Pacte international relatif aux droits civils et politiques : « (1) Toute personne a droit à la liberté de pensée, de conscience et de religion ; ce droit implique la liberté d'avoir ou d'adopter une religion ou une conviction de son choix, ainsi que la liberté de manifester sa religion ou sa conviction, individuellement ou en commun, tant en public qu'en privé, par le culte et l'accomplissement des rites, les pratiques et l'enseignement. (2) Nul ne subira de contrainte pouvant porter atteinte à sa liberté d'avoir ou d'adopter une religion ou une conviction de son choix. (3) La liberté de manifester sa religion ou ses convictions ne peut faire l'objet que des seules restrictions prévues par la loi et qui sont nécessaires à la protection de la sécurité, de l'ordre et de la santé publique, ou de la morale ou des libertés et droits fondamentaux d'autrui. (4) Les Etats parties au présent Pacte s'engagent à respecter la liberté des parents et, le cas échéant, des tuteurs légaux de faire assurer l'éducation religieuse et morale de leurs enfants conformément à leurs propres convictions. »

[3] Ceux-ci incluent la Convention pour la prévention et la répression du crime de génocide (1948) ; la Convention de Genève relative au statut des réfugiés (1951) ; la Convention internationale sur l'élimination de toutes les formes de discrimination raciale (1965) ; le Pacte International relatif aux droits civils et politiques (1966) ; le Pacte international relatif aux droits économiques, sociaux et culturels (1966) ; la Convention pour l'élimination de toutes les formes de discrimination à l'égard des femmes (1979) ; la Convention contre la torture et autres peines ou traitements cruels, inhumains ou dégradants (1984) ; la Convention relative aux droits de l'enfant (1989) ; la Convention internationale sur la protection des droits de tous les travailleurs migrants et des membres de leur famille (1990) ; la Convention relative aux droits des personnes handicapées (2006); la Convention internationale pour la protection de toutes les personnes contre les disparitions forcées (2006).

[4] Ceux-ci incluent la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme (1948); la Déclaration sur l'élimination de toutes formes d'intolérance et de discrimination fondées sur la religion ou la conviction (1981) ; la Déclaration des droits des personnes appartenant à des minorités nationales ou ethniques, religieuse et linguistiques (1992) ; le Code de conduite pour le Mouvement international de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge et pour les Organisations non-gouvernementales (ONG) lors des opérations de secours en cas de catastrophe (1994) ; la Déclaration de principes sur la tolérance adoptée par la Conférence générale de l'UNESCO (1995) ; le Document final sur la Conférence internationale consultative sur l'éducation scolaire en relation avec la liberté de religion et de conviction, la tolérance et la non-discrimination (2001) ; les Principes directeurs de Tolède sur l'enseignement relatif aux religions et convictions dans les écoles publiques (2007) ; la Déclaration des Nations Unies sur les droits des peuples autochtones (2007) ; la Déclaration de La Haye sur « La Foi dans les droits humains » (2008) ; les Principes de Camden sur la liberté d'expression et l'égalité (2009) ; la Résolution 16/18 du Conseil des droits de l'homme sur la lutte contre l'intolérance, les stéréotypes négatifs, la stigmatisation, la discrimination, l'incitation à la violence et la violence visant certaines personnes en raison de leur religion ou de leurs convictions (et le Processus d'Istanbul 2011) ; le Plan d'action de Rabat sur l'interdiction de l'appel à la haine nationale, raciale ou religieuse qui constitue une incitation à la discrimination, à l'hostilité ou à la violence (2012) ; le Cadre d'analyse des atrocités criminelles (2015) ; le Plan d'action du Secrétaire Général pour la prévention de l'extrémisme violent (2015) ainsi que la Conférence sur le rôle des leaders religieux dans la prévention des crimes d'atrocité à Fez (2015).

[5] Toutes les citations provenant de textes religieux ou de croyances ont été proposées par les participants de l'atelier de Beyrouth en relation avec leurs religions ou leurs convictions et sont simplement destinées à être illustratives et non exhaustives.

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

[Ce texte a été traduit en français par Madame Sama El Roumi. Nous lui exprimons notre sincère gratitude pour son travail de qualité.]

Les 18 engagements concernant « La foi pour les droits »: www.ohchr.org/Documents/Press/21451/18CommitmentsonFaithforRights_FR.pdf

1 … d'agir pour protéger le droit de chacun à **choisir librement**, notamment la liberté de pensée, de conscience, de religion ou de croyance	2 … d'utiliser cette déclaration de «La foi pour les droits» comme un **standard commun minimum** pour l'interaction des croyants théistes, non-théistes, athées ou autres	3 … de promouvoir l'engagement constructif dans la **compréhension des textes religieux** à travers de la réflexion critique et du débat sur les questions religieuses	4 … d'éviter que les notions de «**religion d'État**» et de «**sécularisme doctrinal**» soient utilisées pour discriminer ou réduire l'espace du pluralisme religieux	5 … de garantir la non-discrimination et **l'égalité des sexes**, surtout en ce qui concerne les stéréotypes malveillants et pratiques néfastes ou la violence sexiste	6 … de protéger les droits des **minorités** et de défendre leur liberté de religion ou de croyance dans la vie culturelle, religieuse, sociale, économique et publique	7 … de dénoncer publiquement toutes les instances d'**incitation à la haine** qui attisent la violence, la discrimination ou l'hostilité au nom d'une religion ou d'une croyance	8 … d'établir le **suivi de nos propres interprétations**, déclarations ou autres opinions religieuses qui sont manifestement en conflit avec les normes et standards universels des droits de l'homme
18 … d'utiliser les moyens technologiques de manière plus créative et constante afin de renforcer les capacités et de **diffuser les outils** au niveau local	**Nous promettons…**			**Faith for Rights**			9 … de condamner les **déclarations publiques** de tout acteur qui, au nom de la religion, vise à disqualifier la religion ou la croyance d'un autre individu ou d'une autre communauté
17 … de nous associer avec des **institutions académiques** spécialisées afin de promouvoir la recherche interdisciplinaire, des programmes et des outils pour mettre en œuvre les 18 engagements	16 … d'optimiser le **poids spirituel et moral** des religions et croyances afin de renforcer la protection de droits universels de l'homme et de développer des stratégies préventives	15 … de ne forcer personne dans des situations **vulnérables** à se convertir, tout en respectant la liberté de toute personne d'avoir, d'adopter ou de changer une religion ou une conviction	14 … de garantir que **l'aide humanitaire** soit accordée indépendamment de la croyance des bénéficiaires et ne soit pas utilisée pour promouvoir un point de vue religieux particulier	13 … de mettre à profit les expériences et leçons apprises de l'engagement avec les **enfants et les jeunes** victimes ou vulnérables à la violence au nom de la religion	12 … de **revoir les curriculums** et matériels pédagogiques lorsque certaines interprétations religieuses peuvent donner à penser qu'elles incitent à la violence ou la discrimination	11 … de ne pas opprimer les **voix dissidentes** sur les questions de religions et de croyances et nous réclamons l'abrogation des lois contre le blasphème ou l'apostasie	10 … de n'accorder aucun crédit aux **messages d'exclusion** qui seraient basés sur des motifs religieux d'une manière qui instrumentaliserait les religions ou croyances à des fins électorales ou gains politiques

Arabic version

التعهدات الثماني عشر حول
"الإيمان من أجل الحقوق"

نحن، أطراف المجتمع المدني والمنظمات المعنية بشؤون الدين والمعتقد، العاملون في مجال حقوق الإنسان و المجتمعون في بيروت يومي 28-29 اذار/مارس 2017 ، نُعرب عن اقتناعنا العميق بأن كافة الأديان والمعتقدات تتقاسم التزاما بصون الكرامة الإنسانية والقيمة المتساوية لجميع البشر .وبالتالي فإن الإنسانية المشتركة والكرامة المتساوية تشكلان معًا جذور حضارتنا، كما أن الإيمان والحقوق يعزز كلاهما الآخر. فالتعبير الفردي والمجتمعي عن الأديان والمعتقدات ينمو ويزدهر في بيئات تصان فيها حقوق الإنسان انطلاقا من القيمة المتساوية لجميع البشر، وعلى نحو مماثل تعزّز حقوق الإنسان بالأسس الأخلاقية والروحية المتجذّرة في الوجدان والتي ترسخها الأديان والمعتقدات.

إنّ إعلان بيروت، "الإيمان من أجل الحقوق"، موجّه إلى جميع الناس سيما أتباع الأديان والمعتقدات في العالم بهدف تعزيز قيام مجتمعات متماسكة وسلمية والتي تحترم الإختلاف،وذلك على اساس ارضية مشتركة مفتوحة لمشاركة كل من يؤمن بها.

كما نثمّن مساندة الأمم المتحدة، التي تمثل جميع شعوب العالم، لجهودنا من أجل التوصّل إلى إعلان" الإيمان من أجل الحقوق"، والتي أثرتها آليات الأمم المتحدة لحقوق الإنسان، مثل المقررين الأمميين الخاصين وأعضاء الهيئات التعاهدية لحقوق الإنسان، على نسق ما تم مع خطة عمل الرباط لسنة 2012.

لقد حدّدت خطة عمل الرباط لسنة 2012[1] ثلاث مسؤوليات أساسية منوطة بالقيادات الدينية وهي:

أ – الامتناع عن استخدام رسائل التعصّب أو أشكال التعبير التي يمكن أن تحرّض على العنف أو العداوة أو التمييز.

ب – التحدّث علنًا وبحزم شديد ضد التعصّب والتنميط التمييزي وحالات خطاب الكراهية.

ج – عدم التسامح إزاء العنف كردة فعل على التحريض على الكراهية، بحيث لا تصبح الاستفزازات المسبقة مبرّرا للعنف المستقبلي.

ومن أجل دعم إنفاذ هذه المسؤوليات الأساسية التي وردت في خطة عمل الرباط والتي أشارت اليها الدول مرارًا بشكل ايجابي، قمنا بصياغة ثمانية عشرة تعهّدًا حول "الإيمان من أجل الحقوق[2]"، وكذلك إجراءات لمتابعة تنفيذها:

I. إن مسؤوليتنا الأساسية هي الدفاع عن حق كل فرد في حرية الاختيار، ولا سيما فيما يتعلّق بحرية الفكر، الضمير، الدين أو المعتقد .ونؤكّد في هذا الخصوص التزامنا بالمعايير[3] والمبادئ[4] العالمية ذات الصلة، بما فيها المادة 18من العهد الدولي الخاص بالحقوق المدنية والسياسية التي لا تسمح بتقييد حرية الفكر والضمير ولا تسمح بتعريض أي شخص لإكراه من شأنه أن يخل بحريته في اعتناق أي دين أو معتقد يختاره .هذه الحريات، محمية دون قيد أو شرط وفقا للمعايير الدولية كما لا يمكن المساس بها وفقًا للتعاليم الدينية أيضا.

- لا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ (قرآن، البقرة، آية 256)
- وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ فَمَن شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِن وَمَن شَاءَ فَلْيَكْفُرْ (قرآن، الكهف، آية 29)
- وإن ساء في أعينكم أن تعبدوا الرب. فاختارو لأنفسكم اليوم من تعبدون...(يشوع 24:15)
- "لا يجوز لأحد إرغام الآخرين ولا استغلالهم. وللجميع حقاً ثابتاً لا يُنتقص في السعي إلى نيل السعادة ورضا النفس. فالحب والاقناع هما القانون الأوحد لتحقيق الترابط الاجتماعي" (جورو جرانث صاحب صفحة 74).
- "عندما تسود حرية الضمير وحرية التفكيروالحق في التعبير، أي عندما يُعبر كل منا عن معتقداته وفقاً لمثله الخاصة، تصبح التنمية والنمو أمران حتميان" (أبو البهاء).
- "ينبغي للناس معاملة بعضهم البعض كما يودون أن يعاملهم الآخرين وذلك من خلال التسامح والمراعاة والعاطفة" (قاعدة ذهبية) .[5]

II. إننا ننظر إلى هذا الإعلان" الإيمان من أجل الحقوق"، باعتباره يمثّل الحد الأدنى المشترك لكل المؤمنين أيا كان شكل الإيمان سواء العقائد التوحيدية أوغير التوحيدية أو اللادينية أو غير ذلك. ونعرب عن قناعاتنا بأن تفسير النصوص الدينية والمعتقدات ينبغي أن تعزّز مستوى حماية الكرامة الإنسانية بما يفوق حتى ما أقرته القوانين الوضعية.

III. بما أنّ النصوص الدينية قابلة للتفسيرات البشرية المتعدّدة فاننا نتعهّد بتشجيع الحوار الايجابي حول التفسيرات البناءة في فهم النصوص الدينية .وعليه، فإنّ تفسير النصوص الدينية يقتضي ليس فقط التسامح ازاء التفكير النقدي في المسائل الدينية، بل أنه يوجب التشجيع على ذلك، كشرط للتوصّل إلى تفسيرات دينية مستنيرة خاصة ازاء تحديات الحضارة المعاصرة في ظل مجتمعات متعددة الثقافات والأديان تواجه تحدّيات متجددة.

IV. نتعهد بدعم ومساندة كافة جهود تحقيق المساواة في المعاملة عبر كافة مجالات ومظاهر الدين والعقيدة. وأن ندين كل أشكال الممارسات التمييزية في هذا المجال. ونتعهد بالعمل على منع استخدام مفهوم "دين الدولة" للتمييز ضد أي شخص ، ونعتبر أن أي تفسير يناقض ذلك إنما يهدر وحدة الانسانية والمساواة في الكرامة. وبالمثل، فإننا نتعهد بمناهضة استخدام "الأيديلوجية العلمانية" كوسيلة لتقليص مساحة التنوع الديني والعقائدي في واقع الممارسة.

- فبدا بطرس كلامه قائلاً: " تبين لي فعلا ان الله لايفضل احدا على احد" (سفر أعمال الرسل، 10: 34).

V. نتعهد بضمان عدم التمييز وتحقيق المساواة بين الجنسين في إطار تنفيذنا لإعلان "الإيمان من أجل الحقوق". كما نأخذ على عاتقنا بشكلٍ خاص إعادة النظر، كل في حدود ولايته، في التفسيرات والمفاهيم الدينية التي تحطّ من شأن المرأة وتكرس التمييز ضدها بل وتتغاضى عن العنف القائم على التمييز على أساس الجنس .ونتعهّد بالدفاع عن العدالة والمساواة للجميع، وتأمين الحماية للنساء والفتيات والفتيان بوجه خاص ضد أي ممارسات تمييزية وعنيفة، بما في ذلك تشويه الأعضاء التناسلية للإناث والأطفال، والزواج القسري، والجرائم التي ترتكب تحت ذريعة ما يسمى"الشرف".

- علي الرجل أن يحترم زوجته أكثر مما يحترم نفسه، وأن يحبها كما يحب نفسه (التلمود، يباموت 62، ب).
- فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّي لَا أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عَامِلٍ مِّنكُم مِّن ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنثَىٰ بعضكم من بعض(قرآن، آل عمران، آية 195).
- يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا (قرآن، الحجرات، آية 13).
- فَخَلَقَ اللهُ الإِنْسَانَ عَلَى صُورَتِهِ .عَلَى صُورَةِ اللهِ خَلَقَهُ .ذَكَرًا وَأُنْثَى خَلَقَهُمْ (سفر التكوين 1،27).
- خَيْرُكُمْ خَيْرُكُمْ لِنِسَائِهِمْ (حديث).
- " إن المرأة هي الصديق والشريك في الحياة. وهي المرأة التي تحفظ استمرارية الحياة. فكيف يجوز لنا أن نُحط من قدرها وهي التي تنجب العظماء. فالمرأة هي التي تلد ولاوجود لشيء دون المرأة (جورو جرانث صاحب صفحة 743).
- إنّ العالم الإنسانيّ أشبه بطير له جناحان أحدهما الرّجال والآخر النّساء، وما لم يكن الجناحان قويان تؤيدهما قوّة واحدة فإنّ هذا الطّير لا يمكن أنْ يطير نحو السّماء .ويقتضي هذا العصر ارتقاء النّساء، فيقمن بوظائفهن كلّها في مدارج الحياة، ويكن مثل الرّجال، ويجب أنْ يَصِلنَ إلى درجة الرّجال ويتساوين في الحقوق معهم (عبدالبهاء).
- "يتعين على أي منهج شامل وفعال لبناء القدرات إشراك القيادات المؤثرة مثل القادة التقليديين والدينيين [...]". (التوصية العامة المشتركة رقم (31) للجنة المعنية بالحد من التمييز ضد المرأة/ التعليق العام رقم (18) للجنة المعنية بحقوق الطفل المتعلقة بالممارسات الضارة، وثيقة الأمم المتحدة رقم: CEDAW/C/GC/31-CRC/C/GC/18 الفقرة رقم (70).

VI. نتعهّد بالدفاع عن جميع الاشخاص المنتمين للأقليات ضمن نطاق عمل كل منا، ، وحريتهم في الدين والمعتقد، وحقهم في ممارسة شعائرهم بشكلٍ كامل، كما نؤكّد على حقهم في المشاركة المتساوية والفعالة في الحياة الثقافية والدينية والاجتماعية والاقتصادية وفقا لما ورد في القانون الدولي لحقوق الإنسان، وهو ما نعتبره حدًا أدنى من التضامن الواجب بين جميع البشر.

VII. نتعهد، كل في مجال اختصاصه، بالإدانة العلنية لكل حالات الدعوة إلى الكراهية والتحريض التي من شأنها إثارة العنف والتمييز والعداء، لأننا نتحمّل مسؤولية مباشرة عندما يتم إطلاق مثل هذه الدعوات للكراهية والتحريض تحت عباءة الأديان والمعتقدات التي نؤمن بها.

- "عامل الآخر كما هو يعاملك" (عصر الدولة المصرية الوسطى).
- "تعويض الضرر بما يكافئه ومقابلة الاحسان بالإحسان" (كونفوشيوس).

- لا تفعل لأخيك ما تكرهه لنفسك (التلمود، شباط 31، أ).
- "ينبغي علينا توخي الدقة في اختيار كلماتنا فسوف يسمعها الناس ويتأثرون بها سلباً أو إيجاباً" (بوذا).
- "عن طريق ضبط النفس وجعل دهارما (الحق في التصرف) تركيزك الأساسي، عامل الآخرين كما تعامل نفسك "(ماهابهاراتا).
- لاَ تَنْتَقِمْ وَلاَ تَحْقِدْ عَلَى أَبْنَاءِ شَعْبِكَ، بَلْ تُحِبُّ قَرِيبَكَ كَنَفْسِكَ (سفر اللاويين 19، 18).
- "فَكُلُّ مَا تُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَفْعَلَ النَّاسُ بِكُمُ افْعَلُوا هكَذَا أَنْتُمْ أَيْضًا بِهِمْ، لأَنَّ هذَا هُوَ النَّامُوسُ وَالأَنْبِيَاءُ" (إنجيل متى 7:12).
- "احذر من أن تسبب الأذى لأي روح، أو الحزن لأي قلب، حاول أن تساعد في أن تلئم جروح أي رجل في كلماتك سواء كنت تعرفه أو غريب عنك، صديقك أم عدو (بهاء الله).

VIII. كما نتعهد، كلّ في مجال اختصاصه، بوضع سياسات ومنهجيات لرصد التفسيرات أو الآراء الدينية التي تتخذ مسارًا ظاهر الانحراف يناقض القواعد والمعايير العالمية لحقوق الانسان، بغض النظر عما إذا كانت معلنة من قبل مؤسسات رسمية أو أفراد قاموا بتنصيب أنفسهم أولياء على معتقدات الناس. ونحن عازمون على تحمّل هذه المسؤولية بطريقة موضوعية ومنضبطة فقط في مجال اختصاص كل منّا ضمن مسلك النقد الذاتي ودون الحكم على إيمان ومعتقدات الآخرين.

- لاَ تَدِينُوا لِئَلاَّ تُدَانُوا. فَإِنَّكُمْ بِالدَّيْنُونَةِ الَّتِي بِهَا تَدِينُونَ تُدَانُونَ؛ وَبِالْكَيْلِ الَّذِي بِهِ تَكِيلُونَ يُكَالُ لَكُمْ. (إنجيل متى 7: 1-2)
- وأَشْعِرْ قَلْبَكَ الرَّحْمَةَ لِلرَّعِيَّةِ ، والْمَحَبَّةَ لَهُمْ ، واللُّطْفَ بِهِمْ . ولا تَكُونَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ سَبُعاً ضَارِياً، تَغْتَنِمُ أَكْلَهُمْ؛ فَإِنَّهُمْ صِنْفَانِ: إِمَّا أَخٌ لَكَ فِي الدِّينِ، وإِمَّانَظِيرٌ لَكَ فِي الْخَلْقِ... فَأَعْطِهِمْ مِنْ عَفْوِكَ وصَفْحِكَ مِثْلِ الَّذِي تُحِبُّ وتَرْضَى أَنْ يُعْطِيَكَ اللَّهُ مِنْ عَفْوِهِ وصَفْحِهِ (كتاب الامام علي بن ابي طالب إلى "مالك الأشتر" حاكم مصر).
- الغرض الأساسي من دين الله تأسيس الوحدة بين البشر. والتجليات الإلهية هي مصدر الاخوة والحب بينهم. لذا ليس من شأن تجليات الله أن تبعث الشقاق والنزاع والكراهية في العالم. دين الله هو الحب، أما إذا جعلنا منه مصدرًا للعداء وسفك الدماء، فلا شك أن غياب هذا الدين أفضل من وجوده لأنه يغدو شيطانيا ومدمرا وعقبة أمام نشوء عالم إنساني (ابو البهاء).

IX. نتعهّد بالامتناع عن ومناهضة وإدانة كل حكم عام يصدر من قبل أي جهة قوامه تكفير أي فرد أو جماعة أو الحكم على إيمانهم بطريقة من شأنها أن تجعلهم عرضةً للعنف تحت مسمى الدين، أو حرمانهم من حقوقهم الإنسانية.

X. نتعهد بعدم إعطاء سمة القدسيّة للآراء البشرية التي تدعي أنها تستند على خلفيات دينية، والتي من شأنها استغلال الدين أو المعتقد أو المؤمنين بها بشكل إقصائي للحض على الكراهية والعنف، على سبيل المثال لمصالح انتخابية او اهداف سياسية.

XI. كما نلتزم بعدم قمع الأصوات ووجهات النظر التي تقدّم رؤى نقدية في المسائل المتعلّقة بالدين أو المعتقد باسم القداسة، حتى لو لم تكن صائبة في تقديرنا أو بدت عدائية .كما نحث الدول التي ما زالت تعتمد قوانين مكافحة ازدراء الأديان إلى إلغائها، حيث أن هذه القوانين تترك تأثيراً خانقاً على التمتع بحرية الفكر، الضمير، الدين أوالمعتقد، وبالتالي تؤثر سلبًا على فرص تحقيق حوار مطلوب ونقاش صحي مفيد في المسائل الدينية.

XII. نلتزم بالعمل على تنقية المناهج والمواد التعليمية والكتب المدرسية التي تتضمّن تفسيرات دينية أو التي تقدّم بأسلوب قد يشجّع على تبنّي أفكار عنيفة أو تمييزية . ونتعهّد في هذا السياق بتعزيز احترام التعددية والتنوّع في مجال حرية الدين والمعتقد، وبحق الفرد في رفض أي تعليم ديني يتناقض مع قناعاته. كما نلتزم بالدفاع عن الحرية الأكاديمية وحرية التعبير، انسجاما مع المادة نص المادة 19 من العهد الدولي الخاص بالحقوق المدنية والسياسية، في مجال الحوار الديني من أجل ضمان أن يصبح الفكر الديني قادرًا "على مواجهة التحديات الجديدة ، ممّا يستوجب تشجيعا للفكر الحر والخلاّق. هذا ونتعهد بدعم الجهود المبذولة في مجال الإصلاحات الدينية في الميادين التعليمية والمؤسساتية.

- إن السند الأوحد لأخلاقيات راسخة هو التسامح المتبادل والاحترام. (أ.ج. آير)

XIII. نتعهد باستخلاص الخبرات والدروس المستفادة في كيفية التعامل مع الأطفال والشباب، سواء كانوا ضحايا أو عرضة للتحريض على الكراهية من أجل صياغة منهجيات وتبنّي أدوات ابداعية لتمكين المجتمع الديني من معالجة هذه الظاهرة بفاعلية، مع إيلاء اهتمام خاص لدور الأهل والأسرة الحاسم في الكشف والتعامل مع المظاهر المبكّرة لقابلية الأطفال والشباب للتعرض للعنف باسم الدين.

- لا تدع احد يستصغرك لحداثة سنك وكن مثلا للمؤمنين في القول والسلوك والحب والايمان والطهارة (تيموثاوس الأولى، 4:12).

XIV. نتعهّد كلّ في مجال اختصاصه بضرورة ضمان احترام مبادئ مدونة السلوك المعتمدة من جانب الحركة الدولية للصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر والمنظمات غير الحكومية أثناء الإغاثة في حالات الكوارث لكل حالات الإغاثة الإنسانية[6]، لا سيما ضرورة ان تقدّم دون أي تمييز او مصلحة دينية بما في ذلك وجوب تقديم المساعدات بصرف النظر عن عقيدة المتلقي والامتناع عن استخدام المساعدات الانسانية في الترويج أو المساندة لأي آراء دينية.

XV. نتعهّد بعدم إكراه الأفراد وعدم استغلال الأشخاص في الفئات المستضعفة من أجل تغيير انتمائهم الديني مع الاحترام الكامل لحريتهم في اختيار أو تغيير دينهم أو معتقدهم، وحقّهم في إظهار ذلك من خلال التعليم والممارسة وإقامة الشعائر سواء بشكل فردي أو جماعي، وأمام الملأ أو في اطار الخصوصية.

XVI. نلتزم أيضًا، في السياق نفسه، بالاستفادة من الثقل الروحي والأخلاقي للأديان والمعتقدات لتعزيز وحماية حقوق الإنسان العالمية وتطوير استراتيجيات وقائية متلائمة مع مختلف الأطر الوطنية مستفيدين مما يمكن أن تقدمه مؤسسات الأمم المتحدة ذات الصلة من دعم في هذا الصدد.

- وَثَانِيَةٌ مِثْلُهَا هِيَ :تُحِبُّ قَرِيبَكَ كَنَفْسِكَ .لَيْسَ وَصِيَّةٌ أُخْرَى أَعْظَمَ مِنْ هَاتَيْنِ (إنجيل مرقس، 31:12)
- بَلْ أَحِبُّوا أَعْدَاءَكُمْ، وَأَحْسِنُوا وَأَقْرِضُوا وَأَنْتُمْ لاَ تَرْجُونَ شَيْئًا، فَيَكُونَ أَجْرُكُمْ عَظِيمًا وَتَكُونُوا بَنِي الْعَلِيِّ،فَإِنَّهُ مُنْعِمٌ عَلَى غَيْرِ الشَّاكِرِينَ وَالأَشْرَارِ (إنجيل لوقا، 35:6).
- إن وجود الله ناصع كالشمس التي تبعث خيرها و دفئها للجميع. إن وجود الله يهيمن علي الجميع كالريح التي تهب علي قدم المساواة على كل ملك و فقير. (جورو جرانث صاحب، ص 272).
- "دين الرب وشريعته المقدسة هما الأداتان الأكثر فعالية لبزوغ فجر التوحد بين الناس. وتقدم العالم وتطور الأمم وطمأنينة البشر وسلامة جميع من يسكن الأرض هذه جميعاً من بين مقاصد الرب وسُننه (بهاء الله).

XVII. نتعهّد بدعم بعضنا البعض في مجال تنفيذ هذا الإعلان من خلال **تبادل الممارسات** وتعزيز بناء القدرات المتبادلة والتحديث المنتظم لمهارات الدعاة الدينيين والروحيين والمعلمين والمدربين، خاصة في مجالات الاتصالات، والأقليات الدينية، والوساطة المجتمعية، وحل النزاعات خاصة ذات الطابع الطائفي، وسبل الوقاية سلفاً منها ، والكشف المبكّر عن التوترات الطائفية، وتأمين الأدوات العلاجية والمساعي التعويضية. وفي الصدد نفسه، يتوجّب علينا استكشاف **سبل تطوير شراكات مستدامة مع المؤسسات الأكاديمية المتخصصة** وذلك لتشجيع البحوث المتعددة المناهج حول تطبيقات محددة تتعلّق بتنفيذ وتطوير مبادرة" الإيمان من أجل الحقوق "والاستفادة من نتائجها التي يمكن أن تغذي برامج وأدوات إئتلافنا حول هذه المبادرة.

XVIII. **نتعهد باستخدام الوسائل التكنولوجية بطريقة إبداعية ذات استمرارية** أكثر من أجل تعميم هذا الإعلان ونشر مبادرة" الإيمان من أجل الحقوق "وتعميم هذه التعهدات الثمانية عشر لتعزيز بناء مجتمعات متماسكة عبر إثراء التنوّع الثقافي .كما سنسعى إلى تأمين وسائل التمكين وبناء القدرات وأدوات التوعية والتفاعل وجعلها متاحة بلغات مختلفة لاستخدامها محلياً.

[1] راجع الفقرة 36 من تقرير الأمم المتحدة A/HRC/22/17/Add.4

[2] راجع المادة 18 من العهد الدولي الخاص بالحقوق المدنية والسياسية:

1- لكل إنسان حق في حرية الفكر والوجدان والدين. ويشمل ذلك حريته في أن يدين بدين ما، وحريته في اعتناق أي دين أو معتقد يختاره، وحريته في إظهار دينه أو معتقده بالتعبد وإقامة الشعائر والممارسة والتعليم، بمفرده أو مع جماعة، وأمام الملأ أو على حدة.

2- لا يجوز تعريض أحد لإكراه من شأنه أن يخل بحريته في أن يدين بدين ما، أو بحريته في اعتناق أي دين أو معتقد يختاره.

3- لا يجوز إخضاع حرية الإنسان في إظهار دينه أو معتقده، إلا للقيود التي يفرضها القانون والتي تكون ضرورية لحماية السلامة العامة أو النظام العام أو الصحة العامة أو الآداب العامة أو حقوق الآخرين وحرياتهم الأساسية.

4- تتعهد الدول الأطراف في هذا العهد باحترام حرية الآباء، أو الأوصياء عند وجودهم، في تأمين تربية أولادهم دينيا وخلقيا وفقا لقناعاتهم الخاصة

[3]اتفاقية منع ومعاقبة جريمة الإبادة الجماعية (1948) والاتفاقية المتعلقة بمركز اللاجئين (1951) واتفاقية القضاء على جميع أشكال التمييز العنصري (1965) والعهد الدولي الخاص بالحقوق المدنية والسياسية (1966) والعهد الدولي الخاص بالحقوق الاقتصادية والاجتماعية والثقافية (1966) وإتفاقية حقوق الطفل (1989) و الاتفاقية الدولية لحماية حقوق جميع العمال المهاجرين وأفراد أسرهم (1990) واتفاقية الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة (2006) واتفاقية حماية جميع الاشخاص من الإختفاء القسري (2006).

[4]هذا يتضمن الإعلان العالمي لحقوق الإنسان (1948) و إعلان بشأن القضاء على جميع أشكال التعصب والتمييز القائمين على أساس الدين أو المعتقد (1981) و إعلان بشأن حقوق الأشخاص المنتمين إلى أقليات قومية أو إثنية وإلى أقليات دينية ولغوية (1992) و قواعد السلوك من أجل الحركة الدولية للصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر والمنظمات غير الحكومية أثناء الإغاثة في حالات الكوارث (1994) و إعلان مبادئ بشأن التسامح (1995) والمؤتمر الاستشاري الدولي بشأن التعليم المدرسي المتصل بحرية الدين والمعتقد والتسامح وعدم التمييز (2001) وعلان الأمم المتحدة بشأن حقوق الشعوب الأصلية (2007) وبيان لاهاي بشأن "الإيمان بحقوق الإنسان" (2008) ومبادئ كامدن حول حرية التعبير والمساواة (2009) و القرار رقم 18/16الصادر عن مجلس حقوق الإنسان "مكافحة التعصب و القولبة النمطية السلبية و الوصم و التمييز والتحريض على العنف وممارسته ضد الأشخاص على أساس دينهم أو معتقدهم (وعملية ايطنبول 2011) و عمل الرباط بشأن حظر الدعوة إلى الكراهية القومية أو العنصرية أو الدينية التي تشكل تحريضاً على التمييز أو العداء أو العنف (2012) وإطار عمل تحليلي للجرائم الوحشية (2014) وخطة عمل الأمين العام للأمم المتحدة لمنع التطرف العنيف (2015) و إعلان فاس حول منع التحريض الذي من شأنه أن يؤدي إلى جرائم الإبادة (2015).

[5] عرضت جميع الاقتباسات من النصوص الدينية أو المعتقدية من قبل المشاركين في ورشة العمل بيروت فيما يتعلق بدينهم أو معتقدهم ولايقصد بها سوى أن تكون توضيحية وغير حصرية

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



التعهدات الثمانية عشر حول "الإيمان من أجل الحقوق"

www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/FreedomReligion/Pages/FaithForRights.aspx



Options for civil society follow-up

Preliminary action plan drafted in Beirut
(work in progress)

I. PROMOTION / "OWNERSHIP"

Objective: Strong promotion at national level with all stakeholders

- It cannot be assumed that all religious leaders or faith-based organizations will be completely behind the 18 commitments. They need to formally endorse the 18 commitments. They need to own the document. How can it happen if they are not "there" yet? Provide responses, build their capacities
- Include women religious leaders
- Engage the youth
- Engage academics
- We also need to reach out ordinary people: Making the 18 commitments understandable, comprehensible by people; why it is important; why it affects our daily lives

Actions

- Translate and contextualize the document; contextualize the promotion
- Disseminate guides
- Establish multi-stakeholders network/coalition, including youth, religious leaders, academic, CSOs, FBOs, women's organizations, trade unions, journalists and media, MPs, etc. – common grounds on the 18 commitments; there should be a broad coalition of stakeholders endorsing the F4R framework; Membership limited to those that believe in human rights and the F4R
- Approach and work with National Human Rights Institutions; get them involved where and when possible
- Many national coalitions may already be in place; approach them and explain why the purpose of a new coalition; what it can bring; what is its distinctive value and impact
- Launch the national coalition; ensure media coverage; highlight the approach, the vision (possibility of a rotating national agency)
- Reach out to a variety of stakeholders, including trade unions, women's unions; ask for their endorsement
- The OHCHR national or regional offices or other UN offices should be brought in to support the initiative, both logistically, strategically, politically; offer some protection
- At regional level, involve the UN Training Center in Doha – it may support, propose activities, etc.
- Forum to celebrate Freedom of religion or belief and the 18 commitments
- Create attention; invite the Media
- Case studies: what does the implementation of each commitment look like practically?
- Produce a child-friendly version of the F4R framework
- Produce a simpler version of the F4R Framework, including the 18 commitments
- Ask someone influential in society, e.g. a footballer, a musician, to endorse the F4R framework and coalition
- Consider establish regional coalitions in all regions of the world – with an even approach to all regions.

II. ADDRESS THE ROLE OF STATES

Objective: States and religious communities both are needed for freedom of religion or belief. Make sure we have the buy-in from governments and official leaders; that they cooperate with religious leaders

Actions

- If they are not open to the 18 commitments: develop appropriate and context-specific strategies
- Joint delegation, including state actors from other countries and religious actors – to address their fears, beliefs, etc. Counter these with influential people, who speak their languages. Address their fears that freedom of religion or belief may bring chaos.
- Create a political will at the political level to promote the 18 commitments; create a legislative framework, create awareness
- Where feasible, actively ask for official religious channel to support or endorse the process and outcome
- Build synergies with State Religions at the Rabat meeting (October 2017) currently planned as part of the F4R initiative; Inter-governmental process bringing the CSOs/FBOs voice and experience

III. RAPID RESPONSE MECHANISMS

Objective: Establish system to identify incitement to hatred; engage in reactive and pro-active work; public denunciation

Actions

- Collect faith–disaggregated data on hate crimes
- Call out the right-wing media; minority groups are not able to respond to misrepresentation or hatred through the Press Council;
- Religious leaders speak about the right of members of other communities; not just about your own communities
- Onus is on those who are safe and secure to take such actions
- CSOs is to offer guidance on what constitutes incitement

IV. EDUCATION

Objective: To change people's values and behaviours, we need a long-term objective around education; new approaches to education; new curriculum

Actions:

- Assessment of curriculum (e.g. WCC assessments, recommendations, policy changes)
- Organize meeting of religious leaders to discuss and agree the changes to the curriculum
- The F4R framework can be an avenue for curriculum changes
- While curriculum review is on-going consider education of tolerance in schools

V. PROMOTE AND ACTIVE STEPS TO INTRA-FAITH DIALOGUE; ADDRESS INTRA-FAITH INTOLERANCE AND HOSTILITY

VI. SYNERGY LOCAL TO GLOBAL / GLOBAL TO GLOBAL

Objective: Tie local level actions to UN or international process, for example the Istanbul process or the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism; encourage international and local NGOs to be more pro-active at the international level

Actions:

- Establish local/national coalitions, which work on a long-term vision, are driven from the grassroots and focus on the human rights perspective
- UN should formally endorse the F4R Coalition
- Commission of Churches on International Affairs should endorse the F4R
- MPs / from around the world
- International Coalition: There ought to be an international dimension / international coalition of F4R which can offer protection and a framework; it should protect and support; but most importantly it should reach out to those that would have difficulties with the human rights framework – the language of the 18 commitments is different so it opens the door to these individuals who may not endorse the human rights framework
- Promote F4R framework with existing international coalition and seek their endorsement
- Report incidents to the international human rights mechanisms (Special Procedures, Treaty Bodies and the Universal Periodic Review)
- Build synergy with 16/18 resolution and provide input to Istanbul process via national coalitions
- Regional workshops on racism and xenophobia, implementing HRC resolution on NHRI
- Build synergy with SDG Goals 1, 5, 10, 16 and other related Goals; learn from SDGs indicators as these may be helpful; input into States and others reporting on SDG implementation; participate to high-level meetings.
- Organize a Global Forum every two or more years
- Create an on-line presence for all global initiatives and activities; multi-lingual; video content with info-graphics; etc.

VI. IMMEDIATE FOLLOW–UP

Objective: Ensure immediate follow-up before the Rabat Meeting with State religious leaders

Actions:

- Establish a Committee at the international level that can advise and support the meeting in Rabat with State religious leaders
- Convene a preparatory meeting in August 2017

VII. MONITORING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION

Objective: National and regional coalitions to monitor their activities and implementation, possibly along with OHCHR

Actions:

- Determine what should be reported
- Regular self-reporting on activities
- Regular reporting to the UPR.

Symposium for religious leaders and civil society (Dakar, May 2017)

From 3 to 4 May 2017, OHCHR Regional Office for West Africa organized with the Senegalese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice a symposium for religious leaders and civil society representatives on the rights of women and children from the perspective of Islam and in the context of the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights".



Objectives of the Dakar symposium

The symposium in Dakar, which received important media attention, served as a first test of the 18 commitments. It gathered a number of preachers, lawyers, judges and parliamentarians from the Senegalese society and was enriched by high level panellists from Senegal, Egypt and Tunisia, including the former UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, the Senegalese member of the UN Committee on Migrant Workers and the UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues, as well as renowned Islam and human rights specialists.

The objective of the symposium was to place human rights and Islam in the more global context of the Beirut Declaration of 29 March 2017, and to see how the 18 commitments from religious leaders and civil society representatives could be adapted and turned into concrete projects in Senegal. OHCHR Regional Office for West Africa invited the participants to address in particular the rights of women and children (using as a basis CEDAW and CRC recommendations regarding Senegal in 2015 and 2016 respectively) with a purpose to deconstruct the misunderstandings on Islam that some religious leaders and believers in Senegal and others around the world continue to convey.



Outcomes in the Senegalese context

Participants who were divided into working groups during the second day of the symposium all agreed that only the following Commitments could raise tensions and lead to human rights violations in Senegal:
- Commitment 5 (non-discrimination and gender equality),
- Commitment 10 (not to give credence to exclusionary interpretations claiming religious grounds),
- Commitment 12 (refine the curriculums, teaching materials and textbooks),
- Commitment 13 (engaging with children and youth, who are either victims of or vulnerable to incitement to violence in the name of religion),
- Commitment 16 (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),
- Commitment 17 (implementation through exchange of practices) and
- Commitment 18 (use technological means more creatively and consistently in order to disseminate this declaration and subsequent Faith for Rights messages).

On the above commitments, participants considered that the Government of Senegal has the primary obligation in this regard. Concrete projects were then discussed in order to intensify governmental and civil society efforts.



The Dakar symposium resulted in:

- The validation after thorough discussions of the 18 commitments framework, while adapting it to the Senegalese context;
- The creation of a national F4R coalition in Senegal, open to new members from all religions; and
- A concrete project focusing on Commitment 13 on children's rights, especially children who are exploited by certain "Marabouts" in the name of religion.

Project proposal for an alternative to child forced begging in the name of Islam (Commitment 13)

- Senegalese citizens, the majority of whom are Muslims, are very much attached to give alms, especially on Fridays.
- This system is exploited by some religious leaders ("Marabouts") who force very young children into begging while they pretend giving them religious education in so-called "daaras" (religious schools) that the State is currently unable to supervise and control.
- The whole system is very lucrative and has so far not been addressed sufficiently and efficiently.
- The plan is to create an alternative to forced begging by encouraging the Senegalese to give to a well-defined and identified entity in charge of redistributing the gains to religious schools identified by the State and renowned religious leaders.
- The gains would also benefit any project aiming at getting kids out of the streets.



Next steps after the Dakar symposium

- Establishment of a follow-up task force (including representatives from OHCHR, Government, Parliament, UN Treaty Bodies and civil society organizations);
- Operationalization of the F4R coalition in Senegal;
- Implementation of Senegal projects agreed in the framework of the 18 commitments;
- Media campaign in partnership with relevant UN agencies and Government representatives; and
- Drafting of a commentary on the 18 commitments as applied to the Senegalese context.

In November 2019, the **UN Human Rights Committee** reviewed the report of Senegal and recommended urgent measures to end all forms of exploitation and abuse of children by marabout teachers in daaras. The Government replied that seven teachers in Koranic schools had been convicted of acts of violence against and abuse of children; more than 1,000 children had been taken off the streets and reintegrated in their communities and families. The Government was committed to reforming the Koranic schools and it believed that the law – soon to pass through Parliament – would not be weakened because it would contain many measures to prevent the exploitation of children. The Daara Project aimed to set up a collective of teachers in Koranic schools, which were regularly inspected by the inspectors of the Ministry of Education.

CEDAW discussions concerning "Faith for Rights" (from 2017 to 2025)

Summary records of consideration of reports by States parties	Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
Costa Rica, CEDAW/C/SR.1508: 20. Ms. Haidar said the fact that worship-related matters fell within the remit of Ministry of Foreign Affairs only served to underscore the centrality of faith in Costa Rican society. The State party should make use of the latest tools and resources to promote a better understanding of the relationship between faith and the realization of human rights, such as the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights, as a means of forestalling conflicts between the two.	CEDAW/C/CRI/CO/7: 15. The Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Devise a comprehensive strategy with medium-term and long-term benchmarks aimed at eliminating discriminatory gender stereotypes and upholding women's dignity and contribution in all areas of economic and social life, engaging in that regard with religious leaders and civil society organizations in a positive dialogue on women's rights; […]
Niger, CEDAW/C/SR.1516: 27. Ms. Jahan, noting that the draft document on the personal status code had not been adopted owing to the hostility of certain social groups, said that she wished to know whether the State party intended to adopt a new draft in consultation with civil society and with community and religious leaders, including those who might be expected to oppose such an initiative. In view of the fact that over 70 per cent of the population of Niger was under the age of 25, she asked what measures would be taken to involve young people in the process of reviewing the draft personal status code. Lastly, she asked whether the State party would consider seeking the advice of the Governments of other Muslim-majority countries that had taken steps to improve the status of women, promote the principle of gender equality in their personal status laws and reconsider religious interpretations that appeared to perpetuate gender inequality and harmful stereotypes. 28. In order to promote reflection on the relationship between faith and human rights, the State party might wish to consider organizing a symposium similar to the one held in Dakar in May 2017 on the rights of women and children from the perspective of Islam.	CEDAW/C/NER/CO/3-4: 21. The Committee, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 5.3, on the elimination of all harmful practices, such as child marriage and forced marriage and female genital mutilation, recommends that the State party: […] (d) Develop and allocate sufficient resources for the implementation of a national plan of action to combat harmful practices, providing for strategic media campaigns and educational programmes to raise awareness among traditional and religious leaders, health-care and social workers and the general public about the negative impact of the practices on women and girls. […] 35. The Committee recommends that the State party accord priority to the participation of women in its efforts to meet the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and that it: […] (d) Raise awareness among parliamentarians, traditional and religious leaders and the general public about the need to promote women's economic empowerment as a poverty alleviation strategy. 43. The Committee, recalling its general recommendations No. 21 (1994) on equality in marriage and family relations and No. 29 (2013) on the economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution, as well as 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 (2014) on harmful practices, recommends that the State party: […] (c) Prohibit, including under customary law, the harmful practices of child marriage, forced marriage and polygamy and repudiation and conduct awareness-raising campaigns targeting parliamentarians, traditional and religious leaders

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	and the general public on the harmful effects of these practices on women and girls.
Nigeria, CEDAW/C/SR.1518: 14. Ms. Jummai Alhassan (Nigeria) said that the proposal to amend legislation to give equal rights to women married to foreigners was before the Legislative Assembly. Changes to the law on marriage could be made only by continuing to pursue campaigns to raise religious leaders' awareness of the importance of amending the legislation in question. One such campaign was the HeForShe campaign, which had recently been launched in Nigeria. […] 16. Ms. Haidar said that she understood the importance of advocacy in bringing about changes in mindsets and in legislation, as she, too, hailed from a religiously diverse country, namely Lebanon. She drew the State party's attention to the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constituted incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence and the Beirut Declaration on "Faith for Rights" and its related 18 commitments, which could serve as useful tools in encouraging different faith communities to work together to promote human rights. […] 43. Ms. Rana, highlighting the high numbers of women and girls who were subjected to all forms of violence, and welcoming the introduction of the Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act, said that she was concerned about the persistence of patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted discriminatory stereotypes concerning women's roles that perpetuated women's subordination within the family and society. She wondered whether the Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act applied outside the federal capital territory. She would appreciate information on the specific steps taken to enforce the Act in all states and to investigate and prosecute cases of violence against women and adolescent girls in schools. She would also welcome data showing whether the Act had helped reduce the incidence of harmful practices, stereotypes and other forms of violence against women. The failure to pass the gender and equal opportunities bill remained a matter of grave concern. She asked what measures had been taken or planned to assess the impact of the education and gender-related awareness-raising programmes at all levels and increase support for the relevant programmes among women's groups, local	CEDAW/C/NGA/CO/7-8: 7. The Committee notes that the State party's efforts to implement its obligations under the Convention have been significantly affected by various conflicts in Nigeria, in particular the terrorist insurgency waged by Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad (Boko Haram) since 2009. The Committee notes the efforts of the State party to rescue and rehabilitate women and girls who have been abducted and subjected to sexual slavery by Boko Haram. It considers that the full implementation of the Convention, so as to ensure respect for and enjoyment of women's rights, is a prerequisite for the success of those efforts, including those aimed at securing education facilities, bringing about deradicalization and combating violent extremism. The Committee recommends, therefore, that the State party implement the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations as a matter of high priority, including by seeking international assistance and cooperation, if appropriate, for their implementation. In this regard, it also recommends that the State party adopt a national action plan on the implementation of the present recommendations, in consultation with civil society organizations and religious leaders, which should provide a road map for the enhanced implementation and monitoring of the concluding observations. […] 12. The Committee recommends that the State party: […] (c) Expedite the repeal or amendment of all discriminatory laws identified by the Nigerian Law Reform Commission following its comprehensive audit of discriminatory laws in the State party and include religious leaders in the process of addressing issues of faith and human rights, so as to build on several "faith for rights" initiatives and identify common ground among all religions in the State party, as acknowledged by the delegation. 22. Recalling 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 (2014) on harmful practices, the Committee recommends that the State party: […] (b) Expand public education programmes on the negative effect of such stereotypes on women's enjoyment

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communities, traditional and religious leaders, prominent male figures, teachers and members of the media. […] 49. Ms. Rana said that she wondered whether there were plans to make the current ad hoc approach to cooperation with religious leaders and men more permanent so as to bring about a change in mindsets.	of their rights, in particular in rural areas, targeting men and boys, as well as the traditional and religious leaders who are the custodians of customary and religious values in the State party; […] 24. Recalling its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/NGA/CO/6, para. 22), and in line with Sustainable Development Goal 5.3, to eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation, the Committee recommends that the State party: […] (b) Raise awareness among religious and traditional leaders and the general public about the criminal nature of female genital mutilation, including so-called "female circumcision", and its adverse effect on the human rights of women. […] 46. The Committee recommends that the State party: […] (e) Eradicate polygamy through the use of awareness-raising campaigns and education, which should, among other things, focus on the harmful effects of this practice and fully involve religious, traditional and local government leaders.
Fiji, CEDAW/C/SR.1578: 3. In preparation for the dialogue with the Committee, government agencies had worked closely with the private sector, civil society and religious organizations, not only gaining the strong sense of data so vital for national efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, but also laying stronger foundations for tackling the barriers to women's advancement, which included the fact that Fiji had one of the highest rates of domestic violence in the world. The Prime Minister had labelled domestic violence statistics as a national shame and had called on all stakeholders to unite in the battle to stamp out such violence. Various measures had already been taken, including the launch of the "Man Up" campaign, aimed at involving men in the national movement to combat violence; a national forum to promote cooperation with religious organizations; and a task force on eliminating violence against women, which had devised a service delivery protocol to ensure the seamless handling of cases of gender-based violence by all relevant stakeholders. Strong partnerships with cultural and religious leaders were now needed to bring about changes in people's mentalities, break down gender stereotypes and challenge the concept of hypermasculinity. […]	CEDAW/C/FJI/CO/5: 26. The Committee recommends that the State party adopt a comprehensive strategy to eliminate discriminatory stereotypes on the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society, in cooperation with civil society organisations, in particular women's groups, community leaders, teachers and the media, to facilitate and accelerate the necessary societal change and create an enabling environment that is supportive of gender equality. 27. The Committee welcomes the State party's efforts to eradicate gender-based violence against women, including the establishment of the National Domestic Violence Toll Free Helpline. However, it notes with concern the incidence of gender-based violence in the State party continue to be the highest in the region, as well as: (a) The underreporting of gender-based violence against women due to stigma, societal pressure to resort to traditional apology and reconciliation such as bulubulu, and distrust in the justice system; (b) The prevalence of hate speech against women in society and the media; (c) The cost of GBV which represents 7% of GDP; (d) The persistent perception among law enforcement officials that domestic violence is a private matter, as illustrated by the fact that women victims of gender based violence are

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37. Ms. Rana asked what specific steps had been taken, or were planned, to combat deeply rooted patriarchal cultural and religious norms, which gave rise to gender stereotypes and led ultimately to discrimination against women, including, in particular, what measures had been adopted to ensure that traditional apologies such as bulubulu (reconciliation and forgiveness ceremony) were never accepted as mitigating circumstances in domestic violence cases. […] 53. Ms. Manalo said that the delegation had not provided any information on female genital mutilation — a harmful practice that was spreading throughout the Asia and Pacific region. It was essential to prevent the problem from taking root in Fiji. 54. Although NGOs undoubtedly played a crucial role in combating gender-based violence, it was vital for the Government to ensure that cooperation with religious organizations did not lead to conflict with its obligations under the Convention. […] 62. Ms. Haidar said that a number of United Nations bodies and programmes, particularly the "Faith for Rights" initiative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), would be able to lend assistance in the dialogue with representatives of faith groups concerning human rights.	referred to the Family Law Court; intimidation of victims by the police; reluctance to adhere to the "no-drop policy," and/or to issue Domestic Violence Restraining Orders (DVROs), and the encouragement of victims, despite the zero tolerance policy, to resort to traditional apology and reconciliation procedures, as well as several cases of intimidation of victims by police; (e) That perpetrators of gender-based violence against women frequently enjoy impunity or receive lenient sentences owing to gender stereotypes among the judiciary, such as the notion of the man as "sole breadwinner", as well as factors such as the perpetrator's first appearance in court resulting in sentence reduction; (f) Discriminatory attitudes of healthcare personnel and frequent inability to respond to the health needs of victims of gender-based violence and the particularly limited access to emergency contraception and post exposure prophylactics (PEP) for rape victims; (g) The limited availability of support services, including adequate shelters, for women victims of gender-based violence; (h) The increase of gender based violence in disasters and post-disasters situations. […] 55. The Committee notes with concern that women belonging to ethnic and religious minority groups and indigenous women are exposed to significant rates of intersectional discrimination.
Samoa, CEDAW/C/SR.1637: 5. As part of efforts to tackle gender-based violence, two studies had been conducted. […] The second study, namely the national public inquiry into family violence, had provided a platform for public discussions in order to remove the stigma that hampered the acknowledgement of such violence and had reaffirmed calls for more proactive leadership by village councils, church leaders and the Government to prevent violence against women, children and persons with disabilities and to improve measures to address it. The inquiry had emphasized that the principles of Fa'asamoa, Christianity and human rights, when properly applied, played a central role in preventing violence. The results of those studies had prompted investment, with assistance from development partners, in violence prevention campaigns at the village level and in strengthening services for survivors of violence. The Government	CEDAW/C/WSM/CO/6: 21. The Committee welcomes the State party's efforts to modify discriminatory gender stereotypes and cultural practices. Nevertheless, it is concerned about the persistence of deep-rooted discriminatory stereotypes, harmful practices and patriarchal attitudes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society. The Committee is also concerned about the following: […] (d) The lack of a mechanism to monitor and curb the influence of the church in perpetuating discriminatory gender stereotypes and gender-based violence against women and girls; […] 22. The Committee recommends that the State party: [...] (a) Adopt a comprehensive strategy, including through awareness-raising programmes, aimed at women and men at all levels of society, including religious and traditional leaders, to eliminate

Summary records of consideration of reports by States parties	Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
supported village- and district-led initiatives and faith-based programmes to address the root causes and consequences of family violence. 6. The National Council of Churches had held events aimed at tackling gender-based violence, including a workshop focusing on a survivor-centred approach, held in March 2018. […] 18. Ms. Tapuai (Samoa) said that the declaration of Samoa as a Christian nation would in no way affect women's rights, lead to discrimination against women or undermine freedom of religion. 19. Ms. Mulitalo (Samoa) said that church leaders were involved in the District Development Planning Programme and in an initiative of the National Council of Churches whereby ministers would address matters relating to the protection of women's rights in their sermons. Church leaders also engaged youth groups in activities relating to the promotion of human rights. The District Development Planning Programme raised awareness of the Convention among church and village leaders, young people and persons with disabilities. […] 23. Ms. Hofmeister said she was concerned that the constitutional amendment declaring Samoa a Christian State might constitute a step backward in terms of women's rights and could strengthen patriarchal traditions, lead to harmful practices and perpetuate violence against women and girls. While Christianity itself was not incompatible with human rights, male-oriented interpretations of religious texts could undermine such rights. Nonetheless, the State party had made commendable progress in advancing women's rights, most notably through the establishment of the national human rights institution and the conduct of the national public inquiry into family violence. […] 44. Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia said that, notwithstanding the progress made in setting up mechanisms to deal with gender-based violence, the rate of such violence remained alarmingly high, and appeared to be overtaking other forms of violence. She therefore wondered whether violence against women was an emerging cultural syndrome or a cultural legacy from the past. It was sometimes said that, in economic development at least, culture made all the difference; she wondered what difference culture was making in the State party and whether it was a positive or negative influence. […]	discriminatory gender stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society, and regularly monitor and review measures taken in this regard; [...] (d) Establish a mechanism to promote the use of gender-sensitive interpretations of religious texts by churches and assess the impact of religion on public perceptions that foment discriminatory gender stereotypes and gender-based violence. 23. The Committee is concerned about the prevalence of gender-based violence against women and girls, in particular domestic and sexual violence, in the State party. It also remains concerned about the following: [...] (e) The lack of capacity within agencies and organizations, including the health-care system, village *fono* and churches, to address violence against women. 24. Recalling its general recommendation No. 35, the Committee recommends that the State party: [...] (e) Strengthen the capacity of all agencies, including the police, the health-care system, village *fono* and inter-agency and church task forces, develop protocols to address violence against women and establish a mechanism to monitor their enforcement by these agencies. [...] 27. The Committee commends the State party on the amendment to the Constitution, in 2013, which resulted in an increase in female candidates in the general election in 2016, and the designation of the first female Deputy Prime Minister. It also notes with appreciation that the number of women in the judiciary has increased since the previous dialogue with the State party. Nevertheless, the Committee is concerned about the following: [...] (b) The prevalence of male religious leaders in decision-making positions in the State party and the lack of female priests, combined with the low number of women in decision-making positions, leading to violations of women's rights under the Convention, often owing to patriarchal interpretations of the scriptures that negatively affect actions of organs of the State, including the judiciary; 28. The Committee recommends that the State party: [...] (b) Ensure that male religious leaders in decision-making positions in State organs undertake their duties in a way that respects, protects and fulfils women's rights as set out in the Convention and increase the number of women in decision-making positions, including female priests;

Summary records of consideration of reports by States parties	Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
47. Given the key role of church leaders in addressing the problem, she wondered whether the implementation plan adopted by the National Council of Churches to combat gender-based violence was driven by Scripture or by doctrine. Did it reflect global Christian values and the moral obligation to demonstrate compassion, agape love and sacrificial leadership? She wondered whether church leaders planned to use the biblical texts setting forth those principles as a basis for their work, and asked when the State party would end the selective use of Scripture to perpetuate oppression. […] 51. Ms. Mulitalo (Samoa) said that the National Council of Churches programme incorporated Christian principles, not as a means of advoca-ting women's subordination to men, but as a means of informing church ministers and their wives about the provisions of the Convention. […] 57. Ms. Strickland (Samoa), returning to the question of the negative or positive influence of culture, pointed out that the inquiry into family violence had recognized that it was the combination of culture, faith and human rights in Samoa that provided the framework for combating such violence. […] 59. Ms. Gbedemah said that no mention was made of economic violence in the Family Safety Act. The definition of violence against women should be brought into line with the Convention. In addition, the protection orders introduced under the Act were processed principally through NGOs and not through the police. She asked what training the State party intended to provide to help the police to properly deal with violence against women. 60. The question with regard to the role of church leaders in dealing with violence against women was whether their efforts were sustained and systematic. Had church leaders developed specific policies and materials, and did they apply a dynamic interpretation of the Scriptures in respect of violence against women? She also wondered how their work in that regard was monitored: having trained pastors and their wives, how did the State party ensure that they would return to their parishes and impart their new learning to the congregation and hold perpetrators accountable? […] 65. Ms. Mulitalo (Samoa) said that the Government intended to forge a closer relationship with the National Council of Churches, through consultations and workshops, to ensure that	

Summary records of consideration of reports by States parties	Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
church communities were aware of the requirements of the Convention. Church ministers used their Sunday sermons to inform their congregations of the Convention, of the need to eliminate violence against women and of women's rights. The Government was working with women's rights champions in the communities to promote implementation of the Convention through awareness-raising programmes. Church ministers' wives generally chaired the monthly meetings of women's committees in villages and of women's fellowship groups in churches. At those meetings, the ministers' wives informed the groups of the implementation and requirements of the Convention. 66. Ms. Strickland (Samoa) said that church leaders had a role to play because 99.7 per cent of the population attended church. The Govern-ment saw that as an opportunity to convey its message on gender-based violence to the population. The action undertaken by ministers' wives in their group meetings was closely monitored by the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development to ensure policy coherence. That Ministry had tried to evaluate the cost of gender-based violence in its family safety study, but the Government would carefully consider the suggestion that a specific study should be undertaken in that area. 67. Ms. Schulz asked whether the message conveyed by churches was a reinforcement of traditional roles rather than a message of true gender equality. Did Samoa have women ministers? 68. Ms. Gbedemah said that religious texts could be used to reinforce traditional roles and to promote women's submission rather than equality. The problem was how to know whether all ministers were preaching the same policy line. In a country with such a high rate of church attendance, churches were a valuable means of informing the population, but measures must be put in place to monitor the content of sermons. 69. Ms. Eghobamien-Mshelia asked what kinds of networks were in place in Samoa and whether there was a network of male champions against gender-based violence.	
Botswana, CEDAW/C/SR.1678: 13. Ms. Mokganya (Botswana) said that the Government recognized that more needed to be done to lower the maternal mortality rate. […]	CEDAW/C/BWA/CO/4: 24. The Committee recommends that the State party: […] (b) Continue its efforts to engage with relevant actors, including tribal chiefs, religious and

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15. Various media campaigns had been conducted to raise awareness of cervical cancer, and workshops had been held for chiefs and faith-based organizations. Some faith-based organizations had permitted health-care workers to address their congregations directly. In one case, a faith-based organization had made its premises available for cervical cancer screenings. […] 24. Ms. Haidar said that, with regard to cooperation with religious leaders, she wished to draw the State party's attention to Faith for Rights, an initiative launched by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to explore the ways in which human rights issues could be framed from a religious perspective.	community leaders, government officials and parliamentarians, on the negative impact of discriminatory stereotypes on women's enjoyment of their rights; […] 32. The Committee recommends that the State party: […] (b) Conduct awareness-raising campaigns for politicians, community and religious leaders, the media and the general public on the importance of the participation of women in political life and decision-making positions;
Call for joint action in the times of the COVID-19 pandemic (statement adopted on 21 April 2020) […] the Committee is finalizing a prototype of peer-to-peer learning webinars, in collaboration with Religions for Peace and other partners to explore how various faith communities can scale up collaboration around the diverse challenges posed by COVID-19 with a human rights-based approach with respect to women and girls. These webinars will use the #Faith4Rights toolkit as a resource.	**"Confronting COVID-19 from the Prism of Faith, Gender and Human Rights"** Dialogue between representatives from multi-religious faith and human rights communities, aimed at creating a platform for mutual learnings, new insights and the exchange of best practices to ensure the integration of gender-sensitive crisis responses, using the #Faith4Rights toolkit (modules 5, 6 and 16): • Video recording of first webinar on 14 May 2020 • Video recording of second webinar on 21 July 2020
Saint Kitts and Nevis, CEDAW/C/SR.1914 66. Ms. Haidar, commending the State party for its success in ending mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS and in rolling out the human papillomavirus vaccine, said that she wished to know the status of efforts to establish a policy of universal health care. She invited the delegation to comment on the apparent discrepancy between the establishment of the age of consent for girls at 16 and the maintenance of the requirement for girls of that age to obtain parental authorization for sexual and reproductive health services. She would appreciate hearing whether the Government would consider initiating a national dialogue on further decriminalization of abortion, at least in cases of rape, incest or severe fatal abnormality. In that connection, she drew the delegation's attention to work conducted by the United Nations on the interplay between faith and rights. […] 67. Saint Kitts and Nevis acknowledged the need to harmonize the age of consent and the age of	CEDAW/C/KNA/CO/5-9 32. The Committee notes the measures taken by the State party to ensure access to high-quality health-care services to all women. It notes with concern, however, the lack of a strategic plan on sexual and reproductive health and rights, the criminalization of abortion except in cases of rape and threats to the life or health of the pregnant women, the discrepancy between the age of consent (currently 16 years old) and the age at which contraceptives can be accessed without parental approval (currently 18 years old) and the limited accessibility of health services for women with disabilities. 33. The Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Adopt a comprehensive strategic plan on sexual and reproductive health, with clear goals, indicators, a monitoring system and sufficient budgetary allocation; (b) Revise the policy setting the age at which contraceptives can be accessed without parental approval to make it consistent with the age of consent, as an additional

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adulthood in a number of laws on various topics, but it was currently facing a shortage of policy drafters. Sexual and reproductive health-care services and information were available free of charge at community health centres. Decriminalizing abortion would involve reopening a debate on abortion rights, including with faith-based organizations. She was personally prepared to advocate for that discussion to take place.	mechanism to prevent early pregnancy; (c) Legalize abortion in cases of incest and severe fetal impairment, in addition to rape and threats to the life or health of the pregnant woman, and decriminalize it in all other cases; […]
The Gambia, CEDAW/C/SR.1925 19. Ms. Ameline said that it was gratifying to note that the State party had introduced a legal prohibition of female genital mutilation […] 22. The State party's recognition of Sharia law and customary law prevented the effective implementation of the universally agreed principles underlying the Convention. Article 33 (5) of the Constitution limited the applicability of the Convention, which the State party had ratified without reservations. The Government might consider engaging with religious leaders to discuss women's fundamental human rights, as envisaged in the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights, and amend those legal provisions that conflicted with the Convention. 23. She wished to know […] whether any efforts had been made to harmonize the procedures followed by religious tribunals […] 40. [Ms. Rana] would welcome information on the key findings of the study conducted in 2021 with a view to developing the National Strategy and Policy on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting and the Plan of Action for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation. The delegation might describe the current status of both instruments. She wondered what measures were being taken to promote understanding of the criminal nature of female genital mutilation, especially among medical professionals, parents, and community and religious leaders, and to tackle cross-border female genital mutilation. […] 44. [Ms. Kinteh, Gambia] A sensitization programme had led to greater awareness of the criminal nature of female genital mutilation and the penalties that it carried. However, underreporting continued to be a problem, including in cases involving the death of children or cross-border female genital mutilation. The Government therefore offered the public assurances that the identities of persons who reported such offences would not be disclosed.	CEDAW/C/GMB/CO/6 10. Recalling that the Convention covers women's rights in both the private and public spheres and that discrimination against women cannot be justified on the grounds of religion, customs and/or practices, the Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Within a set timeline and in consultation with women's civil society organizations and traditional and religious leaders, ensure that the provisions of the Convention are fully integrated into the national legal framework, including by amending or repealing all legislative provisions that are incompatible with the principles of equality and non-discrimination, such as sections 7 and 33 (5) (c) and (d) of the 1997 Constitution, as replicated in the Women's Act, establishing the primacy of customary and sharia law over ordinary laws; […] (c) Encourage religious (qadi) and common law courts, law enforcement officers and imams to respect, in their decisions and actions, the State party's commitments deriving from its ratification of the Convention to ensure that Muslim women and girls enjoy equal rights in all aspects of family life, including in marriage, divorce, inheritance, marital property, adoption, burial and devolution of property on death, including through the Faith for Rights initiative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; (d) Undertake a review of legislative provisions in countries with similar sociocultural and religious backgrounds and legal systems for integration into its legislative harmonization process and development of strategies to ensure the implementation of legislation promoting and protecting women's rights. […] 20. In line with 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 (2019) on harmful practices, the Committee recommends that the State party:

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Religious leaders had participated in sensitization initiatives, but some still continued to practise female genital mutilation. The topic was becoming less taboo, which had resulted in a slight decrease in the proportion of girls who had been victims, although numbers were still high.	(a) Address the cultural beliefs underlying the harmful practice of female genital mutilation, including by educating parents and traditional and religious leaders on the lifelong devastating effects on both the physical and mental health of girls and women, and by raising awareness of the criminalization of female genital mutilation;
Niger, CEDAW/C/SR.2031 17. Ms. Ameline said that she would like to know whether the State party had considered withdrawing its reservations to the Convention. […] After the disbandment of the National Commission on Human Rights, in the absence of a national human rights institution, she wished to know how the Government planned to work with non-governmental organizations and religious leaders to advance women's rights. […] 25. Ms. Haidar said that she encouraged the authorities of the Niger to look at the way in which countries which had a similar culture and the same religion had gradually overcome opposition to lifting reservations to the Convention. The Government should demonstrate its commitment in that regard by holding awareness-raising and information campaigns. The Faith for Rights Framework might help to persuade religious leaders that there should be no conflict between religious practices and human rights. A group of countries in the Middle East and North Africa had already made considerable progress lifting reservations. […] 37. A representative of the Niger said that, with a view to reviewing previous processes, a committee had been established within the Cabinet of the Prime Minister to draft a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper based on five key pillars, including the pillar of citizen participation and social inclusion. The Government was aware of the need to lift the country's reservations to the Convention and intended to work with religious organizations to achieve that goal. […] 40. [Ms. Rana] wondered how the State party intended to sustain its monitoring of how women and girls were portrayed in the media and how it would engage with traditional and religious leaders and civil society to address harmful gender-based stereotypes and gender violence.	CEDAW/C/NER/CO/5 12. The Committee recalls its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/NER/3-4, para. 9) that the State party withdraw its reservations and welcomes the commitment made by the State party's delegation during the interactive dialogue to continue the national dialogue towards their withdrawal. In this regard, the State party should take into consideration the practices of countries with similar cultural backgrounds and legal systems that have successfully harmonized national legislation with their international human rights obligations, in particular those under the Convention. The Committee also recommends that the State party ensure the meaningful participation of religious and community leaders and members of civil society, in particular women's organizations, in that process. […] 16. Recalling its general recommendation No. 33 (2015) on women's access to justice, the Committee recalls the State party's obligation to ensure that women's rights are protected against violations by all components of plural justice systems. It recommends that the State party: (a) Adopt legislation to regulate the harmonization between the formal and traditional justice systems, ensure that women have effective access to justice, that statutory laws take precedence over customary laws and that the norms, procedures and practices of traditional and religious justice systems are in conformity with the Convention; […] 26. The Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy, including for the digital space, targeting community and religious leaders, teachers, girls and boys and women and men, to eliminate stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society and develop targets and indicators to systematically measure the impact of the strategic interventions undertaken; […] 30. Recalling its general recommendation No. 14 (1990) on female circumcision, the joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee/general

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	comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2019) on harmful practices and the Committee's general recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, as well as its previous recommendations to the State party (CEDAW/C/NER/CO/3-4, para. 21), the Committee urges the State party: (a) To ensure the strict application of the relevant provisions of the Criminal Code and strengthen awareness-raising campaigns, in particular among religious and community leaders, health professionals, teachers, parents and girls, in cooperation with civil society, on the criminal nature of female genital mutilation, its adverse effects on the human rights, physical integrity, health and dignity of women and girls, its long-term physical and psychological consequences and the need to eradicate it and its underlying cultural justifications;
Drafting of general recommendation No. 40 **CEDAW/C/SR.2059** 29. Ms. Haidar […] had also attended the regional consultation on draft general recommendation No. 40 in Cairo, Egypt, which, in view of current regional events and broader trends of polarization worldwide, would be crucial in shaping the draft general recommendation and linking it to Security Council resolution 1325 (2020) on women and peace and security. 30. As a member of an expert group constituted by technology conglomerate Meta on human rights and content policy, she had attended an online meeting in April aimed at defining issues and challenges in that field and would continue those deliberations in an in-person meeting in June. She had participated in the launch of a university diploma programme on religion and human rights with particular emphasis on women's human rights that had been prepared jointly by Saint Joseph University of Beirut and OHCHR as part of its Faith for Rights initiative. **CEDAW/C/SR.2117** 8. The Chair said that, during the [eighty-ninth] session, the Committee had considered eight State party reports and adopted concluding observations on those reports. […] 10. The highlights of the session had included the adoption of general recommendation No. 40 (2024) on equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems […].	**General recommendation No. 40 (2024) on the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems, CEDAW/C/GC/40:** 30. Under article 5, States parties are required to eliminate all forms of gender stereotypes in all spheres. [[41] In its forthcoming general recommendation No. 41, the Committee will specifically address gender stereotypes in various sectors, including in connection with the media, digitalization and artificial intelligence.] The Committee observes strong prevalence of gender stereotypes in all spheres of society, including their perpetuation and exacerbation through media portrayals of women reinforcing the dominant position of men. The rapidly emerging artificial intelligence sector, including generative artificial intelligence, computer vision systems, speech and audio artificial intelligence, robotics and control systems, specialized artificial intelligence systems and hybrid artificial intelligence systems, learns from frequently gender-biased training data, carrying gender-based discrimination from the analog into the digital world, and needs to be addressed urgently from a human rights, including women's rights, perspective. Furthermore, some misinterpretations of religion and culture can shape gender stereotypes. The Committee emphasizes that gender stereotypes constitute a key barrier to women's equal access to decision-making. 31. The Committee recommends that States parties: (a) Conduct awareness-raising campaigns

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	for – and cooperate with – relevant stakeholders, including office holders, political parties, the public sector, media outlets, teachers, community, religious and faith-based leaders, members of electoral bodies, private sector representatives, trade unions, judiciary and law enforcement to adopt a positive discourse on parity, and enhance the understanding that the full participation of women in all areas of decision-making, on an equal basis with men, is essential for women to enjoy their human rights and benefits the entire community; (b) Conduct corresponding awareness-raising campaigns as in subparagraph (a) addressed to the general public of all ages, aiming for women, girls, men and boys to become transformative agents of change for gender equality; (c) Engage religious leaders and faith-based actors in the process of addressing areas of possible tensions between some interpretations of religious traditions and human rights, such as through the Faith for Rights framework of the OHCHR;
Afghanistan (https://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/meeting-summary/2025/06/examen-de-lafghanistan-au-cedaw-les-expertes-evoquent-une) Bandana Rana, Committee Expert and Country Rapporteur, extended profound appreciation to the women and girls of Afghanistan, whose voices continued to resonate across the world demanding justice. The dialogue transcended mere procedure; it unfolded against the stark reality of one of the gravest human rights catastrophes confronting women and girls. It was hoped that today's exchange would prove constructive, anchored in mutual respect, steadfast commitment to strengthening accountability for the rights of Afghan women and girls. […] Since the takeover in August 2021, the de facto authorities had issued a sweeping series of edicts and decrees that institutionalised gender-based discrimination, directly violating article 1 of the Convention. This discrimination was systemic and far-reaching, affecting every aspect of public, political, social, economic and cultural life. Women and girls were barred from secondary and tertiary education, excluded from most forms of employment, severely restricted in their freedom of movement, and denied participation in political and public life. The Committee expressed its profound concern regarding these deep and entrenched violations. The abolition of	**CEDAW/C/AFG/CO/4** 8. The Committee expresses its concern regarding the systematic constitutional and legislative regressions owing to which the legal framework protecting women's human rights in Afghanistan has been dismantled since August 2021, in violation of articles 1 and 2 of the Convention. The Committee notes that, despite the absence of a specific definition of discrimination against women, the 2004 Constitution of Afghanistan accorded women and men equal rights and duties before the law and prohibited any kind of discrimination and distinction between citizens. It is recalled that, in accordance with article 7 (1) of the 2004 Constitution, the State Party is bound to adhere to its international treaty obligations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Committee notes with deep concern that, in September 2021, the de facto Minister of Justice announced that the de facto authorities would govern the State Party by temporarily enacting articles from the 1964 Constitution of Afghanistan that were "not in conflict with sharia" and that international laws and instruments that were not in conflict with the principles of "Sharia and Islamic Emirate" would also be respected, thereby effectively abrogating the 2004 Constitution. The Committee is particularly concerned at reports that, during an address on Eid al-Fitr, the Supreme

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Afghanistan's 2004 Constitution, and the dismantling of key legislative protection, including the law on the elimination of violence against women, were grave violations of article 2. The inconsistent and opaque application of religious and customary law reinforced patriarchal norms, especially in areas such as family law, inheritance, and protection from violence, further entrenching gender inequality. […] **Responses by the Delegation** The delegation said Islam and Sharia recognised and supported the rights of women and girls. The Taliban de facto authorities had weaponised their interpretation of culture and religion and systematically restricted every part of women's lives. These interpretations undermined the agency of women and girls. Space for women was being limited under the pretence of "culture". The term "gender apartheid" should be codified. **Questions by Committee Experts** […] There was a pressing need for States, multilateral organizations and those with a presence on the ground to work on a coordinated basis to support documents relating to civil documentation with a gender perspective. It was essential to roll out awareness raising campaigns targeting community and religious leaders. […] Another concern was that young boys and girls were sent to religious madrasas where the curriculum was aligned with the most extreme versions of Islam. The exclusion of half the population from education aimed to erase women and girls from public and intellectual life. These restrictions had led to a rise in early marriage and child labour, and deepened poverty in an already poor country. The de-facto authorities must reverse all education bans and allow girls to receive an education; there must be pressure from the international community to ensure this occurred. […] **Responses by the Delegation** The delegation said the discrimination faced by women in Afghanistan was even worse for rural women, and those from diverse ethnic groups. Women human rights defenders were especially at risk. Rural women were also hit harder by climate change and disasters, with no system to help them recover. The Committee was urged to ensure that women and civil society inside Afghanistan were able to participate in the development of strategies conducive to the Convention. Even a cell phone in Afghanistan was	Leader of the Taliban declared that democracy had ended and that Islamic law sufficed to govern the State Party. The Committee also notes with deep concern that the de facto authorities have subsequently issued a series of sweeping edicts and decrees providing for systematic distinctions, exclusions and restrictions based on sex that institutionalize discrimination against women, in violation of article 1 of the Convention. The Committee notes that such discrimination affects every aspect of public, political, social, economic and cultural life. It excludes women and girls from secondary and tertiary education, most forms of employment and participation in political and public life; severely restricts their right to freedom of movement; and subjects them to public behaviour and dress codes that further undermine their dignity and autonomy. The Committee is further alarmed by the complete rollback of progress made towards gender equality and the dismantling of legal and constitutional mechanisms that provided women and girls with access to justice and remedies to claim their rights, including those remedies set out in the Law on the Elimination of Violence against Women. The Committee also notes with concern the legal vacuum that has been created because the de facto authorities' have asserted that their extremist interpretation of Islamic law is the prevailing legal framework while simultaneously conducting an ongoing review of pre-2021 laws for sharia compliance, a situation that has been combined with a profound lack of clarity regarding which provisions of the 1964 Constitution remain in effect. This vacuum has resulted in inconsistent and opaque application of religious and customary law that reinforces patriarchal norms and entrenches gender inequality, leaving women vulnerable to arbitrary treatment and abuse, especially in such areas as family law, inheritance and protection from gender-based violence. […] 10. The Committee calls upon the international community to exercise leverage on the de facto authorities through diplomatic initiatives, targeted sanctions and conditional assistance programmes in which any support is explicitly linked to concrete progress in restoring constitutional protections for women and girls, in accordance with international human rights standards. The Committee urges international partners to provide technical assistance for constitutional and legal reform processes, support the documentation of violations

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not considered personal property; all communications were checked. All Afghan women were facing the same type of discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, religion or where they lived. The Olympic Committee in Afghanistan was under the control of the Taliban; the Committee was called on to show support for Afghan athletes, who were largely based outside of Afghanistan. **Questions by a Committee Expert** A Committee Expert said the access of women to inheritance was an area where there had been modest progress. Courts were currently led by male religious leaders. Forced marriage and child marriage were other concerning areas. […]	of international humanitarian law and human rights law, and facilitate dialogue between the de facto authorities and constitutional law experts, Islamic scholars and women's rights advocates in order to develop frameworks that reconcile religious principles and international human rights obligations, including through the application of the Faith for Rights framework of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Committee calls upon regional organizations and neighbouring countries to refrain from legitimizing or normalizing the current discriminatory legal framework, and to support the legitimate work of Afghan civil society organizations and women's rights groups in exile that are advocating in favour of legal reforms and constitutional protections for women's human rights. […] 16. The Committee, recalling its general recommendation No. 33 (2015) on women's access to justice, urges the de facto authorities to immediately restore and strengthen judicial and quasi-judicial institutions that guarantee women's equal access to justice, including the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, family courts, protection centres for women and legal aid services, and provide specialized training for judges and legal professionals on women's human rights and the criminal nature of gender-based violence. The Committee calls upon the de facto authorities to remove barriers to access to justice faced by women, particularly rural women, older women, single women, women living in poverty, women with disabilities and women from ethnic and religious minorities, by providing free legal aid, reasonable accommodations and interpretation services. 17. The Committee notes with concern: […] (f) The misuse of religious and cultural norms to perpetuate deeply rooted stereotypes about the roles and status of women in society and to reinforce patriarchal power structures in which women are treated as inferior to and dependent on men. 18. Drawing attention to the 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 (2019) on harmful practices, as revised, and in line with its general recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general

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	recommendation No. 19, the Committee recommends that the de facto authorities: (a) Immediately repeal all discriminatory laws and directives that perpetuate gender stereotypes and patriarchal norms, ensure that religious or cultural justifications are not invoked to legitimize discrimination against women, and promote interpretations of religious texts that are compatible with the Convention and the principles of human dignity, equality and non-discrimination; (b) Eliminate the punitive guardianship system, recognize the full legal capacity of women and their independent decisions about their lives, and ensure their rights to freedom of movement, free choice of dress, education, employment and equal participation in public life; (c) Eliminate all characterizations that subject women's religious identity, honour or dignity to compliance with behavioural norms, and raise awareness that women's dignity is inherent and unconditional; […] 21. The Committee calls upon religious and traditional leaders to: challenge religious interpretations that legitimize harmful practices and discrimination against women; promote interpretations of Islam that affirm the dignity and equal rights of women; raise awareness at the community level to address root causes of gender-based violence and dismantle patriarchal attitudes and discriminatory norms; and create safe spaces for women to report gender-based violence and seek help. […] 28. The Committee urgently calls on the international community, in particular third States Parties, multilateral agencies, regional organizations, donors and humanitarian actors, to work in a coordinated manner: […] (c) To conduct social awareness campaigns in the media targeting religious leaders and the general public to raise awareness of the importance of civil registration of births and personal identity documents in order for women and their children to access basic services and exercise their human rights. […] 30. The Committee notes that the State Party had made important progress prior to 2021: more than 3.5 million girls had enrolled in schools by 2017, and a national education strategic plan emphasizing gender-sensitive infrastructure had been adopted. It notes with deepest concern that there has been a systematic and complete rollback of girls' and women's right to education since August 2021, and that Afghan women and girls

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	have been systematically deprived of access to education at all levels. The Committee is concerned that this situation not only constitutes extreme gender-based discrimination and oppression at present, but will also result in the disempowerment of women and girls in the State Party for generations to come. The Committee is particularly alarmed that: [...] (e) Boys and young girls are sent to religious madrasas at which curricula are often aligned with extremist interpretations of Islam that reinforce patriarchal attitudes and gender stereotypes; […] 41. The Committee urges the de facto authorities to eliminate all intersecting forms of discrimination against disadvantaged groups of women and ensure their substantive equality by: (a) Immediately ending the structural exclusion, targeted violence and denial of education faced by Hazara, Tajik and Uzbek women, ensuring their access to basic services without discrimination based on ethnicity or religion, and implementing targeted measures to address the particular needs of ethnic minority women in rural areas;
Thailand (https://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/meeting-summary/2025/06/examen-de-la-thailande-au-cedaw-les-experts-onusiens-se-penchent) **Questions by Committee Experts** A Committee Expert recognised important advances, including the marriage equality act, and the adoption of a national strategy on this issue. What measures had the State party adopted to ensure the territorialised adoption of gender policies in areas affected by armed conflict? What measures had been taken to harmonise religious and customary laws with State legislation and gender equality? How was it ensured that data collected reflected the multiple inequalities by marginalised groups? […] **Responses by the Delegation** Under the application of Islamic law in certain provinces, the Islamic family law was currently applied to Muslim citizens in the Southern Border Provinces. A hybrid court system was responsible for handling cases involving disputes with family cases. Muslim women who were victims of domestic violence and sexual violence could seek assistance through alternative avenues. Marriages were regulated under the Central Islamic Committee, which prohibited marriage for anyone under the age of 17. Most of the Southern Border	**CEDAW/C/THA/CO/8** 23. The Committee is concerned about: (a) he absence of a comprehensive strategy to address gender stereotypes, in view of the perpetuation of patriarchal attitudes within the family, religious communities, the education system and by the media, as well as to combat gender stereotypes, which are amplified and magnified by algorithmic bias and data bias; […] 49. The Committee welcomes the recent Amendment to the Civil and Commercial Code Act (No. 24), which raises the minimum age of marriage to 18 years, and notes the meetings with religious leaders on women's rights. However, it notes with concern: (a) That Islamic family and inheritance law, applicable in the Southern Border Provinces, is not in line with the Convention; (b) The exceptions to the minimum age of marriage in the State Party's legislation and in Islamic law, and the prevalence of child marriage and polygamy in some areas of the State Party; (c) That section 1453 of the Compilation of Civil and Commercial Code, prevents women from remarrying for 310 days after divorce or the death of the husband; (d) That women who undergo a religious wedding ceremony without civil marriage registration do

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Provinces were Muslim. There were also channels for grievances for Islamic women, including remedies for victims affected by the conduct of officials. Assistance had been provided to more than 3,000 victims, and remedy was also provided to those affected by violence in the Southern Border Provinces. […] The delegation said there were mechanisms in place to ensure girls from marginalised groups received education. […] A religious school, supported by the Government, was located in the Southern Border Provinces, providing additional opportunities for students. […] **Questions by a Committee Expert** […] Women in the Southern Border Provinces faced further issues, including female genital mutilation and unsafe abortions, as well as mental health issues due to the violence they experienced. How was the State addressing these issues? What steps was it taking to combat female genital mutilation, ensuring Muslim women could access care appropriate to their religious beliefs? […] How was the State party effectively implementing the international standards for the treatment of prisoners as provided for in the Nelson Mandela Rules and the Bangkok Rules? […] **Responses by the Delegation** The delegation said inmates in the prison system received three nutritious meals daily which respected local, cultural and religious practices, and drinking water was supplied in adequate quantities. […] **Questions by a Committee Expert** […] Polygamy was prohibited under the Civil Code, but it was still practiced. What enforcement mechanisms were in place to eradicate exceptions permitting marriage under the age of 18? What progress was being envisaged in harmonising Islamic family and inheritance law? What was the body specifically assigned for this important task? How was the State party addressing systemic barriers that Muslim women faced in accessing divorce? What concrete steps were being taken to eradicate polygamous unions? **Responses by the Delegation** The delegation said Islamic family law was currently provided to Muslim citizens in the Southern Border Provinces. Government authorities had supported the application of the use of Islamic family law in line with human rights and standards.	not benefit from the same protection, particularly upon dissolution of the union; (e) That Muslim women face barriers in gaining access to a divorce under Islamic law, and that unilateral divorce (talaq) is only available to husbands. 50. The Committee recommends that the State Party: (a) Ensure that religious and customary justice systems fully harmonize their norms, procedures and practices with the Convention, and provide relevant capacity-building to religious and traditional leaders; (b) Amend article 1448 of the Compilation of Civil and Commercial Code and remove any exceptions to the age of marriage of 18 years for both women and men; apply the prohibition of polygamy, enshrined in article 1452 of the Code, throughout the State Party; and strengthen measures to eliminate child, forced and polygamous marriage, including through adequate penalties and by entering into a dialogue on faith and rights under the Faith for Rights framework with the Central Islamic Council of Thailand and religious and customary leaders; (c) Repeal section 1453 of the Compilation of Civil and Commercial Code to abolish the waiting period for women to remarry; (d) Ensure that religious wedding ceremonies can be administered only after the civil registration of a marriage, and protect the rights of women upon the dissolution of religious and customary unions, in line with the Committee's general recommendation No. 29 (2013) on the economic consequences of marriage, family relations and their dissolution; (e) Eliminate any gender-based inequalities between women and men in gaining access to divorce under Islamic law, including the practice of unilateral divorce through triple talaq; provide legal advice and assistance to Muslim women seeking divorce under Islamic law; and discuss related guidelines with local administrations and religious and traditional leaders.

Excerpts from United Nations reports (from 2017 to 2025)

Reports by the Secretary-General

Secretary-General's 2017 report on effective promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (A/72/219):
"26. The role of religious leaders and faith-based actors in promoting human rights, including rights of persons belonging to minorities, is highlighted in the "Faith for Rights" initiative, launched by OHCHR with an expert workshop in Beirut in March 2017. This initiative provides space for cross-disciplinary reflection on the deep and mutually enriching connections between religions and human rights. The initiative has led to the adoption of the Beirut Declaration and its corresponding 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights", which include the pledge to stand up for the rights of all persons belonging to minorities 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."

Secretary-General's 2017 report on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief (A/72/381):
"94. States noted that Governments and political officials had spoken out against religious intolerance. This type of action at the highest level possible, including on the part of religious officials, is critical to countering negative stereotyping and stigmatization. Religious leaders are potentially very important human rights actors, as stressed by the High Commissioner. It is in this context that faith-based and civil society actors participating in an OHCHR workshop in March 2017 adopted the Beirut Declaration and its corresponding 18 commitments on the theme 'Faith for rights'."

Secretary-General's 2018 report on the work of the Organization (A/73/1):
"93. […] We have also supported approaches that enhance inter-faith and inter-community understanding through the Faith for Rights initiative be means of which faith-based actors explore the deep connections between religion and human rights."

Secretary-General's 2018 report on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief (A/73/153):
"16. Religious leaders are potentially very important human rights actors, and OHCHR has launched an initiative to engage religious leaders in speaking out against intolerance. The Beirut Declaration of March 2017 and the associated "Faith for Rights" framework are addressed to faith-based actors, who are defined in a wide manner to include theistic, non-theistic, atheistic or other believers. The "Faith for Rights" framework provides 18 operative commitments through which faith-based actors have articulated how "Faith" can stand up for "Rights" more effectively so that both can enhance each other. On 6 and 7 December 2017, OHCHR and the Government of Morocco co-organized the Rabat+5 symposium on the follow-up to the Rabat Plan of Action, providing a platform for the exchange practices and discussion of concrete "Faith for Rights" projects at the grass-roots level in various parts of the world. […]

22. The expert conclusions and recommendations of the Rabat Plan of Action are based on legislative patterns, judicial practices and policies. They provide some guidance to stakeholders, including the national legislatures and the judiciary, in implementing the international standards relating to the prohibition of incitement to racial, national and religious hatred. The Plan of Action outlines a six-part threshold test for expressions considered criminal offences: context; speaker; intent; content and form; extent of speech act; and likelihood, including imminence (see A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, appendix, para. 29). […]

51. The Rabat+5 symposium, co-organized by OHCHR, offered an opportunity for various stakeholders to engage with experts who had contributed to the elaboration of the Rabat Plan of Action and the 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights" (see para. 16 above) and to exchange experiences in the area of

combating violence in the name of religion. The broad and diverse participation in the symposium reflected an interest in guidance and the relevance of the emerging standards in the context of faith and human rights. As human rights are by definition a multi-stakeholder exercise, the "Faith for Rights" framework is a good example of States, State religious authorities, faith-based and civil society organizations, national human rights institutions and individuals working together in the collaborative networks called for by the action plan. […]
61. […] Moreover, in March 2017, the Human Rights Council adopted thematic and country-specific resolutions which recall Council resolution 16/18 and its follow-up resolutions (resolution 34/8, twenty-sixth preambular paragraph) or encourage increasing efforts to further promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence in all sectors of society in accordance with Council resolution 16/18 and the Rabat Plan of Action (resolution 34/22, para. 14)."

Secretary-General's 2018 report on a global call for action for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (A/73/371):
"64. […] In Rabat, on 6 and 7 December 2017, the Rabat+5 Symposium on the follow-up to the Rabat Plan of Action offered an opportunity for various stakeholders to engage with experts on the elaboration of the Rabat Plan of Action and the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights and its 18 commitments, and to exchange experiences in the area of combating violence in the name of religion."

Secretary-General's 2018 report on promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace (A/73/391):
"28. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) continued to implement the follow-up to the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights and its 18 commitments, a framework providing space for cross-disciplinary reflection and action on the mutually enriching connections between religions and human rights. In Rabat in December 2017, more than 100 States, national human rights institutions, regional organizations, religious authorities and faith-based civil society actors participated in an OHCHR symposium to discuss the implementation of the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence. In May 2018, OHCHR engaged with and consulted young people in a regional workshop in Tunis on the role of youth faith actors in promoting human rights in the Middle East and North Africa."

Letter dated 20 September 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/73/399, annex):
"Vienna+25 Building Trust — Making Human Rights a Reality for All: […]
VIII. Recommendations to other entities
64. Call upon religious leaders to implement the Faith for Rights Declaration and Plan of Action and the Rabat Plan of Action in regard to action against incitement to hatred."

Secretary-General's 2018 report on the United Nations operation in Cyprus (S/2018/25):
"27. On 28 September, the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process, in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), convened the third round table on human rights since 2013. OHCHR introduced the "Faith for Rights" initiative, launched in March 2017 with the adoption of the Beirut Declaration, in which faith-based civil society actors recognized "religious or belief convictions as a source for the protection of the whole spectrum of inalienable human entitlements". Religious leaders and representatives from 16 religious groups and civil society organizations participated in the discussion in Cyprus, and the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments were translated into Greek and Turkish by the Religious Track."

Secretary-General's 2019 report on the United Nations operation in Cyprus (S/2019/37):
"29. The religious leaders of Cyprus sustained their engagement within the framework of the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process, under the auspices of the Embassy of Sweden. On 25 October, the religious leaders addressed a joint letter to the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders expressing hope for a fruitful continuation of the settlement negotiations. They also engaged in other joint initiatives, such as advocating for the preservation of religious artefacts and launching social media campaigns to promote tolerance and to combat violence against women and girls."

Secretary-General's 2019 report on effective promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (A/74/215):
"47. The role and responsibilities of religious leaders and faith-based actors in promoting human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minority groups, are highlighted in the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights and the 18 commitments on Faith for Rights (A/HRC/40/58, annexes I and II). OHCHR uses the framework for training and advocacy purposes with religious minority groups, civil society organizations and United Nations human rights mechanisms, including the Special Rapporteur on minority issues. In May and November 2018, OHCHR organized two regional workshops, in Tunis and in Marrakech, Morocco, focusing on the role of youth faith actors in promoting human rights, combating incitement to hatred and identifying future steps to protect religious minority groups in the Middle East and North Africa region. In thematic and mission reports, the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief has called upon States to use the Faith for Rights framework of specific commitments and practical measures to address the related phenomena of incitement to religious hatred, discrimination and violence (A/HRC/40/58, para. 21).

48. In April 2019, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights referred to the Faith for Rights framework in her press statement concerning the revised Penal Code of Brunei Darussalam, which includes provisions that may encourage violence and discrimination, inter alia, against religious minority groups, and she stressed that the Government, religious authorities and a wide range of civil society actors should work together to uphold human dignity and equality for all. At the Global Summit on Religion, Peace and Security, the High Commissioner highlighted the importance of protecting religious minority groups, in particular where they have been targeted by incitement to hatred and violence on the basis of exclusionary interpretation, with religion or belief being used for political gain. Furthermore, she noted that the 18 commitments are intended to be used to reach out to people of different religions and beliefs in all regions of the world in order to promote a common, action-oriented platform (see A/HRC/40/58, annex II)."

Secretary-General's 2019 report on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief (A/74/229):
"29. The Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights" (A/HRC/40/58, annexes I and II) highlight the role and responsibilities of religious leaders and faith-based actors in promoting human rights. OHCHR continues to use this framework for training and advocacy purposes with faith-based actors, civil society organizations and United Nations human rights mechanisms. In 2018, OHCHR organized two regional workshops, in Tunis and in Marrakech, Morocco, focusing on the role of youth faith actors in promoting human rights, combating incitement to hatred and identifying future steps to protect religious minorities in the Middle East and North Africa region. […]

81. OHCHR has engaged on different related issues with various stakeholders, including religious leaders, field presences and United Nations country teams, national human rights commission, academic institutes, and the business and private sector. In addition to its work on the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights" with religious and faith-based actors, it is working with information technology companies on a number of human rights issues, including multiple discrimination, artificial intelligence, hate speech and the incitement to racial, national and religious hatred. OHCHR has also been engaging with a number of national and international organizations working to combat anti-Semitism. It is a member of the working group on the United Nations strategy and plan of action on hate speech and will be very involved in

their implementation, given that a number of the substantive mandates and mechanisms of OHCHR cover a range of issues relating to hate speech and incitement to racial, national and religious hatred.

82. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has spoken out in various public forums, including the Human Rights Council. For example, in the July 2018 update on a country situation, the High Commissioner noted that Council resolution 16/18, the Rabat Plan of Action and the Beirut Declaration could be useful to address the advocacy of hatred that incites violence, discrimination or hostility based on religion or belief (A/HRC/38/CRP.2, para. 49). At the Global Summit on Religion, Peace and Security, the High Commissioner highlighted the importance of protecting religious minorities, in particular when they have been targeted through incitement to hatred and violence."

Secretary-General's 2019 report on the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region (A/74/262):

"19. From 19 to 21 November 2018, for the first time since its establishment, the Centre organized activities in Djibouti in partnership with the Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions and the National Human Rights Commission of Djibouti. Activities included a workshop on the prevention of hate speech and the protection of human rights while countering terrorism. Around 30 participants, including 10 women, attended the workshop: government officials, members and staff of the Commission, civil society organizations, religious leaders and journalists. The workshop included discussions on the United Nations Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (A/70/674), the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence (A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, appendix), the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on Faith for Rights (A/HRC/40/58, annexes I and II), and the implementation of human rights norms by law enforcement and investigators concerning hate speech, violent extremism and the fight against terrorism. The workshop also included discussions on the situation regarding hate speech and violent extremism in Djibouti and efforts to prevent these phenomena as well as terrorism.

20. From 2 to 5 May 2018, in Tunis, the Centre organized a regional workshop on the role of youth faith actors in promoting human rights in the Middle East and North Africa region to consult young human rights activists and religious leaders on the best way to implement the Faith for Rights framework in the region and to address the vulnerabilities of young people to incitement to hatred and violence in the name of religion. Twenty-five participants, including 10 women, attended the workshop, which involved government officials, experts, human rights educators and United Nations staff. Participants examined the general context, analysed the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights and its 18 commitments on Faith for Rights, and discussed their potential integration into capacity-building and education programmes to address religious radicalization of youth. The workshop identified ideas on the best ways to continue working together on promoting human rights."

Secretary-General's 2019 report on the promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace (A/74/476):

"23. United Nations entities continued to broaden their engagement in global frameworks with faith-based actors as key players in conflict-resolution and peacebuilding. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights continued the implementation of the "Faith for rights" framework, aimed at reaching out to persons belonging to religions and holding beliefs in all regions of the world, with a view to enhancing cohesive, peaceful and respectful societies."

Secretary-General's 2020 report on the United Nations operation in Cyprus (S/2020/23):

"35. The religious leaders of Cyprus sustained their commitment to peacebuilding and reconciliation within the framework of the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process, under the auspices of the Embassy of Sweden. The religious leaders, who have been meeting regularly since March 2011, cooperated with OHCHR and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to uphold the right to freedom of religion. They organized language classes (Turkish and Greek) and thematic seminars on human rights, religious awareness and gender issues and successfully supported pilgrimages on both sides of the divide."

Secretary-General's 2020 report on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief (A/75/369):
"79. […] As a member of the working group to operationalize the United Nations strategy and plan of action on hate speech, OHCHR developed its own strategy on hate speech.
80. On 22 June 2020, OHCHR issued a guidance note on racial discrimination in the context of COVID-19 crisis that addressed manifestations of religious discrimination and recommended actions to be taken by States, leaders and civil society.
81. On 28 May 2020, the High Commissioner, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide and the High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations opened the virtual consultation for a global pledge for action by religious actors and faith-based organizations to address the COVID-19 pandemic in collaboration with the United Nations. The High Commissioner urged religious leaders to speak out firmly against intolerance and hate speech, which have been aimed at multiple minority communities throughout the world.
82. OHCHR organized regional workshops and webinars on the implementation of the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on faith for rights and on enhancing civic space and addressing hate speech in social media. In January 2020, OHCHR launched the #Faith4Rights toolkit, which included 18 learning modules and offered peer-to-peer exercises. OHCHR, together with Religions for Peace, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, has been piloting the toolkit online.
83. On 18 November 2019, the Deputy High Commissioner spoke at the seventh meeting of the Istanbul Process, at which she reiterated the call of the previous High Commissioner to focus the Istanbul Process on implementation, discussing in an inclusive exchange with civil society what worked, and to put in place a solid road map."

Secretary-General's 2021 report on his mission of good offices in Cyprus (S/2021/5):
"16. Marking its tenth anniversary, the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process, under the auspices of the Embassy of Sweden, continued its role of upholding the commitment of the religious leaders to peacebuilding and reconciliation, responding to cases of vandalism and provocation at places of worship and issuing public statements counteracting displays of hate with calls for religious freedom, coexistence and peace. A principal concern of the religious leaders remained the present and future status of their places of worship and the continued lack of proper maintenance and protection for those places, in accordance with the principles of the right to freedom of religion or belief. In addition, to mark the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign and the twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the Religious Track focused on women's rights and equality, including through a webinar on the theme "Violence against women and girls, freedom of religion or belief and gender equality", held on 23 November in cooperation with the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe."

Secretary-General's 2021 report on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief (A/76/164):
"61. OHCHR has been piloting the #Faith4Rights toolkit with faith-based actors, academics and United Nations human rights mechanisms at the national, regional and global levels. The toolkit translates the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights" (A/HRC/40/58, annexes I and II) into practical peer-to-peer learning programmes, offering concrete ideas for exercises and cases to debate on addressing incitement to hatred and violence against minorities, including in a pandemic context. […]
82. […] The Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights" recognize the importance of engaging religious leaders in addressing intolerance and standing up for human rights firmly and promptly. The Secretary-General has also emphasized the crucial role of religious leaders in addressing the multiple challenges of COVID-19, including hate speech, continuity of education and violence against women and girls."

Secretary-General's 2021 report on effective promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (A/76/255):
"38. The 18 modules of the #Faith4Rights toolkit, a peer-to-peer learning programme launched online by OHCHR in 2020, contain specific ideas for exercises, such as how to address incitement to hatred and violence against minorities, especially in the context of COVID-19. In addition, webinars entitled "Keeping the faith in times of hate" and "Confronting COVID-19 from the prism of faith, gender equality and human rights" were conducted with Religions for Peace, the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, the Special Rapporteur on minority issues and representatives of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women."

Secretary-General's 2022 report on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief (A/77/487):
"18. On 2 and 3 December 2021, discussions at the fourteenth session of the Forum on Minority Issues focused on challenges, opportunities and initiatives to prevent conflict and protect the human rights of minorities, in line with the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities and other relevant international instruments. In that context, participants reflected on the 18 Commitments on Faith for Rights and committed to supporting each other in the implementation of the Declaration, including through exchange of practices in, inter alia, the areas of intercommunity mediation, conflict resolution, early detection of communal tensions and remedial techniques. […]
36. OHCHR conducted a number of peer-to-peer learning events in 2021, piloting the interactive methodology and case studies of the Faith for Rights (#Faith4Rights) toolkit, including for civil servants in Brazil and Nigeria (with the Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion or Belief), judges in Indonesia (with the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights and the Indonesian Institute for an Independent Judiciary) and several universities, as well as Chevening scholars from more than 60 countries. United Nations human rights mechanisms contributed to those webinars, notably the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief and the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, as did members of the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. […]
61. Internet providers, social media platforms and other operators in the digital space continue to struggle in trying to strike the right balance between responding effectively to the amplification and spread of hatred in the digital space while avoiding measures which could undermine freedom of expression. The Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the Rabat Plan of Action and the Faith for Rights framework and toolkit, as well as general comments and recommendations of the human rights treaty bodies and recommendations of Human Rights Council special procedures mandate holders, provide clear guidance for addressing these issues. It is imperative that we make progress in these areas quickly."

Secretary-General's 2023 report on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief (A/78/241):
"26. During the reporting period, the Faith for Rights framework and its peer-to-peer learning methodology were applied in workshops and webinars facilitated by OHCHR together with religious leaders and faith-based organizations, United Nations human rights mechanisms and other partners. In October and November 2022, OHCHR and the Faith for Rights Academy organized four workshops with religious leaders and faith-based actors in the United Kingdom. In December 2022, the Gandhi-King Global Academy, the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief and OHCHR launched the online course "Religions, Beliefs and Human Rights: A 'Faith for Rights' Approach" addressing the role of religious and faith-based actors in promoting human rights and how the intersection of religion and human rights can facilitate sustainable peace. […]
59. Interfaith harmony and mutual respect should be promoted, in the interest of all communities. Exchanges of lessons learned and promising practices should continue to be promoted, including through the Faith for Rights framework. Political and religious leaders have a particularly crucial role to play in speaking out clearly, firmly and immediately against disrespect and intolerance – not only of their own communities, but of any group subjected to attack."

Secretary-General's 2023 report on effective promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (A/78/306):
"24. The introductory note also mentioned that the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence highlighted that minorities and other vulnerable groups constituted the majority of victims of incitement to hatred, and members of minorities were also persecuted through the abuse of vague domestic legislation, jurisprudence and policies (A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, appendix, para. 11). Furthermore, the Beirut Declaration and its 18 Commitments on Faith for Rights expands on article 2 of the Declaration with the specific pledges of faith-based actors to denounce all instances of advocacy of hatred that incites to violence, discrimination or hostility, and to stand up for the right of all persons belonging to minorities to participate equally and effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life (A/HRC/40/58, annex II, commitments VI and VII)."

Secretary-General's 2023 report on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace (A/78/591):
"61. Protecting religious or belief minorities and combating incitement to hatred remained the focus areas of the Faith for Rights framework and its peer-to-peer learning methodology, which OHCHR applied in workshops and webinars, facilitated together with religious leaders and faith-based organizations, United Nations human rights mechanisms and other partners. For example, OHCHR and the European Commission held three peer-to-peer learning events on using the #Faith4Rights toolkit, targeting staff in European Union delegations and at Headquarters. In 2022, OHCHR and the Faith for Rights Academy organized four online and in -person workshops with more than 80 religious leaders, faith-based actors and media professionals in the United Kingdom to promote minority rights and gender equality and address community tensions and environmental crises."

Secretary-General's 2024 report on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief (A/79/284):
"13. In November 2023, OHCHR and the National Human Rights Council of Morocco organized a workshop in Rabat with religious actors, women's rights experts, academics and parliamentarians from the Middle East and North Africa region, following up on the use of the Faith for Rights framework by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in dialogues with States parties and in its concluding observations. The pilot project under the Committee's knowledge hub was focused on peer-to-peer learning and advocacy to ensure that culture, tradition and certain religious interpretations were not used to violate women's rights. The workshop participants reflected on involving male and female parliamentarians in the Committee's knowledge hub, while analysing their role in strengthening women's rights in national legislation and formulating recommendations for lifting the existing reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
14. In April and May 2024, Religions for Peace, the United Nations University for Peace, the United States Institute of Peace and OHCHR continued to facilitate weekly exchanges based on the online course of the Gandhi-King Global Academy on "Religions, Beliefs, and Human Rights: a Faith for Rights Approach". The instructor-led format blended a self-paced curriculum of the free online course with live interactive webinars. It used the peer-to-peer learning methodology of the #Faith4Rights toolkit for religious or belief actors, policymakers and practitioners to discuss causes of religious discrimination and strategies to prevent, manage and resolve conflict. […]
39. In November 2023, OHCHR organized a peer-to-peer learning week on "Faith for Rights", bringing together religious leaders, faith-based actors, diplomats, treaty body members, special rapporteurs, academics, representatives of United Nations entities, regional organizations, national human rights institutions, civil society and staff of Meta's Oversight Board. More than 100 participants shared good practices and lessons learned among the network of facilitators for peer-to-peer learning using the #Faith4Rights toolkit. A round-table brainstorming session at the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights focused on addressing religious hatred, in follow-up to the Rabat Plan

of Action, the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights and Human Rights Council resolutions 16/18, 52/6 and 53/1. OHCHR also organized a meeting among religious leaders and faith-based actors linked to the Geneva Spiritual Appeal, the Interreligious Platform of Geneva and the Faith for Rights network. Participants compiled a snapshot of peer-to-peer learning and action points with a view to enlarging the Faith for Rights "commUNity of practices".

40. As a result of meetings in May 2024 co-organized by OHCHR with the American University of Paris, Anglia Ruskin University and the educational charity Bridging Spiritual Cultures, several academics and civil society actors from Australia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, France, Lebanon, Maldives, Nigeria, Norway, Tunisia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America created an inter-university "Faith for Rights" platform. This new partnership will provide academic support for OHCHR work on religion and human rights, discrimination on the basis of religion or belief and incitement to hatred, as well as gender equality as it intersects with freedom of religion or belief. […]

61. Furthermore, I call in particular upon political, community and religious leaders to speak out against incitement to violence and religious hatred. Digital platforms should enforce content moderation policies on hateful content in accordance with international human rights standards, as well as listen to those most affected by online hate speech and provide better channels for raising concerns that result in prompt action. Governments and regulators should ensure effective remedies against any advocacy of religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence. The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the Rabat Plan of Action and the "Faith for Rights" framework and toolkit, as well as relevant general comments and recommendations of the human rights treaty bodies and recommendations of Human Rights Council special procedures mandate holders, can be drawn upon to address these issues. […]

65. To build societies in which expressions of religious hatred have become socially unacceptable requires inclusive faith literacy. The "Faith for Rights" framework has been engaging with Governments, religious leaders and a wide range of civil society actors in peer-exchanges about concrete efforts on the ground. For example, several religious leaders who are part of the Faith for Rights "commUNity of practices" have advocated for people of all faiths to have unimpeded access to their places of worship, and they have also condemned incitement to violence, discrimination or hostility in the name of religion. Exchanges of lessons learned and promising practices of interfaith harmony and mutual respect should continue to be promoted, including through the "Faith for Rights" framework.

66. Furthermore, human rights education may be implemented not only in schools and public media campaigns but also through inclusive sports teams, local skills training, women's civil society programmes, projects jointly led by religious and community leaders, as well as inclusive participation of young people, who will carry the lessons of these shared social connections into the future. Peer-to-peer learning and awareness-raising may promote respect and understanding between individuals and communities across religions and beliefs, upholding the dignity of all."

Secretary-General's 2025 report on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief (A/80/287):

"18. In October 2024, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women adopted its general recommendation no. 40 (2024) on the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems. The Committee recommended that States Parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women engage religious leaders and faith-based actors in the process of addressing areas of possible tensions between some interpretations of religious traditions and human rights, such as through the Faith for Rights framework of the OHCHR. A related formulation was also included in the Rome Communiqué in June 2025, at the conclusion of the second Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue.

19. In January 2025, Albania and the University of Essex hosted the inaugural conference against hate of the HR30 Forum in Tirana, which was co-sponsored by the office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, OHCHR and the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief. In the resulting Tirana Framework for Confronting Intolerance, Governments, private sector actors and civil society organizations

were urged to assess the role of education, counter-speech, emerging technologies and legal mechanisms, including existing frameworks such as the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights and guidance offered by UNESCO, in addressing hate speech, both online and offline. The Framework also includes a call for building multi-sector alliances to collaboratively combat intolerance, including antisemitism, Islamophobia/anti-Muslim hate, and prejudice against Christian minorities and other religious or belief minorities. Moreover, it includes a call upon technology and social media companies to establish clear, transparent mechanisms to identify and address hate speech while respecting free expression.

20. At the general assembly of the ACT Alliance – Action by Churches Together in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, in October 2024, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights stated that the world needed faith-based actors to come together and promote respect, knitting together a renewed social contract based on trust, respect and compassion, in order to overcome religious hatred. In that context, he stressed the importance of implementing the 18 commitments on Faith for Rights, in which religious leaders and faith-based actors had pledged to stand up for the right of persons belonging to minorities to participate equally and effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life, to publicly denounce all instances of religious hatred that incite violence, discrimination or hostility, to address hate speech through compassion and solidarity that transcend the boundaries between faiths and to ensure that religions and beliefs were not instrumentalized for political benefit. […]

30. In October 2024, the International Association for the Defence of Religious Liberty and OHCHR jointly organized the Faith for Rights peer-learning experience in Portugal, with workshops at the Human Rights Centre of the law faculty of the University of Coimbra and interactive engagement with members of religious minorities at their places of worship in Lisbon. In November, OHCHR launched the second edition of the #Faith4Rights toolkit in Chinese, English, French and Spanish [See www.ohchr.org/en/documents/tools-and-resources/faith4rights-toolkit]. Instructor-led and online courses using the peer-to-peer learning methodology of the toolkit were offered during the reporting period in Canada, Costa Rica, Egypt, France, Lebanon, Nigeria, Portugal, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The Faith for Rights framework and toolkit have been referred to by United Nations treaty bodies and several Special Rapporteurs in their communications and thematic reports, as well as at the regional level by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the European Union, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Also in November, OHCHR organized round-table discussions on countering the instrumentalization of religions, beliefs or their followers to incite hatred and violence. [A/HRC/40/58, annex II, commitment X; Human Rights Council resolutions 16/18, 53/1 and 55/16.]

50. In November 2024, OHCHR organized the sixth annual meeting of the Faith for Rights commUNity of practices, which facilitated ongoing dialogue and exchange of information with faith-based organizations, governments, parliamentarians, academic communities and the United Nations system, also in line with action 55 of the Pact for the Future . From November 2024, leading up to the second Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue, held in Rome in June 2025, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and OHCHR jointly organized a series of hybrid exchanges between faith-based actors and parliamentarians to identify challenges and share good practices in countering hatred based on religion or belief. These exchanges deepened United Nations engagement with national parliaments and enhanced the human rights literacy of parliamentarians to maintain support for implementing the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as well as relevant United Nations resolutions and action plans. In the communiqué issued in June 2025 following the second Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue, participants rejected the misuse of religions or beliefs and the manipulation of their followers to incite hatred and violence, for example for electoral purposes or political gains. […]

55. Building societies in which expressions of religious hatred are socially unacceptable requires inclusive faith literacy. The Faith for Rights framework has been facilitating engagement with Governments, religious leaders and a wide range of civil society actors in peer exchanges regarding concrete efforts on the ground. Lessons learned and promising practices of interfaith harmony and mutual respect should continue to be exchanged, including through the Faith for Rights framework."

Reports by the High Commissioner for Human Rights

High Commissioner's 2017 report on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief (A/HRC/34/35):
"91. In that context and pursuant to the Rabat Plan of Action, OHCHR is reaching out within a "Faith for rights" initiative to stakeholders in the field of religion or belief. The overall objective of the initiative is to promote a collaborative definition of the role and responsibilities of leaders in promoting human rights, based on good practices and lessons learned."

Annual report 2018 of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/37/3):
"69. Through the Faith for Rights initiative, OHCHR has been engaging with faith-based actors to reflect on the deep connections between religions and human rights. In March 2017, theistic, non-theistic and atheistic participants in an OHCHR expert workshop adopted the Beirut Declaration and 18 commitments, which articulate how "faith" can stand up for "rights." The Declaration addresses incitement to religious hatred and the human rights responsibilities of religious leaders. In Tunisia, with technical support from OHCHR, the independent high authority for audio-visual communication developed a national barometer to monitor incitement to hatred, based on the Rabat Plan of Action (see A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, appendix). This model is being replicated in Côte d'Ivoire and Morocco."

OHCHR 2018 report on the question of human rights in Cyprus (A/HRC/37/22):
"38. […] On 28 September 2017, the Office of the Religious Track convened its third round table for human rights, bringing together faith-based actors and civil society organizations to introduce the OHCHR Faith for Rights initiative and promote interdisciplinary dialogue and cooperation on religion and human rights. The Office of the Religious Track translated the Beirut Declaration and its 18 Faith for Rights commitments into Greek and Turkish, in order to make it available for concrete projects for and with women, men and children in the whole island."

High Commissioner's 2018 report on rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (A/HRC/37/26):
"27. […] Over the past year, OHCHR has organized a series of meetings among faith-based and civil society actors, seeking to help them establish a respectful common ground on the essential principles of human dignity, equality and justice. In March 2017, they adopted the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on "Faith for rights". It aims to foster peaceful societies, which uphold diversity of belief, behaviour and thought as an intrinsic and inalienable right of all their people.

28. In May 2017, OHCHR organized a symposium for religious leaders and civil society representatives on the rights of women and children from the perspective of Islam in Dakar, which led to the creation of a national "Faith for rights" coalition in Senegal. In December 2017, together with Morocco, OHCHR organized a meeting for States, national human rights institutions, religious authorities and faith-based civil society actors in order to outline good practices and define modalities of support for existing and new "Faith for rights" projects. The Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments illustrate how faith can stand up for rights more effectively so that both enhance each other. The commitments also include a pledge to stand up for the rights of all persons belonging to minorities and to defend their freedom of religion or belief and their right to participate equally and effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life, as recognized by international human rights law.

29. UN treaty bodies have also raised issues related to religious diversity in their dialogues with States. For example, in its concluding observations of July 2017, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Nigeria "expedite the repeal or amendment of all discriminatory laws identified by the National Law Reform Commission following its comprehensive audit of discriminatory laws in the State party and include religious leaders in the process of addressing issues of faith and human rights, so as to build on several 'faith for rights' initiatives and identify common ground among all religions in the State party"."

High Commissioner's 2018 report on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief (A/HRC/37/44):
"28. […] Religious leaders are potentially very important human rights actors, and OHCHR has been undertaking an important activity which engages religious leadership. The Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights", launched in March 2017, are aimed at faith-based actors, who are defined in a broad manner to include theistic, non-theistic, atheistic or other believers. The Declaration provides 18 corresponding operative commitments through which faith-based actors can articulate how "Faith" can more effectively stand up for "Rights" in order to enhance each other. In December 2017, OHCHR and the Government of Morocco co-organized the "Rabat+5 symposium", offering a platform to exchange practices and discuss concrete "Faith for Rights" projects at the grass-roots level in various parts of the world. […]

80. On 6 and 7 December 2017, the Rabat+5 symposium offered an opportunity for various stakeholders to engage with experts who had contributed to the elaboration of the Rabat Plan of Action and the 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights" and to exchange experiences in the area of combating violence in the name of religion. The broad and diverse participation in the symposium reflected an interest in guidance and the relevance of the emerging standards in the context of faith and human rights. As human rights are by definition a multi-stakeholder exercise, the "Faith for Rights" framework is a good example of States, State religious authorities, faith-based and civil society organizations, national human rights institutions and individuals working together in the collaborative networks called for by the action plan."

High Commissioner's 2018 update on the situation of human rights of Rohingya people (A/HRC/38/CRP.2):
"49. Moreover, the Government should take further action to publicly condemn and speak out against any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence. It should also increase efforts further to promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence in all sectors of society in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 16/18 and the Rabat Plan of Action. In addition, the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on 'Faith for Rights' can be useful to address advocacy of hatred that incites to violence, discrimination or hostility, particularly when it is conducted in the name of religion or belief."

Summary of the 2018 expert workshop on the role and contribution of civil society organizations, academia, NHRIs and other relevant stakeholders in the prevention of human rights abuses (A/HRC/39/24):
"30. Ms. Anwar focused her presentation on the work of women's rights groups in countries where private actors and State authorities used religion to justify human rights violations and abuses. She noted that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was the human rights treaty that had attracted the most reservations, with some 60 per cent based on religion, notably on its article 16 regarding marriage and family relations. Therefore women's demands were thwarted in many States, and she noted that the work of women's rights groups was demonized as being against Islam or morality. There was limited space for debate and change, with little reflection of women's rights in decision-making processes. She noted that if it was only religious leaders who were seen to have the right to talk about Islam, then women would fear speaking out; many secular human rights activists had also disengaged with religious issues. However, non-governmental organizations such as Sisters in Islam (at the national level) and Musawah (at the international level) were working to build knowledge and courage to deal with a misogynistic reading of religion. Civil society efforts, for example writing letters to newspapers, submitting memorandums for law reform, and challenging in court a book ban and fatwa against Sisters in Islam, aimed to build a rights-based democratic culture.

31. She asserted that religion could be a source of empowerment and liberation if ideological non-State actors ceased silencing any demands for equality. Musawah had undertaken capacity-building and engaged in international advocacy, including by submitting to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women thematic reports and country-specific statements on reservations that justified the repression of women. Furthermore, she noted that the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on "Faith

for Rights" was important in order to turn the principles into action on the ground, for example by refining curriculums, teaching materials and textbooks wherever some religious interpretations, or the way they were presented, may give rise to the perception of condoning violence or discrimination (twelfth commitment). She stressed the importance of devising a human rights-based counter-narrative in order to build knowledge and prevent violent extremism."

High Commissioner's 2018 report on youth and human rights (A/HRC/39/33):
"77. OHCHR engages with and consults youth in the context of its Faith for Rights initiative, which follows up on the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights and its 18 commitments. A first regional workshop was held in Tunis in May 2018, focusing on the role of youth faith actors in the promotion of human rights in the Middle East and North Africa region. OHCHR plans to organize more workshops in order to provide space for cross-disciplinary reflection and action on the deep and mutually enriching connections between religions and human rights."

Annual report 2019 of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/40/3):
"88. In Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia, OHCHR conducted workshops on the role of religious leaders, women and youth in the promotion of human rights in the Middle East and North Africa, in line with the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence and the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on 'Faith for Rights'."

OHCHR 2019 report on the question of human rights in Cyprus (A/HRC/40/22):
"41. On 6 December 2017, the Office of the Religious Track participated in the Rabat+5 symposium on the follow-up to the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, highlighting the experiences of faith-based actors in promoting human rights in Cyprus. Having translated the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights and its 18 commitments into Greek and Turkish, the Office of the Religious Track highlighted its projects to promote the Faith for Rights initiative through awareness-raising campaigns on social media, collaboration with educators and journalists and cross-disciplinary dialogue on human rights between religious and non-religious actors from across the island."

High Commissioner's 2019 report on rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (A/HRC/40/30):
"45. OHCHR has been relying on the United Nations network on racial discrimination and protection of minorities, and the framework contained in the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights, for training and advocacy purposes with different stakeholders, including religious minorities, members of civil society and United Nations human rights mechanisms. The Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights" notably include the pledge to stand up for the rights of all persons belonging to minorities 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 and as a minimum standard of solidarity among all believers.

46. In the same context, OHCHR organized the first regional workshop in Tunis in May 2018, focusing on the role of young people of different faiths in the promotion of human rights in the Middle East and North Africa. Several ongoing initiatives were presented through interactive panel discussions, including initiatives on promoting minority rights through advocacy with United Nations human rights mechanisms and on youth entrepreneurship to prevent violent extremism.

47. In November 2018, OHCHR organized a conference in Morocco, with the participation of young people from the Middle East and North Africa and international experts, including the Special Rapporteur on minority issues. The conference focused on engaging members of civil society, in particular young people, to share their experience of promoting the rights of minorities, combating incitement to hatred and identifying future steps to protect religious minorities. It also aimed to encourage young people to engage in promoting respect and understanding, combating incitement to hatred and promoting the rights of religious minorities.

83. Respect for religious diversity and dialogue, and for the participation of minorities in various spheres of life, is essential for the development of a truly inclusive society. OHCHR used the United Nations network on racial discrimination and protection of minorities, and the framework in the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights, for training and advocacy purposes with religious minorities, members of civil society and United Nations human rights mechanisms."

2019 Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to the General Assembly (A/74/36):
"63. To implement the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence (A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, appendix) and the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights (A/HRC/40/58, annex I), OHCHR undertook research to identify the causes of discrimination faced by ethnic and religious groups in the Middle East and North Africa. […]
105. In Tunisia, OHCHR signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Religious Affairs on developing a human rights education programme and a legal framework on the rights of imams."

Annual report 2020 of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/43/3):
"54. In partnership with United Nations entities and other regional and national institutions, OHCHR continued to contribute to the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (see A/CONF.189/12), the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence (see A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, annex) and the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights (see A/HRC/40/58, annexes I and II), and the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech. […]

63. In August 2019, the High Commissioner addressed the Security Council in an Arria-formula meeting on advancing the safety and security of religious minorities in armed conflict. […]

117. Nationalism, hatred, and discrimination are interlinked and can severely impact the future of our world. Nationalism is on the rise in many countries, accompanied by outspoken racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and other forms of discrimination, including attacks on women's rights, and the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons. Pushbacks against the rights of racial and religious minorities in some countries are also a source of concern. […]"

High Commissioner's 2020 report on the situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslim minority and other minorities in Myanmar (A/HRC/43/18):
"35. Myanmar has a historic opportunity to develop a strong minority rights and non-discrimination regime that recognizes, protects and fulfils the rights of all. Putting in place legal and institutional guarantees for equality for all requires dismantling the current system of discriminatory laws, policies and practice, and adopting positive measures to effectively promote and protect equality for all and minority rights. Key international standards, including those set out in the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the Rabat Plan of Action on prohibition of national, racial or religious hatred, provide guidance for the elaboration of national strategies, policies, programmes and legal frameworks that promote tolerance, encourage positive inter-religious and inter-communal communication, and serve to counter advocacy of hatred that incites violence, hostility, intolerance and discrimination. […]

39. The role of political and religious leaders in speaking out firmly and promptly against intolerance, discriminatory stereotyping and instances of hate speech is critical. [A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, appendix, para. 36 and A/HRC/40/58, annex II.] The Beirut Declaration and its 18 Commitments on "Faith for Rights", along with positive examples from other countries, can provide a roadmap in this regard. [A/HRC/40/58, annexes I and II. These are guidance developed in collaboration with the United Nations, international human rights mechanisms and faith actors, designed to empower the latter to optimize their impact as human rights defenders and to address incitement to hatred. The #Faith4Rights toolkit, which translates this vision into 18 practical modules of peer-to-peer learning for faith actors, academic institutions and training experts, is a useful resource.] […]

46. The below recommendations relate specifically to the promotion and protection of the rights of Rohingya and other minorities in Myanmar. OHCHR remains ready to provide technical assistance to the implementation of these recommendations, as required, including through the establishment of a country presence. […] OHCHR recommends religious leaders and religious communities to:
(a) Systematically, promptly and firmly condemn any incident of incitement to religious hatred against Rohingya, other Muslims and other religious minorities by speaking out against intolerance, discriminatory stereotyping and instances of hate speech; and refrain from incitement to violence, hostility or discrimination;
(b) Stand up for equality for all people in Myanmar, in all circumstances, and for the rights of persons belonging to minorities, by defending their rights to participate equally and effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life and to freedom of religion or belief. [A/HRC/40/58, annex I, para. 17 and annex II, commitment VI]"

OHCHR 2020 report on the question of human rights in Cyprus (A/HRC/43/22):
"47. The religious leaders of Cyprus sustained their commitment to peacebuilding and religious freedom within the framework of the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process, under the auspices of the Embassy of Sweden. They have worked to build trust and confidence among their respective faith communities, who are divided because of the conflict, and they have conducted several activities and projects under the Faith for Rights framework. These included two seminars in December 2018 and October 2019, organized in cooperation with the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), for religious leaders and representatives of faith communities on international standards of freedom of religion or belief, including the relationship with freedom of expression. The seminar in October 2019 featured a special session on women's rights and freedom of religion or belief, as well as a training seminar for 20 youth and students from the five main faith communities of Cyprus. In October 2019, the Religious Track also organized a Faith for Rights seminar on the role that faith communities can play in combating human trafficking and supporting victims, in follow-up to the 2017 statement by the religious leaders condemning all forms of violence against women and girls.

48. The religious leaders also publicly denounced the terrorist attacks in New Zealand and Sri Lanka, and issued statements condemning instances of any advocacy of hatred that incites violence, discrimination or hostility in the name of religion or belief. The Religious Track has been using social media as a tool to increase the outreach in promoting respect for all faith traditions in Cyprus, in line with the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on Faith for Rights (A/HRC/40/58, annexes I–II). As an additional way to advocate jointly for the right to access and worship across the island, the religious leaders advised and were consulted by an academic researcher in a project mapping Christian and Muslim sites of religious heritage in Cyprus. […]

72. Despite the persisting division of Cyprus, numerous actors have continued to work to advance positive developments for the promotion and protection of human rights. During the reporting period, those developments have included sustained interreligious dialogue and capacity-building initiatives under the Faith for Rights framework by the religious leaders and faith communities; expanded activities in the area of peace education; the ongoing revitalization of religious and cultural heritage sites; and cooperation in new areas by groups across the island. In this respect, the work of intercommunal initiatives and of civil society remains essential, as is the need for consultation and cooperation between the various tracks."

High Commissioner's 2020 report on rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (A/HRC/43/28):
"29. As part of its work on countering discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities, OHCHR held a national short film competition and festival on minorities and human rights in Iraq. Since March, over 4,000 people had watched the leading short films in screening events in 17 out of the 19 governorates of Iraq, with social media and television coverage reaching thousands more. Participants emphasized that the discussions following the screenings of the films had enabled a forum for open discussion about human rights issues and concerns in Iraq, including the rights of minorities, gender-based violence, accountability for the atrocities committed during the conflict, discrimination and accountability. […]

35. […] In August, addressing the Security Council in an Arria-formula meeting on advancing the safety and security of persons belonging to religious minorities in armed conflicts, the High Commissioner noted that protecting minorities must begin before conflicts erupted. Disaggregated data by religion and ethnicity were also required. She also reiterated that the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence emphasized the role of politicians and religious leaders in preventing and speaking out against intolerance, discriminatory stereotyping and instances of hate speech. [A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, appendix, para. 36]

37. At the Global Summit on Religion, Peace and Security in April, the High Commissioner highlighted the importance of protecting religious minority groups, in particular in situations in which they had been targeted by incitement to hatred and violence on the basis of exclusionary interpretations that instrumentalized religions, beliefs or their followers for electoral purposes or political gains.

38. In April, the High Commissioner referred to the Faith for Rights framework in her press statement concerning the revised Penal Code of Brunei Darussalam, which included provisions that could encourage violence and discrimination against, inter alia, religious minority groups, and she stressed that the Government, religious authorities and a wide range of civil society actors should work together to uphold human dignity and equality for all.

39. At the end of her visit to Malaysia in October, the High Commissioner highlighted the Rabat Plan of Action as useful guidance in distinguishing between permissible speech and speech that could amount to incitement, and she offered the assistance of OHCHR and other United Nations human rights mechanisms to further explore that. […]

42. On the International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief, several special procedure mandate holders called on States to do more to stop hate crimes and to promote interfaith initiatives. In thematic and mission reports, the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief called upon States to use the Rabat Plan of Action and the Faith for Rights framework as a chart of specific commitments and practical measures to address the related phenomena of incitement to religious hatred, discrimination and violence. [A/73/362, para. 79; A/HRC/40/58/Add.1, para. 91.] In his report on combating antisemitism, the Special Rapporteur also referred to them as soft law instruments that could provide essential guidance for strategies to combat antisemitism and other forms of intolerance. [A/74/358, para. 73]

47. The High Commissioner noted with alarm a dangerous rise in intolerance, racism and religious hatred. She emphasized that interreligious dialogue was an important tool to unlock action and move towards creating change on the ground, based on concrete projects that gave priority to education and capacity-building of faith actors within a shared vision and framework across different religious communities. In April, the High Commissioner urged the Government of Brunei to halt the entry into force of the revised Penal Code, the provisions of which could encourage violence and discrimination against, among others, religious minorities in the country. In May, the High Commissioner condemned the rise in antisemitic incidents taking place in a number of European countries and the United States of America. The rise in attacks targeting Jews, along with other groups targeted because of their race or religion, was a matter of grave concern, and she urged all Governments to redouble their efforts to combat racism and related intolerance in all its forms. […]

49. The role and responsibilities of religious leaders and faith-based actors in promoting human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to religious minorities, are highlighted in the Beirut Declaration and its 18 Commitments on Faith for Rights. The Faith for Rights framework continues to be quoted and used by faith-based actors and civil society organizations. For example, the Group of 20 Interfaith Forums in Argentina and Japan recommended reducing incitement to hatred by supporting religious leaders and faith-based actors in fulfilling their human rights responsibilities as summarized in the Beirut Declaration and its 18 Commitments. Also referring to the Beirut Declaration, the Global Partners Forum on Faith Action for Children on the Move called, in its action plan, for the design and implementation of projects and initiatives aimed at promoting respect for and an understanding of minority groups, including those with different beliefs, faiths and religions, to reduce violence and xenophobic narratives and nurture peaceful societies.

50. At the regional level, OHCHR focused on the protection of religious minorities by organizing an activity in Tunis in October on enhancing civic space and addressing hate speech in social media in the Middle East and North Africa. OHCHR is also undertaking a comprehensive study of the standards and practices across the Middle East and North Africa region in order to identify the root causes of discrimination and inequalities faced by the various ethnic and religious groups, including ways to address gaps in their protection, participation and access to rights. The study was initiated in September 2019 and is expected to be finalized in 2020. It involves legal and sociocultural mapping and analysis of the current situation of ethnic and religious groups in the Middle East and North Africa Region. The study specifically incorporates a gender lens to identify forms of intersectional discrimination and inequalities faced by women and girls belonging to ethnic and religious groups."

High Commissioner's 2020 report on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief (A/HRC/43/72):

"34. Legislation prohibiting incitement to racial, national and religious hatred should be specific, should not be overly broad in either its scope or its application and should be consistent with the international standards on freedom of religion or belief and freedom of opinion and expression. States should ensure that there is no impunity in the judicial system and that prosecutions and adjudications are undertaken in accordance with the law.

35. Some useful guidance in this regard is provided by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Human Rights Committee. The Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence and its six-part threshold test, as well as continuing developments on what the threshold entails and what is considered to be advocacy of religious hatred constituting incitement may provide some guidance to those implementing the international standards relating to the prohibition of incitement to racial, national and religious hatred. […]

75. In 2019 OHCHR organized regional workshops in Marrakech, Djibouti and Tunis on implementing the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights, enhancing the civic space and addressing hate speech in social media. Furthermore, it finalized a training manual for judicial training institutions in the Middle East and North Africa on the protection of freedom of opinion and expression and the prohibition of hate speech. […]

77. OHCHR has engaged with national and international organizations working to combat antisemitism. As a member of the working group on the United Nations strategy and plan of action on hate speech, OHCHR is currently drafting its own strategy on hate speech.

78. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has spoken out on issues of freedom of religion and belief relevant to the many topics contained in the action plan, in various public forums, including at the Second Global Summit on Religion, Peace and Security, held in Geneva from 29 April to 1 May 2019. On that occasion, the High Commissioner highlighted the importance of protecting religious minorities, particularly those targeted through incitement to hatred and violence.

79. In August 2019, the High Commissioner addressed the Security Council, in an Arria formula meeting, on advancing the safety and security of persons belonging to religious minorities in armed conflicts, stressing that efforts to protect minorities must begin before conflicts erupt and that it is important to collect data disaggregated by religion and ethnicity. Referring to the Rabat Plan of Action, she emphasized the role of politicians and religious leaders in preventing and speaking out against intolerance, discriminatory stereotyping and hate speech."

High Commissioner's 2020 report on international cooperation in the field of human rights (A/HRC/44/28):

"22. Following the launch in 2017 by OHCHR of the "Faith for Rights" framework, the #Faith4Rights toolkit, as refined in 2019, contains prototypes of peer-to-peer learning modules, exploring the relationship between religions, beliefs and human rights. Taking the elimination of religious intolerance as a means to enhance international cooperation in human rights, the toolkit translates the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights and its 18 commitments into practical learning and capacity-building programmes. The 18 modules offer concrete ideas for learning exercises, share personal stories or provide inspiring examples of artistic expression."

OHCHR 2021 report on the question of human rights in Cyprus (A/HRC/46/23):

"54. The religious leaders of Cyprus sustained their commitment to peacebuilding and religious freedom within the framework of the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process, under the auspices of the Embassy of Sweden. For the first time in their 10 years of cooperation, the religious leaders and religious communities of Cyprus were physically divided and unable to meet owing to COVID-19 restrictions. The closure of the crossing points negatively affected interactions between the Christian and Muslim communities, as well as their ability to manifest their religion or belief. Religious communities were unable to participate in pilgrimages and services across the Green Line or to pay respect to their loved ones buried in cemeteries across the divide.

55. Within that context, the Office of the Religious Track sought to ensure continuity of interreligious dialogue and confidence-building activities through virtual meetings, including peer-to-peer learning activities under the "Faith for Rights" framework. Using that framework and the #Faith4Rights toolkit, the Office of the Religious Track continued to raise awareness of the rights to freedom of religion or belief, freedom of expression and gender equality, in cooperation with the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). It also used social media as a tool to increase outreach in promoting respect for all faith traditions in Cyprus, in line with the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights" (A/HRC/40/58, annexes I–II). The #Faith4Rights toolkit notably refers to examples and statements by the religious leaders of Cyprus in its module 5 on women, girls and gender equality, as well as in module 16 on ethical and spiritual leverage. [See https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/tools-and-resources/faith4rights-toolkit, pp. 32, 79 and 95.] In November 2020, the Office of the Religious Track held a webinar on women's rights and freedom of religion or belief with the participation of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief and OHCHR, and joined the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign, encouraging religious leaders and members of the faith communities to help end violence against women and girls.

56. The religious leaders also tackled the challenges of COVID-19 together by facilitating the understanding of COVID-19 response measures in different languages and faith traditions. The Office of the Religious Track served as a hub for sharing and discussion regarding the challenges and consequences of the pandemic and where measures in response to the pandemic were translated into English, Greek and Turkish. In a joint statement dated 20 March, the religious leaders called for everyone to pray fervently, act compassionately and remain in solidarity with each other, especially with the most vulnerable, and urged all faith communities to strictly follow the advice and directives issued by the World Health Organization and State health authorities, and remain responsible and hopeful without succumbing to fear and panic."

High Commissioner's 2021 report on rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (A/HRC/46/44):

"43. The #Faith4Rights toolkit, launched online by OHCHR in January, translates the Beirut Declaration and its 18 Commitments on Faith for Rights into practical peer-to-peer learning programmes that include concrete ideas for addressing incitement to hatred and violence against minorities, especially in the COVID-19 context. OHCHR has been piloting the #Faith4Rights toolkit with faith-based actors, academics and United Nations human rights mechanisms at the national, regional and global levels. Webinars on keeping the faith in times of hate and on confronting COVID-19 through the prism of faith, gender equality and human rights were conducted, in collaboration with Religions for Peace, United Nations human rights experts, and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (as part of its Knowledge Hub).

44. In February, the OHCHR Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa piloted the #Faith4Rights toolkit through a dedicated session during the MENA regional round of the Price Moot Court Competition in Lebanon. […]

62. At the virtual consultation held in May for a global pledge for action by religious actors and faith-based organizations to address the COVID-19 pandemic in collaboration with the United Nations, the High Commissioner stressed the powerful role of religious leaders in guiding responses to the pandemic. By speaking out firmly against intolerance and hate speech, religious leaders could help to shape minds, and restore respect for diversity. The pledge includes a declaration by religious leaders and faith-based actors that contains commitments made in response to COVID-19 and also outlines possible areas of collaboration with the United Nations."

High Commissioner's 2021 report on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief (A/HRC/46/67):

"83. OHCHR continued promoting the implementation of the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights and the 18 associated commitments (A/HRC/40/58, annexes I and II) and helped to protect and expand civic space and address hate speech in social media through the organization of regional workshops and webinars. The #Faith4Rights toolkit, launched online in January 2020, translated the vision of the Declaration into practical peer-to-peer learning programmes. The whole concept was interactive, results-oriented and participatory, engaging the participants through audiovisual material and social media, with a particular focus on the needs of youth. OHCHR was piloting the toolkit with faith-based actors, academics and United Nations human rights mechanisms at the national, regional and global levels. […]

86. On 28 May 2020, the High Commissioner, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide and the High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations opened the virtual consultation for a "Global Pledge for Action by Religious Actors and Faith-Based Organizations to Address the COVID-19 Pandemic in Collaboration with the United Nations". Noting that religious leaders had a powerful role to play in guiding responses to the pandemic, the High Commissioner urged them to speak out firmly against the intolerance and hate speech that was being targeted at multiple minority communities across the world, which were being stigmatized as supposed carriers of the virus and were facing discrimination and physical and verbal attacks. The Global Pledge for Action included a declaration of commitments by religious leaders and faith-based actors in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and a mapped out ongoing activities and possible areas of collaboration with the United Nations. […]

88. The Human Rights Committee, on 23 July 2020, adopted its general comment No. 37 (2020), on the right of peaceful assembly, in which it stressed that assemblies could not be used for advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constituted incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence. With regard to the definition of incitement to violence, the Committee referred in the general comment to the threshold test in the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence (A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, appendix) and to the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights and the 18 commitments. […]

91. The Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief focused his 2020 interim report to the General Assembly on the importance of safeguarding freedom of religion or belief for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/75/385). In the report, he recommended that States, intergovernmental organizations and civil society actor utilized tools developed by the United Nations system to promote social inclusion, in particular Human Rights Council resolution 16/18, the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, the Rabat Plan of Action, the #Faith4Rights toolkit, the Fez Plan of Action and the UNESCO programme on preventing violent extremism through education. […]

104. Speaking out against religious intolerance at all levels is essential in preventing intolerance, discriminatory stereotyping and hate speech. At a time when incitement to discrimination, hatred and violence against persons based on religion or belief is on the rise, public officials, religious and community leaders and the media should speak out, recognizing their collective responsibility as set out in the Rabat Plan of Action. Both the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights and the 18 associated commitments and the Fez Plan of Action recognize the importance of engaging religious leaders in addressing intolerance and standing up for human rights."

High Commissioner's 2021 report on international cooperation in the field of human rights (A/HRC/47/47):

"19. OHCHR organized workshops and webinars with faith-based actors, civil servants, academic institutions and human rights mechanisms, piloting the #Faith4Rights toolkit and emphasizing the importance of the elimination of religious intolerance as a means of enhancing international cooperation on human rights. The toolkit, which covers dealing with violence against minorities in the COVID-19 context, proposed 12 cases to debate. A crash course entitled "Stomping out hate speech" was conducted in October 2020, with 150 undergraduate and postgraduate university students, and media and other professionals from 55 countries. In May 2020, the High Commissioner, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of

Genocide and the High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations convened a virtual consultation, resulting in the Global Pledge for Action by Religious Actors and Faith-Based Organizations to Address the COVID-19 Pandemic in Collaboration with the United Nations. The collaboration continued through an online peer-to-peer learning programme on topics including hate speech and interfaith dialogues."

Annual report 2021 of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/47/54):
"28. OHCHR piloted the #Faith4Rights toolkit with faith-based actors, special procedures and treaty bodies, [See www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/FreedomReligion/Pages/FaithForRights.aspx] organizing monthly peer-to-peer learning events with the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the Office on Genocide Prevention and Responsibility to Protect, in follow-up to the Global Pledge for Action by Religious Actors and Faith-Based Organizations to Address the COVID-19 Pandemic in Collaboration with the United Nations."

OHCHR 2022 report on the question of human rights in Cyprus (A/HRC/49/22):
"56. As part of the global "Faith for Rights" framework, the Office of the Religious Track continued to raise awareness about the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights and its 18 commitments. In the context of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign, the Office of the Religious Track engaged in a process to reflect on actions to be taken to follow up on the Beirut Declaration, including the revisiting of religious interpretations that appear to perpetuate gender inequality and harmful stereotypes or even condone gender-based violence.[See www.ohchr.org/documents/press/faith4rights-toolkit.pdf, p. 31.] […]
76. Despite the challenges, numerous actors continued to promote and protect human rights. They included representatives of civil society, religious leaders and faith-based actors, and many of the bicommunal technical committees. It is worth noting that politically or ethnically motivated attacks were counterbalanced by the words and actions of community, religious, political and human rights actors on both sides."

OHCHR 2022 report on rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (A/HRC/49/36):
"26. At the multi-stakeholder forum on addressing hate speech through education, held on 30 September and 1 October 2021, the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights noted that the Office's #Faith4Rights toolkit brings together tools by and for faith-based actors, including tools to address hate speech and protect religious or belief minorities. She noted that OHCHR and the special procedures of the Human Rights Council contributed to the open online course on freedom of expression, held in May and June 2021 jointly by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights at the University of Oxford, bringing together close to 5,000 participants. [www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27582&LangID=E] […]

68. In 2021, OHCHR conducted peer-to-peer learning events, piloting the interactive methodology and case studies contained in the #Faith4Rights toolkit, including with civil servants in Brazil and Nigeria (with the Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion or Belief). Additional events were conducted with universities in Misau, Mozambique; Oslo; Oxford, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; Pretoria; and Uberlândia, Brazil, as well as with Chevening scholars from more than 60 countries. United Nations human rights mechanisms have been part and parcel of these webinars.

69. Furthermore, OHCHR collaborated with the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations for a peer-to-peer learning programme with religious actors and faith-based organizations, focusing on topics related to religious or belief minorities, hate speech, atrocity crimes, religious sites, gender equality and interfaith dialogue. In addition, a series of monthly high-level dialogues on freedom of religion or belief and the Sustainable Development Goals was conducted with parliamentarians and faith-based actors.

70. In 2021, the Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa, in partnership with the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, published a booklet engaging religious actors to counter hate speech, prevent incitement to violence, and build peaceful and inclusive societies. In the

publication, it is noted that persons belonging to minorities, including religious or belief minorities, remain subject to acute discrimination across the Middle East and North Africa region. […]

77. In September 2021, the High Commissioner noted that thematic forums, such as the Forum on Minority Issues, could contribute to widening civic space, promoting mutual understanding and enriching governmental deliberations with grass-roots contributions.[See www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27442&LangID=E.] She also referred to the new European Union Gender Action Plan III, which emphasizes that the European Union should support mobilization of religious actors for gender equality in line with the Faith for Rights framework.

78. During 2021, OHCHR continued to advocate and provide technical support to the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Tunisia for the drafting of a guide that listed key commitments made by imams to advance their role in promoting human rights and a democratic society. The reference guide is intended to be a practical benchmark developed by the preaching imams themselves, drawing inspiration from the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on Faith for Rights."

High Commissioner's 2022 report on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief (A/HRC/49/86):

"17. On 2 and 3 December 2021, discussions at the fourteenth session of the Forum on Minority Issues focused on challenges, opportunities and initiatives to prevent conflict and protect the human rights of minorities, in line with the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities and other relevant international instruments. In that context, participants reflected on the 18 commitments of the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights, notably to exchange on practices in areas of mediation, early detection of communal tensions and remedial techniques. […]

36. OHCHR conducted several peer-to-peer learning events in 2021, piloting the interactive methodology and case studies of the #Faith4Rights toolkit, including for civil servants in Brazil and Nigeria (with the Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion or Belief), judges in Indonesia (with the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights and the Indonesian Institute for an Independent Judiciary) and for several universities, as well as Chevening scholars from more than 60 countries. United Nations human rights mechanisms contributed to those webinars, notably the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief and the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, as had members of the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Furthermore, OHCHR collaborated with the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide and the High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations on a peer-to-peer learning programme on the Global Pledge for Action by Religious Actors and Faith-Based Organizations to Address the COVID-19 Pandemic in Collaboration with the United Nations, focusing on topics related to religious or belief minorities, hate speech, atrocity crimes, religious sites, gender equality and interfaith dialogue. At the high-level political forum on sustainable development in July 2021, the High Commissioner underlined the importance of inclusive peer-to-peer learning on faith and human rights, noting that releasing the world from incitement to national, racial or religious hatred could unleash tremendous potential. OHCHR, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Population Fund and the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities/Sexual Violence Research Initiative also conducted webinars that had resulted in "peer-to-peer learning snapshots", including on the situation of religious minorities. In addition, OHCHR and the European Commission Directorate-General for International Partnerships held peer-to-peer learning events on using the #Faith4Rights toolkit in the context of the European Union Gender Action Plan III, which calls on the European Union to support the mobilization of religious actors for gender equality in line with the Faith for Rights framework. A series of monthly high-level dialogues on freedom of religion or belief and the Sustainable Development Goals were conducted with parliamentarians and faith-based actors, co-organized with the Freedom of Religion or Belief Leadership Network, the International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief, African Parliamentarians Association for Human Rights and Religions for Peace."

High Commissioner's 2022 annual report (A/HRC/50/4):
"50. […] In follow-up to the "Faith for Rights" framework, OHCHR and the European Commission held a series of peer-to-peer learning events to mobilize religious actors to work for gender equality."

High Commissioner's 2022 report on conscientious objection to military service (A/HRC/50/43):
"8. The Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights emphasizes that freedom of thought and conscience precede all freedoms, for they are linked to human essence, to an individual's right to choice and to freedom of religion or belief. As highlighted in the corresponding 18 commitments and #Faith4Rights toolkit, article 18 of the Covenant does not permit any limitations whatsoever on freedom of thought and conscience, which are absolutely protected under international human rights law, covering all ethics and values a human being cherishes, whether of a religious nature or not."

High Commissioner's 2022 report on international cooperation in the field of human rights (A/HRC/50/51):
"25. Faith-based actors increasingly engaged with treaty bodies, special procedures and OHCHR through the Faith for Rights framework. OHCHR collaborated with the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations on a peer-to-peer learning programme with religious leaders and faith-based organizations concerning hate speech, atrocity crimes, religious or belief minorities, religious sites, interfaith dialogue and gender equality. OHCHR and the European Commission held peer-to-peer learning events on using the #Faith4Rights toolkit in the context of the European Union Gender Action Plan III, which calls upon the European Union to support the mobilization of religious actors for gender equality in line with the Faith for Rights framework."

OHCHR 2023 report on the question of human rights in Cyprus (A/HRC/52/18):
"59. The religious leaders of Cyprus remained united in their commitment to peacebuilding and religious freedom. They continued to meet within the framework of the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process, under the auspices of the Embassy of Sweden, which remained active in its endeavour to promote human rights, dialogue and peaceful coexistence. Notably, in November 2022, representatives of Christian and Muslim faith communities, among others, gathered together for the wake and funeral of the late Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Church of Cyprus, who had played an essential part in the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process since its inception in 2009.
60. Within the context of the global "Faith for Rights" framework, the Office of the Religious Track, in cooperation with several religious communities, the Deputy Minister for Social Welfare of the Republic of Cyprus and UNHCR, engaged in the creation of a pilot home unit for unaccompanied children, including survivors of human trafficking, at the Catholic social centre of Saint Joseph in Nicosia.[…]
87. Despite the challenges, numerous actors continued to promote and protect human rights. They included representatives of civil society, religious leaders and faith-based actors and many of the bicommunal technical committees."

OHCHR 2023 report on rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (A/HRC/52/53):
"67. During the 8th Annual Symposium on the Role of Religion and Faith-based Organizations in International Affairs, on "Mobilizing moral influence and governance to end the systemic injustices of racism, the legacy of colonialism, and slavery", OHCHR stressed the importance of fully implementing the Declaration, notably the right of all persons belonging to minorities to participate effectively.[As set out in article 2 of the Declaration. See also commitment VI of the 18 Commitments on Faith for Rights.]"

High Commissioner's 2023 report on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief (A/HRC/52/79):
"15. OHCHR conducted peer-to-peer learning events with religious leaders and faith-based actors in 2022, using the interactive methodology and case studies contained in the #Faith4Rights toolkit. In this context, OHCHR has been developing an informal network of Faith for Rights facilitators and a peer-to-peer learning programme for professional faith leaders, specifically those who are either in training, have recently qualified

or are young faith leaders. Together with the Freedom of Religion or Belief Leadership Network, the International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief, Religions for Peace, African Parliamentarians for Human Rights and the Danish Institute for Human Rights, OHCHR also co-organized a monthly dialogue series entitled "Leave no one behind". Furthermore, in December 2022 the Global Campus of the United States Institute of Peace launched an online course entitled "Religions, beliefs, and human rights: a 'faith for rights' approach", addressing the role of religious and faith-based actors in promoting human rights and how the intersection of religion and human rights can facilitate sustainable peace. This self-paced online course is moderated by the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief and includes modules contributed by the Special Rapporteur on minority issues, United Nations treaty body members and faith-based actors.

16. In his 2022 report on the rights of persons belonging to religious or belief minorities in situations of conflict or insecurity, the former Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief stressed that faith-based actors should promote interfaith engagement, including through the #Faith4Rights framework, should oppose essentializing narratives about religious or belief communities and should refrain from and publicly denounce hatred and incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence against persons based on religion or belief. He urged faith-based leaders and influencers to use their authority to promote inclusive, peaceful and just conflict resolutions, and to prevent tensions from arising, particularly where they were conducted in the name of religion or belief.[A/HRC/49/44, para. 80.]

32. […] Furthermore, OHCHR had held #Faith4Rights workshops linked to hate speech scenarios that were discussed in the context of the Nelson Mandela World Human Rights Moot Court Competition 2022 (organized by the Centre for Human Rights at the University of Pretoria) and the Price Media Law Moot Court Competition 2022 (organized by the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights at the University of Oxford). In addition, OHCHR had held two expert workshops, at the Campus adventiste du Salève and at the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, in October 2022, which were focused on the implementation of the Rabat Plan of Action and of the Beirut Declaration and its 18 "Faith for Rights" commitments. […]

54. The Forum on Minority Issues, at its fourteenth session, on the theme of "Conflict prevention and the protection of the human rights of minorities", encouraged States, the United Nations, international and regional organizations and civil society to work closely in supporting the positive contributions of faith-based actors, including through the promotion of the Beirut Declaration and the #Faith4Rights toolkit. A related recommendation was also included by the Human Rights Council in March 2022 in its resolution on prevention of genocide. At the regional level of the Council of Europe, the Committee of Ministers' recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 on combating hate speech built on the threshold test of the Rabat Plan of Action, and the Council of Europe's explanatory memorandum commented that the Faith for Rights framework and toolkit was a useful tool with its peer-to-peer learning methodology.

60. As highlighted by the Secretary-General, Internet providers, social media platforms and other operators in the digital space continue to struggle in trying to strike the right balance between responding effectively to the amplification and spread of hatred in the digital space while avoiding measures which could undermine freedom of expression. Clear guidance for addressing these issues is provided in the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the Rabat Plan of Action and the Faith for Rights framework and toolkit, as well as in general comments and general recommendations of the human rights treaty bodies and recommendations of Human Rights Council special procedure mandate holders.**"**

High Commissioner's 2023 report on international cooperation in the field of human rights (A/HRC/53/46):

"21. Through the Faith for Rights framework, faith-based actors have engaged with the treaty bodies, the special procedures and OHCHR. In September 2022, with the International Center for Law and Religion Studies OHCHR developed an online Faith4Rights facilitator guide training course. From December 2022, OHCHR, the United States Institute of Peace, Religions for Peace and the University for Peace facilitated monthly events to promote the universality and indivisibility of human rights in celebrating the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

OHCHR 2024 report on the question of human rights in Cyprus (A/HRC/55/20):
"62. Nevertheless, religious leaders and clerics involved in the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process continued to advocate for each other's right to pray and free access to their respective places of worship. Within the context of the global Faith for Rights framework, the Office of the Religious Track facilitated and led joint efforts to provide a safe space for refugees, asylum-seekers and unaccompanied minors, and the network was expanded to include other religious communities in Cyprus and faith-based institutions. It also participated in an interfaith roundtable in Nicosia on 20 October 2023 and in the hybrid peer-to-peer learning week organized by OHCHR in November 2023 as part of the Faith for Rights initiative."

OHCHR 2024 report on the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (A/HRC/55/35):
"63. In September, OHCHR together with the NGOs Helping Hands Foundation, the Al Baraem Association and Vivat International held a side event during the fifty-fourth session of the Human Rights Council on a Faith for Rights approach to promoting sustainable peace. OHCHR highlighted the objective of fostering peaceful societies that uphold human dignity and equality for all, including the human rights of persons belonging to religious or belief minorities. OHCHR also noted that recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women increasingly referred to the need to engage with faith-based actors, including through the Faith for Rights framework, to address areas in which religion and the rights of women had to be bridged. Participants recommended countering religious hatred against minorities, and avoiding the instrumentalizing of religions and beliefs and of their followers for electoral purposes or political gains. […]
77. Diversity should be recognized not as a threat, but as a richness of our societies. The recognition of diversity starts with the inclusion and effective participation of minorities. International declarations have reaffirmed the right of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities to participate equally and effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life, as well as to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion and to use their own language in private and in public, freely and without interference or any form of discrimination.[Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, art. 2; Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, chap. I, para. 19; and Beirut Declaration and its 18 Commitments on Faith for Rights (A/HRC/40/58), annex II, commitment VI.]"

High Commissioner's 2024 report on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief (A/HRC/55/74):
"14. Throughout 2023, Religions for Peace, the University for Peace, the United States Institute of Peace, United Nations human rights mechanisms and OHCHR facilitated a series of monthly conversations on religions, beliefs and human rights. Several of the hybrid meetings were held as side events during sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Human Rights Council and the Academic Council on the United Nations System and at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The series has created a community of practice and peer-to-peer learning opportunities on Faith for Rights, with a view to promoting the universality and indivisibility of all human rights, without discrimination on any grounds.
15. In November 2023, OHCHR and the National Human Rights Council of Morocco organized a workshop in Rabat with religious actors, women's rights experts, academics and parliamentarians from the Middle East and North Africa region, following up to the use of the Faith for Rights framework by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in dialogues with States parties and in its concluding observations. The pilot project under the knowledge hub on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was focused on advocacy and peer-to-peer learning in cases where culture, tradition or certain religious interpretations might impede the realization of equal rights for women and girls in all spheres. […]
34. In November 2023, OHCHR organized a peer-to-peer learning week on Faith for Rights, bringing together religious leaders, faith-based actors, diplomats, treaty body members, special rapporteurs, academics, representatives of United Nations entities, regional organizations, national human rights institutions, and civil society and staff of Meta's Oversight Board. More than 100 participants shared good practices and

lessons learned among the network of facilitators for peer-to-peer learning using the Faith for Rights toolkit (#faith4rights). A round-table brainstorming session at Geneva Academy focused on addressing religious hatred, in follow-up to the Rabat Plan of Action, the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights and Human Rights Council resolutions 16/18, 52/6 and 53/1. Another meeting among religious leaders and faith-based actors linked the dots between the Geneva Spiritual Appeal, the Interreligious Platform of Geneva and the Faith for Rights network. Further workshops discussed collaboration with OHCHR minority fellows and follow-up to the guide Protecting Minority Rights. Participants compiled a snapshot of peer-to-peer learning and action points with a view to enlarging the Faith for Rights "commUNity of practice". […]

62. The United Nations has facilitated the development of several tools to provide human rights guardrails in this context. The Rabat Plan of Action can help to navigate the fine line between free speech and prohibited incitement, by assessing the context, speaker, intent, content, extent and likelihood of harm in each case. The Faith for Rights framework facilitates cross-disciplinary reflection and action against incitement to religious hatred and other human rights violations. […]

64. Exchanges of lessons learned and promising practices should continue to be promoted, including through the "Faith for rights" framework. Political and religious leaders have a particularly crucial role to play in speaking out clearly, firmly and immediately against disrespect and intolerance, not only of their own communities, but of any group subjected to attack. They should also make it clear that violence cannot be justified by prior provocation, whether real or perceived. Education initiatives, positive speech campaigns, research to understand and address root causes and efforts to promote inclusion and equal rights all play important roles. Peer-to-peer learning and awareness-raising may promote respect and understanding between individuals and communities, across religions and beliefs, and upholding the dignity of all."

OHCHR 2024 report on the panel discussion on countering religious hatred constituting incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence (A/HRC/56/39):

"10. The High Commissioner recommended effective initiatives to build societies in which expressions of hatred were considered socially unacceptable. That required inclusive faith literacy and a more holistic view of human rights education. The Faith for Rights framework, set up by OHCHR in 2017, was aimed at engaging Governments, religious authorities and a wide range of civil society actors in peer exchanges about concrete efforts on the ground. For example, several religious leaders who were part of the Faith for Rights "commUNity of practices" had advocated for persons of all faiths to have unimpeded access to their places of worship and had condemned incitement to violence, discrimination or hostility in the name of religion. OHCHR consultations with States and civil society had yielded many examples that could contribute to guiding efforts aimed at promoting more collaboration among individuals and groups of different faiths and skill sets. […]

27. Since 2012, the Rabat Plan of Action had been referred to in more than 60 resolutions of the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council – including Council resolution 53/1. The European Court of Human Rights, the Oversight Board of Meta and several national authorities for audiovisual communications had used the Rabat Plan of Action threshold test. In its general comment No. 37 (2020), the Human Rights Committee cited the Rabat Plan of Action and the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights. Furthermore, the explanatory memorandum for the recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to Member States on combating hate speech17 emphasized that the Faith for Rights framework and toolkit were useful tools that employed a peer-to-peer learning methodology. Ms. Tchamdja Kpatcha concluded by stating that sharing of experience among political and religious leaders, independent experts and members of the media and civil society should be supported. […]

40. With regard to educational campaigns and programmes on faith literacy and human rights, best practices implemented by OHCHR, the University for Peace and the Inter-Parliamentary Union were also highlighted. State representatives noted that experiences from the Faith for Rights initiative should continue to be exchanged and that the Rabat Plan of Action also provided a useful tool for guidance. Furthermore, they recalled Human Rights Council resolution 16/18 and recommended ensuring regular exchanges on initiatives to counter national, racial or religious hatred and to protect the rights of persons belonging to religious minorities in all countries. […]

56. Mr. Alves Pinto noted that one of the tools that the United Nations had created to address the issue of discrimination experienced by members of different religious and belief groups was the Faith for Rights framework and the #Faith4Rights toolkit. He stated that he had successfully used the toolkit's peer-to-peer learning methodology with religious and community leaders in several countries."

High Commissioner's 2024 report to the General Assembly (A/79/36):
"59. As a result of meetings co-organized in May by OHCHR with the American University of Paris, Anglia Ruskin University and Bridging Spiritual Cultures, several academics and civil society actors from Australia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, France, Lebanon, Maldives, Nigeria, Norway, Tunisia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America created an inter-universities Faith for Rights framework."

OHCHR 2025 report on the question of human rights in Cyprus (A/HRC/58/21):
"55. Efforts also continued to sustain and develop the dialogue and cooperation among the religious leaders of Cyprus in order to uphold and advance human rights and to build confidence within the framework of the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process, under the auspices of the Embassy of Sweden in Cyprus. While these efforts faced some challenges, representatives of religious communities met regularly with facilitation by the Religious Track and advocated for each other's right to pray and free access to their respective places of worship. [S/2024/13, para. 11; S/2024/526, para. 8; and see www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/religion/faithforrights/Faith-for-rightsP2Pweek2023.pdf.] Within the global Faith for Rights framework, on 10 December 2023, members of the Religious Track also joined in a hybrid interfaith annual walk event on 'Faith for Rights' in Nicosia, Geneva and Collonges-sous-Salève, France, to promote the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

OHCHR 2025 report on the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (A/HRC/58/34):
"45. On 18 June, on the International Day for Countering Hate Speech, OHCHR organized, together with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the University for Peace, a side event during the fifty-sixth session of the Human Rights Council on the theme of 'The role of youth faith actors in combating hate speech and creating more inclusive societies'. The event highlighted successful initiatives to promote digital citizenship, media and information literacy, and freedom of religion or belief and to foster inter-cultural and interfaith engagement, using the peer-to-peer learning methodology of the Faith for Rights toolkit.
46. In June, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 54/25 and linked to the 2024 Union of European Football Associations European Championship, OHCHR co-organized in Berlin, together with the World Jewish Congress and the German non-governmental organization What Matters, a panel discussion on combating antisemitism in the context of football. The panel discussion highlighted structural conditions and practical approaches by individual clubs and athletes, and the summary document outlined recommendations for actions to combat antisemitism and all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and religious intolerance through sport. […]
[www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/religion/faithforrights/faith4rights-berlin-panel-2024.pdf]
60. On 15 March, on the International Day to Combat Islamophobia, United Nations independent experts warned that acts of harassment, intimidation, violence and incitement based on religion or belief had risen to alarming levels across the world, including against Muslims. The experts denounced the fact that in many countries in the lead-up to elections, State and non-State actors fed religious tensions and promoted discriminatory laws and policies against Muslim minorities to gain political advantage. The experts urged States to ground their responses to all forms of religious hatred, including Islamophobia, in the universal values, principles and legal framework of international human rights. They also recalled that States and faith-based actors had human rights responsibilities and had to step in to counter such violations, in line with the Rabat Plan of Action and the implementation guidance provided by the Faith for Rights framework and toolkit.
61. In March, the High Commissioner expressed his profound concern that the shocking surge in Islamophobia was occurring as part of a broader trend of the continuing rise of antisemitism,

Christianophobia and prejudices against people of other religions or beliefs; of hatred that is directed at migrants, refugees and minorities, including Roma; of deep-seated racism against people of African descent and Indigenous Peoples; and of many other forms of discrimination and xenophobia. He urged States to urgently step up efforts to combat intolerance against people based on religion or belief, within the parameters of international human rights law, using the many tools they had at their disposal, including Human Rights Council resolution 16/18, the Rabat Plan of Action and the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights. The High Commissioner referred to the *Practical Guide*, as a crucial tool to support States in protecting minority rights and addressing the root causes of religious hatred. […]

63. As a result of meetings in 2024 in Paris and Cambridge, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, co-organized by OHCHR, several academics and civil society actors from Australia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, France, Lebanon, Maldives, Nigeria, Norway, Tunisia, the United Kingdom and the United States created an inter-university Faith for Rights platform [www.aup.edu/news-events/event/2024-05-02/faith-human-rights-co-existence]. This new partnership provides academic support for OHCHR work on religion and human rights, discrimination on the basis of religion or belief and incitement to hatred, as well as gender equality as it intersects with freedom of religion or belief. The Faith for Rights commUNity of practices elaborated the rules of procedure for the platform and appointed a tetrarchy, chaired by a civil society coordinator and composed of the focal points on programmes, faith leaders and education. [www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/religion/faithforrights/faith4rights-annual-meeting-2024.pdf]

64. In October, the International Association for the Defence of Religious Liberty and OHCHR co-organized the Faith for Rights Peer-Learning Experience in Portugal.[www.aidlr.org/news103.php] Interactive workshops in Coimbra and Lisbon created a space for encountering, sharing, learning and training for faith-based actors, based on the Faith for Rights framework. Participants concluded that interfaith engagement should not remain mere dialogues but should include development of actions on the ground, which in turn would require well-prepared facilitators who could ensure that peer-to-peer learning sessions would be spaces for constructive dialogue leading to sustainable impact.

65. In November, OHCHR organized the fifth annual meeting of the Faith for Rights commUNity of practices [www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/religion/faithforrights/faith4rights-cop-2024.pdf]. This hybrid meeting with more than 200 participants facilitated ongoing dialogue and exchange of information with faith-based organizations, parliamentarians and academic communities, in line with action 55 of the Pact for the Future. The participants discussed the peer-to-peer learning methodology used by various academic institutions to enhance skills and optimize the outcomes of relevant treaty bodies and special rapporteurs. One thematic focus of the meeting was on promoting gender equality and freedom of religion or belief, including through the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Knowledge Hub and activities with the Gandhi-King Global Academy and the ACT Alliance – Action by Churches Together [www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/10/high-commissioner-statement-act-alliance-general-assembly]. A round table was held focusing on countering the instrumentalization of religions, beliefs or their followers to incite hatred and violence, in line with commitments on Faith for Rights and Human Rights Council resolutions 16/18, 53/1 and 55/16. In addition, the "Geneva100" meeting brought together religious leaders and faith-based actors from the Geneva Spiritual Appeal on its twenty-fifth anniversary, the International Committee of the Red Cross on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, the Inter-religious Platform of Geneva, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Faith for Rights network.

66. The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights included in its 2024 publication *Belief, Dialogue and Security: Fostering Dialogue and Joint Action Across Religious and Belief Boundaries* the Faith for Rights framework and methodology as a good practice for joint action across religions and beliefs. Furthermore, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in paragraph 31 of its general recommendation No. 40 (2024) on the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems recommended that States parties engage religious leaders and faith-based actors in the process of addressing areas of possible tensions between some interpretations of religious traditions and human rights, such as through the Faith for Rights framework of OHCHR."

High Commissioner's 2025 report to the Human Rights Council on "A world of sport free from racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" (A/HRC/60/69):

"14. During the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) European Men's Football Championship in June and July 2024, OHCHR, together with the World Jewish Congress, organized a panel on combating antisemitism in football, which highlighted good practices and culminated in a set of practical recommendations to fight antisemitism and other forms of racism in sport. [See www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/religion/faithforrights/faith4rights-berlin-panel-2024.pdf]

In July 2024, OHCHR convened a quadrennial panel discussion at the Human Rights Council on promoting inclusiveness in and through sports, amplifying calls for zero tolerance for racism and racial discrimination, including discrimination experienced by refugees and persons with disabilities. [See www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/07/high-commissioner-addresses-panel-promoting-human-rights-through] In the oral update on sports and racism of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Council at its fifty-seventh session, a call was made for inclusive and safe spaces for all athletes, regardless of their race, ethnicity, nationality, religion or belief, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex characteristics or other status. […]

39. In addition, ways in which faith-based discrimination and religious intolerance intersect with racism and racial discrimination and other factors, such as gender, were highlighted in the submissions and during the regional consultations. Religious groups, in particular those whose members wear visible religious symbols and attire, continue to be targeted, especially by antisemitic and anti-Muslim slurs and other forms of racism. A submission by the World Jewish Congress denounced an increase in antisemitism and an increasingly hostile environment towards Jewish athletes, teams and fans. The regional consultation for Europe found that, in some contexts, Muslim women and girls were unable to practise grass-roots, amateur and professional sport due to bans on religious attire or due to an enforced attire, arising from decisions by some Governments and sport federations. Special procedure mandate holders have raised concerns over the application by the Government of France and by French sports governing bodies of administrative decisions prohibiting women and girls from wearing forms of clothing ostensibly demonstrating a religious affiliation, resulting in their exclusion from sport, expressing concern about the discriminatory effects thereof in the sports sector.[https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownLoadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=29435] Applying a gender lens is critical to upholding both the freedom to choose to wear religiously significant attire and the freedom not to be coerced in the expression of core personal autonomy, ensuring that participation in sport is inclusive and respectful. [See E/CN.4/2006/5; the Beirut Declaration and its 18 Commitments on Faith for Rights; the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence; and https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Women/WRGS/VeilinEuropereport.pdf.]"

High Commissioner's 2026 report on international cooperation in the field of human rights (A/HRC/62/31):

"48. Through the Faith for Rights framework, religious leaders, faith-based actors and academics engaged with treaty bodies, special procedures and OHCHR. In January 2026, the University for Peace, the British University in Egypt and the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights co-published in open access the book Faith in United Nations Human Rights Treaties: Legal and Religious Commentaries for Research and Peer-learning, which explores the role of faith-based actors in drafting and implementing the core conventions and declarations on civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, the right to development and international humanitarian law."

OHCHR 2018 report to the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Compilation on Nigeria (A/HRC/WG.6/31/NGA/2):
"13. The Committee [on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women] also recommended that Nigeria ensure that the ongoing constitutional review process addressed the applicability of statutory, customary and Islamic personal laws, which afforded varying degrees of protection for women and girls. It further recommended expediting the repeal or amendment of all discriminatory laws identified by the Nigerian Law Reform Commission and including religious leaders in the process of addressing issues of faith and human rights, so as to build on several "faith for rights" initiatives and identify common ground among all religions in Nigeria."[CEDAW/C/NGA/CO/7-8, para. 12 (b) and (c).]

Human Rights Committee, summary record of the 3646th meeting on 26 July 2019 (CCPR/C/SR.3646):
"Draft general comment No. 37 on article 21 of the Covenant (Right of peaceful assembly) […]

2. Mr. Heyns (Rapporteur for the general comment) said that Committee members' inputs had proved extremely valuable, for instance when it came to identifying outstanding issues. […]

30. Mr. Heyns said that paragraph 23 corresponded to paragraph 24 of the previous version, and referred to article 20 of the Covenant. He proposed addressing the provision of article 20 concerning incitement to violence in the section on the scope of the right of peaceful assembly. The other provisions could be addressed in the section concerning restrictions. He suggested deleting the following phrase in the second sentence: "because the different rights limit one another (art. 5 (1))". He also suggested amending the third sentence to read: "Participation in an assembly which is aimed at destroying the rights of others should be prohibited (art. 5)." Lastly, he suggested referring in a footnote to the 2012 Rabat Plan of Action and the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights, which contained widely accepted observations on how article 20 should be interpreted."

Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 37 on the right of peaceful assembly, adopted in July 2020 (CCPR/C/GC/37):
"50. In accordance with article 20 of the Covenant, peaceful assemblies may not be used for propaganda for war (art. 20 (1)), or for advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence (art. 20 (2)). As far as possible, action should be taken in such cases against the individual perpetrators, rather than against the assembly as a whole. Participation in assemblies whose dominant message falls within the scope of article 20 must be addressed in conformity with the requirements for restrictions set out in articles 19 and 21.[62]

[62] General comment No. 34, paras. 50–52; International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, art. 4; and Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, general recommendation No. 35 (2013) on combating racist hate speech. See also the Rabat Plan of Action, para. 29, and the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights (A/HRC/40/58, annexes I and II)."

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, General Recommendation No. 40 (2024) on the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems (CEDAW/C/GC/40):
"30. Under article 5, States parties are required to eliminate all forms of gender stereotypes in all spheres. […] Furthermore, some misinterpretations of religion and culture can shape gender stereotypes. The Committee emphasizes that gender stereotypes constitute a key barrier to women's equal access to decision-making.
31. The Committee recommends that States parties: […] (c) Engage religious leaders and faith-based actors in the process of addressing areas of possible tensions between some interpretations of religious traditions and human rights, such as through the Faith for Rights framework of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;"

Reports by Special Rapporteurs

General Assembly 2017 report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief (A/72/365):
"60. The Special Rapporteur notes that the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights", launched in March 2017, and the Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes (Fez Plan of Action), launched in July 2017, are also important opportunities for advancing respect for freedom of religion and societal tolerance. It is imperative, therefore, that States redouble their focus and efforts towards putting those tools to use in the face of the growing threat of religious intolerance. [...]

78. The Special Rapporteur, therefore, encourages all stakeholders, including States, faith leaders and civil society, to fully utilize the recommendations outlined in resolution 16/18, the Rabat Plan of Action, the Fez Plan of Action and the Beirut Declaration. Religious literacy and interfaith dialogue can play a vital role in identifying the common good and promoting respect for pluralism. As stressed in the Beirut Declaration, all believers — whether theistic, non-theistic, atheistic or other — should join hands and hearts in articulating ways in which "faith" can stand up for "rights" more effectively, so that each enhances the other. Rejecting expressions of hatred within one's own community and extending solidarity and support across faith or belief boundaries are honourable and meaningful actions. [...]

83. Member States should also consider taking steps to strengthen information-sharing and improve the transparency of the various United Nations processes and activities aimed at combating acts of hostility, discrimination and violence for all stakeholders. This could include establishing an "Internet portal" designed to serve as a platform for all stakeholders (i.e. faith-based actors, human rights experts, government officials, national human rights institutions and other practitioners) to access legal, judicial and policy guidance, allow for the sharing of success stories and challenges and enhance the visibility of the work of the United Nations in combating the advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred constituting incitement to hostility, discrimination or violence for broader constituencies. Such a platform could bring together sources of information produced by activities organized in support of the implementation of resolution 16/18 and the Rabat Plan of Action. Information produced by complementary processes, such as those carried out under the Beirut Declaration and the Fez Plan of Action, could also be linked to such a website."

Human Rights Council 2018 report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion and belief (A/HRC/37/49):
"C. International legal standards
1. Hard and soft law

29. The Human Rights Committee notes that this duty involves both negative obligations, like refraining from perpetuating discriminatory acts, and positive duties, such as the obligation to protect against third-party infringements, including incitement to religious hatred. States are also obliged to ensure that individuals belonging to minorities are able to practise their religions or beliefs or receive public support in the same manner as adherents to a State religion. Other positive duties include satisfying all obligations stipulated by article 27 of the Covenant and by the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, which require States to "take measures to create favourable conditions" that enable persons belonging to religious, ethnic and linguistic minority communities, to "express their characteristics". Furthermore, the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights" explicitly refer to preventing the use of the notion of "State religion" or "doctrinal secularism" to discriminate against individuals or groups, and to "reducing the space for religious or belief pluralism in practice". […]

89. Finally, the Special Rapporteur would like to reiterate commitment IV of the "Faith for Rights" framework, which warns against the use of the notion of "State religion" to discriminate against any individual or group as well as against the use of "doctrinal secularism", which risks reducing the space for religious or belief pluralism in practice. He stresses that States must satisfy a range of obligations, including to adopt measures that guarantee structural equality and to fully realize freedom of religion or belief. […]"

General Assembly 2018 report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion and belief (A/73/362):

"62. Another related and important soft law standard is the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence (see A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, appendix), which was adopted by experts at a meeting in Rabat in October 2012. The Special Rapporteur and his predecessor have outlined the importance of the Rabat Plan of Action in addressing advocacy of religious hatred that constitutes incitement to violence, discrimination and hostility (see A/HRC/25/58, A/HRC/28/66, A/HRC/31/18, A/HRC/34/50 and A/72/365). It provides practical guidance through a six-part test that takes into account the context of the statement, the speaker's position and intent, the content and extent of the speech and the likelihood that the speech would incite action against the target group (see A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, appendix, para. 29). This test is being used by the national authorities for audiovisual communication in Côte d'Ivoire, Morocco and Tunisia (see A/HRC/37/3, para. 69), and the European Court of Human Rights also referred to the Rabat Plan of Action in a recent judgment. [*Case of Mariya Alekhina and Others v. Russia*, paras. 110, 187, 190–191 and 223. See also the separate opinion of Judge Elósegui, para. 14.]

63. In a thematic resolution, the Human Rights Council called for the international community's effective implementation of resolution 16/18, the Istanbul Process and the Rabat Plan of Action "in order to contribute to a more conducive environment to countering hate speech and violence" (see Human Rights Council resolution 34/8). Similarly, in a country-specific resolution, the Human Rights Council encouraged the Government of Myanmar to increase further efforts to promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence in all sectors of society in accordance with Council resolution 16/18 and the Rabat Plan of Action (see resolution 34/22). In his July 2018 update on the situation of human rights of Rohingya people, the High Commissioner for Human Rights referred to resolution 16/18 and the Rabat Plan of Action, as well as to the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights and its 18 commitments (see below), in order to address advocacy of hatred that incites violence, discrimination or hostility, particularly when it is conducted in the name of religion or belief. This illustrates the complementarity and practical usefulness of these soft law standards. […]

67. The "Faith for Rights" framework, which was launched in March 2017 through the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights and its 18 commitments, highlights that religious leaders are potentially very important human rights actors in view of their considerable influence on the hearts and minds of hundreds of millions of believers. The underlying rationale is expressed in the commitment 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". [OHCHR, "18 commitments on 'Faith for Rights'", commitment XVI.]

68. The undertaking expressed in the Beirut Declaration to enhance cohesive, peaceful and respectful societies by mobilizing faith-based actors behind the human rights framework is particularly well illustrated by the commitments to: support and promote equal treatment in all areas and manifestations of religion or belief; ensure non-discrimination and gender equality; stand up for the rights of all persons, including those belonging to minorities; publicly denounce all instances of advocacy of hatred that incite violence; refrain from oppressing critical voices or giving credence to exclusionary interpretations on the basis of religious grounds; and condemn judgmental public determinations by any actor who in the name of religion aims to disqualify the religion or belief of another individual. The holistic human rights approach of the "Faith for Rights" framework is further expressed in the commitment to defend the freedom of expression, including academic freedom and the promotion of tolerance through formal education channels. It also emphasizes 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. […]

79. The Special Rapporteur specifically calls upon States to: […] (c) […] invest in the dissemination and implementation of the Rabat Plan of Action, the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights and the Fez Plan of Action, which provide a chart of specific commitments as well as a number of practical measures to address the related phenomena of incitement to religious hatred, discrimination and violence; […]

80. The Special Rapporteur also calls upon the respective United Nations mechanisms to facilitate transparency in the implementation by States of Human Rights Council resolution 16/18 and of the steps taken by key stakeholders to operationalize the Rabat Plan of Action, the Fez Plan of Action and the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments, and to support the convening of the seventh meeting of the Istanbul Process."

Human Rights Council 2019 report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion and belief (A/HRC/40/58):
"21. The 'Faith for Rights' framework, launched in March 2017 under the auspices of OHCHR with the engagement of faith actors and international human rights experts, draws from insights gleaned under the Rabat Plan of Action into the positive role that faith actors can play in responding to incitement to violence. The aim of the Faith for Rights framework is to mobilize faith-based resources to promote the human rights framework, in particular by recognizing the interdependence of the freedom of expression and the freedom of religion or belief. The Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights and its 18 commitments promote the resolve 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 (see annexes I and II). Echoing the Rabat Plan of Action, the 18 commitments also contain a call upon States that still have anti-blasphemy or anti-apostasy laws in force to repeal them, stressing that such laws stifle the freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief, as well as a healthy dialogue and debate about religious issues. […]

66. In this context, the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights provides important guidance and inspiration for action: '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 peacebuilding in the hearts and minds. Speech is one of the most strategic areas of the responsibilities we commit to assume, and we support each other for their implementation through this Faith for Rights declaration on the basis of the thresholds articulated by the Rabat Plan of Action.'"

Tunisia mission 2019 report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion and belief (A/HRC/40/58/Add.1):
"91. During its third Universal Periodic Review in 2017, Tunisia also accepted the recommendation to establish an interreligious council to facilitate interreligious dialogue and harmony. In this context, the Special Rapporteur calls upon the Government to invest in the dissemination and implementation of the Rabat Plan of Action, the Beirut Declaration on "Faith for Rights" and the Fez Plan of Action which provide a chart of specific commitments of faith-based actors as well as a number of practical measures to address the related phenomena of incitement to religious hatred, discrimination and violence."

General Assembly 2019 report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion and belief (A/74/358):
"55. The Special Rapporteur recalls that, as discussed below, international human rights instruments also stress the responsibility of public officials to refrain from expressing religious, racial and other forms of intolerance, as well as a duty to condemn expression that, even if protected by law, nevertheless reflects anti-Semitic attitudes. As set out in the Rabat Plan of Action, "political and religious leaders should refrain from using messages of intolerance or expressions which may incite violence, hostility or discrimination; but they also have a crucial role to play in speaking out firmly and promptly against intolerance, discriminatory stereotyping and instances of hate speech" (A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, appendix, para. 36). […]

73. […] Soft law instruments and guidance documents developed under the auspices of the United Nations [See e.g. A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, appendix; A/HRC/40/58, annexes I and II; and Human Rights Council resolution 16/18.] can provide essential guidance for strategies to combat antisemitism and other forms of intolerance."

Human Rights Council 2020 report of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues (A/HRC/43/47):
"30. On 18 and 19 December 2019, the Special Rapporteur participated in an expert workshop on a human rights training toolkit for faith actors, held in Collonges-sous-Salève, France. The workshop was organized by OHCHR to strengthen the implementation of minority rights and the freedom of religion or belief and to prevent violent extremism by designing a human rights training toolkit for faith actors."

Human Rights Council 2020 report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief (A/HRC/43/48):
"2. […] The Special Rapporteur participated in the 7th Meeting of the Istanbul Process held in the Hague from 18-19 November 2019 and took part in the validating meeting of the #Faith4Rights toolkit in Collonges, France from 18-19 December 2019. […]

58. The Special Rapporteur also draws attention to recent initiatives at the United Nations that engage religious or belief actors in the promotion of gender equality. The "Faith for Rights" Initiative, led by the OHCHR, has launched in January 2020 a peer-to-peer learning toolkit for faith actors to assist in revisiting religious interpretations that perpetuate gender inequality and harmful stereotypes or condone gender-based violence. [https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/FreedomReligion/Pages/FaithForRights.aspx] […]

77. The Special Rapporteur recommends that: a) States […] xi) Develop human rights education and training for religious leaders; in this connection, the Special Rapporteur welcomes the #Faith4Rights toolkit recently launched by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights;"

Sri Lanka mission 2020 report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief (A/HRC/43/48/Add.2):
"58. One of the challenges the country faces is the lack of equality among religious communities, especially when article 9 of the Constitution explicitly guarantees Buddhism the foremost place and mandates the State with the duty to protect and foster the Buddha Sasana. The provision is almost equivalent to Buddhism being made the official religion of the State. The Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights and its 18 commitments [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/FreedomReligion/Pages/FaithForRights.aspx] explicitly refer to preventing the use of the notion of "State religion" to discriminate against individuals or groups or to reduce the space for religious or belief pluralism in practice (A/HRC/40/58, annex II, commitment IV). The Special Rapporteur reiterates that the extent to which the State supports a religion and the degree to which it enforces that religion could have far-reaching implications for how the State protects freedom of religion or belief for everyone. […]
92. Against this background, the Special Rapporteur recommends that the Government of Sri Lanka: a) Take concrete steps to address all of the identified root causes of religious intolerance and tensions, and to promote trust among different ethnic and religious communities in Sri Lanka. He recommends drawing on the action plan described in Human Rights Council resolution 16/18, and the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights and its 18 commitments, in activities designed to promote interreligious dialogue and foster pluralism; […]
d) Develop monitoring mechanisms to establish early warning systems and respond to hate speech and incitement to violence in conformity with international human rights standards using existing tools such as the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence […]"

General Assembly 2020 report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion and belief (A/75/385):
"10. Development goals and targets that aim to advance civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights can help fulfil States' obligations in the context of minority rights protection. State's legal duties towards minorities – from ensuring the survival of minority communities, the promotion of the identity of minorities, ensuring equality and non-discrimination [Minorities Declaration, art. 2 (2). See also commitments on "Faith for Rights" (A/HRC/40/58, annex II), commitment VI] and effective participation of minorities in public affairs and social life – and development measures aimed at inclusion, equality (including gender equality) and sustainability are mutually reinforcing. […]
61. […] Recognizing that no one will be left behind only when sustainable development efforts advance the political, social and economic inclusion of persons belonging to religious or belief minorities, the Special Rapporteur encourages States to employ specific indicators [The proposed indicators are available at www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Religion/forbindicators.docx, including sources such as the Beirut Declaration and #Faith4Rights toolkit] to identify the impact of interventions on reducing inequalities involving religion or belief. […]
70. Furthermore, data is not always quantitative: the Special Rapporteur emphasizes that human rights outcomes cannot be fully captured in statistics. Qualitative reports from civil society and first-hand testimony from rights-holders are essential to understanding context, revealing through "storytelling" [See the peer-to-peer learning exercises related to "storytelling" in the #Faith4Rights toolkit] the lived experiences of rights-holders and the hidden dynamics of marginalization. […]
80. In the light of the preceding analysis, the Special Rapporteur recommends that States: […] (i) Implement effective measures to promote mutual respect for the human rights of religious or belief minorities, including

through peer-to-peer learning, practical outreach tools, capacity-building programmes and interdisciplinary research on questions related to faith and rights. [See #Faith4Rights toolkit, Collonges Declaration (available at https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/tools-and-resources/faith4rights-toolkit), p. 4.] […]
83. Finally, the Special Rapporteur reiterates his recommendation that States, intergovernmental organizations and civil society actors, including religious leaders and faith actors, take targeted action to utilize tools developed by the United Nations system to promote social inclusion. In particular, he recommends Human Rights Council resolution 16/18, the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, the #Faith4Rights toolkit, the Fez Plan of Action and UNESCO programme on preventing violent extremism through education."

Human Rights Council 2021 report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief (A/HRC/46/30):
"56. […] The Special Rapporteur further encourages States to adopt measures that operationalize the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, which includes a six-part threshold test (taking into account the context, speaker, intent, content and form, extent of dissemination and likelihood of harm), on how to establish whether hateful expression should be considered to reach the level of incitement that must be prohibited. The CERD Committee also has offered concrete guidance for States parties on the adoption of legislation combating racist hate speech falling under Article 4 of ICERD. And the Human Rights Committee has also provided useful guidance, notably through its General Comments on freedoms of opinion and expression (2011) as well as on the right of peaceful assembly (2020). [CCPR/C/GC/34, paras 48-52; and CCPR/C/GC/37, para 50, referring to CERD General Recommendation No. 35, the Rabat Plan of Action and the Beirut Declaration on "Faith for Rights" (A/HRC/40/58, annexes I and II)] […]
82. Fulfill obligations to prohibit any advocacy of religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, in line with international norms and soft law instruments developed under the auspices of the United Nations [A/HRC/RES/16/18; A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, appendix; A/HRC/40/58, annexes I and II]."

Human Rights Council 2021 report of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues (A/HRC/46/57):
"84. The Special Rapporteur also invites States and other interested parties to refer to existing guidance on what constitutes forms of expression that may be restricted under international human rights law in the area of impermissible hate speech, in particular the six-part threshold test in the Rabat Plan of Action and principle 12 of the Camden Principles on Freedom of Expression and Equality.
85. The Special Rapporteur reminds States that in order to comply with their international obligations, they must adopt legislation against certain forms of hate speech, including the prohibition of any advocacy of national, ethnic, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, and the criminalization of incitement to genocide in social media. These forms of prohibited hate speech must be interpreted narrowly, consistent with the six-part threshold test in the Rabat Plan of Action and the detailed guidance on the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech." […]
Annex II: "Inspired by the Rabat Plan of Action, the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on 'Faith for Rights' and the 2019 launch by the Secretary-General of the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, the present report will refer to the global discussions on 'hate speech' and incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence through social media and will highlight the significance of the promotion and protection of the human rights of minorities, whilst respecting the right of freedom of expression."

Human Rights Council 2020 Forum on Minority Issues, Provisional agenda and annotations (A/HRC/FMI/2020/1):
"In order to further clarify the international norms, participants will consider: […] (c) Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence (A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, appendix); (d) Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights and its 18 commitments (A/HRC/40/58, annexes I and II). […] Participants will also discuss the role of other stakeholders, including religious leaders and faith actors. In this context, participants will consider the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights and its 18 commitments as well as the #Faith4Rights toolkit."

Recommendations made by the 2020 Forum on Minority Issues (A/HRC/46/58):

"39. States and tech companies should implement and expressly reference the Rabat Plan of Action in addressing incitement to hostility, discrimination or violence as part of their strategies to deal with hate speech, including hate speech targeting minorities, at the global level. The Rabat six-part threshold test provides the criteria and conditions under which content that constitutes incitement should be criminalized in national law, and the standards specifying when content should be removed from social media platforms. These criteria are context, the speaker, intent, content and form, extent of the speech, and likelihood of the incitement.

40. States should ensure that hate speech laws or regulations are not used to suppress minorities, whether national or ethnic, religious or linguistic. Nor should those laws or regulations be used for censorship or to stifle freedom of opinion and expression. The threshold for defining restrictions on freedom of expression and incitement to hatred, and for the application of article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, must be very high. States should distinguish between what constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility and violence as opposed to other forms of hate speech, in order to refrain from adopting measures that hinder the rights of minorities to dissent and to speak out. […]

46. UN legal and political standards and mechanisms, including the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the Rabat Plan of Action, should be consistently and concertedly deployed to counter hate speech online.

47. The implementation of recommendations contained in the Rabat Plan of Action should be monitored, and specific indicators should be developed for States in relation to their duty to address and counter hate speech and incitement to hostility, discrimination or violence against minorities and to protect them against hate crimes."

Human Rights Council 2021 report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education (A/HRC/47/32):

"24. […] It has been well established by the relevant bodies that both [article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights] and article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights should be interpreted as protecting the right of every person to be exempted from instruction in a particular religion. [Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 22 (1993), para. 6, and OHCHR, #Faith4Rights toolkit, module 12.] These freedoms are valuable because they allow for diversity in education and may promote the realization of the right to education with due respect for cultural diversity and the cultural rights of learners."

General Assembly 2021 report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief (A/76/380):

"24. […] In the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights, it is further stressed that freedom of religion or belief cannot exist without freedom of thought. […]

89. Within the educational sphere, the Toledo Guiding Principles on Teaching about Religions and Beliefs in Public Schools of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe guide the preparation of public school curricula teaching about diverse religions and beliefs and promote critical thinking. Critical thinking is also a core principle of the #Faith4Rights toolkit."

2021 Study on the contribution of the special procedures in assisting States and other stakeholders in the prevention of human rights violations and abuses (A/HRC/48/21):

"70. Mandate holders cooperate with different human rights mechanisms in their prevention initiatives. For example, the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief has been actively involved in the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence. Several special procedures, including the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, as well as a member of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, have participated in expert workshops on the Rabat Plan of Action. Mandate holders have also been engaged in the OHCHR Faith for Rights framework, which closely followed on from the Rabat Plan of Action, to work with religious and faith-based actors more directly, thereby encouraging them to promote the right to freedom of religion or belief and prevent religious intolerance."

Human Rights Council 2022 report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief (A/HRC/49/44):
"VI. Good Practice
64. State and non-State actors have developed policies and projects widely considered as good practices for promoting and protecting religious or belief minorities' rights, including conflict prevention, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding measures. Where appropriate, practices should be adapted to the local circumstances while upholding a human rights-based approach. […]
66. Some religious leaders, influencers and other civil society actors promote reconciliation, peacebuilding and conflict prevention through constructive discourse and other interfaith initiatives: #Faith4Rights is a human rights framework for faith-based actors to exchange practices and engage in interfaith projects, collectively promoting human rights; [https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/FreedomReligion/faith4rights-toolkit/Pages/Index.aspx.] […]
77. To address pressing concerns over alleged rights violations of persons belonging to religious or belief minorities in conflict and insecurity, the Special Rapporteur makes the following recommendations.
78. States should: (a) Promote and protect freedom of religion or belief for minorities by repealing anti-conversion and anti-blasphemy laws, revoking restrictions on manifestations of their religion or beliefs, and adopting comprehensive anti-discrimination laws with input from all disadvantaged groups. [OHCHR/Equal Rights Trust, *Protecting Minority Rights: A Practical Guide to Developing Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Legislation* (forthcoming 2022).] (b) Fulfil obligations to prohibit incitement (online and offline) to discrimination, hostility, or violence based on religion or belief, consistent with IHRL and standards,[A/HRC/RES/16/18; Rabat Plan of Action; Beirut Declaration and its 18 Commitments on Faith for Rights.] and condemn and prosecute violations. This includes the weaponization of crises like the COVID-19 pandemic against religious or belief minorities. […]
80. Civil society actors (including faith-based actors) should: (a) Promote interfaith engagement (including through the #Faith4Rights framework), oppose essentializing narratives about religious or belief communities and refrain from and publicly denounce hatred and incites discrimination, hostility, or violence against persons based on religion or belief. Faith-based leaders and influencers should use their authority to promote inclusive, peaceful and just conflict resolutions and to prevent tensions arising, particularly where conducted in the name of religion or belief."

Recommendations made by the 2021 Forum on Minority Issues (A/HRC/49/81):
"3. Specifically, on the topic of preventing conflicts involving minorities, the following instruments are also a reference: the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights and its 18 commitments and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. […]
58. States, the United Nations, international and regional organizations and civil society are encouraged to work closely in supporting the positive contributions of faith-based actors, including through the promotion of the Beirut Declaration and the faith for rights toolkit."

General Assembly 2022 report of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues (A/77/246):
"56. […] Some of the few positive developments for minorities within the United Nations in more recent years were the development of the OHCHR #Faith4Rights toolkit, which flags the disproportionate targeting of religious and other minorities in hate speech and stresses the importance of protecting their rights [See https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/tools-and-resources/faith4rights-toolkit.]"

Human Rights Council 2023 report of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues (A/HRC/52/27):
"33. […] A special mention ought to be made, however, of the OHCHR-initiated 2012 Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, which lays out religious leaders' core responsibilities in countering incitement to hatred, and the subsequent 2017 Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights, which expands those responsibilities to the full spectrum of human rights and which led to the #Faith4Rights toolkit of 2019, containing 18 commitments to "reach out to people of different religions and beliefs in all regions of the

world, to promote a common, action-oriented platform". The toolkit's training modules make frequent references to and include strategies aimed at nurturing tolerance and inclusion of religious minorities and protecting their rights. [Module 6 on minority rights. See www.ohchr.org/en/faith-for-rights/faith4rights-toolkit/module-6-minority-rights.]
73. The Special Rapporteur urges the United Nations to mainstream and integrate in the training of United Nations staff, where appropriate, especially in its work at the global, regional and country levels, the #Faith4Rights toolkit, in particular module 6 on minorities."

Human Rights Council 2023 report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief (A/HRC/52/38):
"7. […] While the myriad violations that occur in the name of religion or belief can in no way be downplayed, recognition has also been given to the potential role that inspiration, volition and action, drawing from religion or belief, can play in advancing respect for the human rights of each and every person.[See https://www.ohchr.org/en/faith-for-rights.] In this vein, the Forum on Minority Issues encouraged States, the United Nations, international and regional organizations and civil society organizations to work closely in supporting the positive contributions of faith-based actors. [A/HRC/49/81, para. 58.]
49. In the humanitarian field, religious communities have had a very long standing and notable engagement the world over. A number of codes of conduct have emerged from such communities to clarify that humanitarian aid must be 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".[See https://www.ifrc.org/our-promise/do-good/code-conduct-movement-ngos, core principles 2 and 4; and A/HRC/40/58, annex II, commitment XIV.]
50. The influence and engagement of religious and belief communities in conflict resolution, peacekeeping and peacebuilding has long been established. This has given rise to inspiring visions, new initiatives and global movements with established regional and national plans to advance peace. A previous mandate holder urged caution against homogenizing the experiences of religious or belief minorities in conflict situations, lest it lead to 'religionizing' conflicts, which may make conflict resolution more elusive and intractable. Other frameworks have put forward holistic understandings of human rights and peace,[See https://upeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Wiener-and-Fernandez-A-Missing-Piece-for-Peace.pdf#page=268.] promoting commitments to stand up for the rights of Indigenous Peoples and all persons belonging to minorities, their freedoms and right to participate in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life,[A/HRC/40/58, annex II, commitment VI.] which may also contribute to political and social stability.
65. […] Others promote this through video series or peer-to-peer learning, developed into a variety of formats, such as an online course addressing the role of religious and faith-based actors in promoting human rights and sustainable peace,[See https://www.usip.org/academy/catalog/religions-beliefs-and-human-rights-faith-rights-approach.] an online facilitator training course [See https://faith4rights.iclrs.org.] and other online and in-person formats. […]
81. The Special Rapporteur recommends that international organizations and multilateral institutions: […] (d) Collaborate with States, regional organizations and civil society organizations in supporting the positive human rights contributions of faith-based actors, where appropriate."

Maldives mission 2023 report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism (A/HRC/52/39/Add.1):
"24. The Special Rapporteur is profoundly disquieted at the use of the law and practice on "extremism" and "religious extremism" as a placeholder for impingements on the absolute right of freedom of religion and belief enshrined in article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. She recalls that freedom of religion and belief is a universal right, an intrinsic aspect of a person's humanity, which allows everyone to practise their religion or belief, individually and in community with others, in private or in public. The perception that a Government can directly or indirectly control what individuals think or believe, or that a Government is directly or indirectly entitled to decide what authorized thoughts or beliefs are, has no place in a modern democracy governed by the rule of law and respect for the dignity of all human beings. She

reaffirms, in this context, the fundamental principle of equality and non-discrimination on any ground, including religion, enshrined in article 26 of the Covenant and refers to the 18 commitments of the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights, particularly the commitments on preventing the use of the notion of "State religion" to discriminate against any individual or group; on revisiting religious interpretations that appear to perpetuate gender inequality and harmful stereotypes or even condone gender-based violence; on publicly denouncing all instances of advocacy of hatred that incites to violence, discrimination or hostility; on monitoring interpretations, determinations or other religious views that manifestly conflict with universal human rights norms and standards; on refraining from oppressing critical voices and urging States to repeal any existing anti-blasphemy or anti-apostasy laws; and on refining curriculums, teaching materials and textbooks."

Human Rights Council 2023 report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education (A/HRC/53/27):
"54. Educational freedoms are essential. Under article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, parents have the liberty to choose schools for their children and to ensure that their education is in conformity with their own convictions; and individuals and bodies have the liberty to establish and direct educational institutions. These liberties include the right to opt out of religious education, including one's own religion,[Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 22 (1993), para. 6; and OHCHR, #Faith4Rights toolkit, module 12, available at https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/tools-and-resources/faith4rights-toolkit.] thus allowing for diversity in education, without absolving public education systems from their obligations to protect cultural diversity."

General Assembly 2023 report of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues (A/78/195):
"63. Also noteworthy at the United Nations, among others, are the publication in 2022 of a guidance note on intersectionality, racial discrimination and protection of minorities, the publication in 2021 of a checklist to strengthen United Nations work at the country level to combat racial discrimination and advance minority rights, and the release of the #Faith4Rights toolkit in 2019, with training modules that include frequent references to, and strategies aimed at nurturing, tolerance and inclusion of religious minorities and protection of their rights."

General Assembly 2023 report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences (A/78/256):
"28. […] These intersecting forms of discrimination serve to highlight the important role that religion and religious leaders play in preventing statelessness and protecting and promoting women's right to nationality. [See, for example, the European Union Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Action for the period 2021 to 2025, the Faith for Rights framework and #Faith4Rights toolkit of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and UNHCR, "Partnership note on faith-based organizations, local faith communities and faith leaders", 2014.]"

Human Rights Council 2024 report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief (A/HRC/55/47):
"24. Regarding the speaker, in recent years the speaker's role and responsibilities have come into greater focus in relation to political and other leaders [A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, appendix, para. 20; see also A/HRC/40/58, annex I, paras. 18–22] campaigning for office and populist support in a context that is increasingly permissive in relationship to hate speech. […]
26. Where the intent is to criticize those holding office, that is, politicians and public figures, including in relation to their religion or belief policies, this may serve as a form of policy reflection, and hence the advancement of freedom of religion or belief for all. This should be encouraged where pertinent to the defence of human rights. Those in office may include religious leaders, who often exercise a heightened degree of influence over the hearts and minds of their followers. [A/HRC/40/58, annex I, para. 19, and annex II, commitments VII–XI.]
29. It should be recalled that the rights holder under the Covenant is an individual or group of persons, meaning "everyone", "all persons" or "persons belonging to" religious or belief minorities whose human rights are protected under articles 18 through 22, 26 and 27 of the Covenant. Discrimination and incitement to religious

hatred can relate to theistic, non-theistic, atheistic or any other believers, as well as to individuals not professing a belief. [Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 22 (1993), para. 2; and A/HRC/40/58, annex I, para. 10, and annex II, commitment II.]
39. Counter-speech, or "speaking out" against advocacy of hatred based on religion or belief is a valuable and necessary companion to regulation of expressions. Its value has been recognized by the Human Rights Council in its resolutions 16/18 (para. 5 (e)) and 53/1 (para. 3) and in the Rabat Plan of Action. [A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, appendix, para. 36; see also A/HRC/40/58, annex I, paras. 20–22, and annex II, commitments VI and VII.]
60. […] Civil society organizations, including religious leaders and faith-based actors, should be consistently invited to participate in the meetings of the Istanbul Process, with a view to sharing good practices and lessons learned; their inclusion could lead to compiling peer-to-peer learning and action points at the international, regional, national and local levels."

Human Rights Council 2024 report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association (A/HRC/56/50):
"80. The rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association are vital for the exercise of religious freedoms. Faith-based and religious actors should ensure that they do not undermine those rights but, rather, join efforts to defend them. Given the influence of religious and faith leaders in shaping societal norms and behaviours, they should work to counter human rights violations and incitement to hatred and also to counter stigmatization against civil society organizations, in line with their responsibilities as outlined in the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence and the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights."

Human Rights Council 2024 report of the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity (A/HRC/56/57):
"17. The engagement of civil society in international solidarity actions by its very nature entails the exercise of freedom of expression, assembly and association across borders. Pursuant to article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, civil society actors may seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of their choice. It is notable that such expression should be peaceful and non-discriminatory in nature, as article 20 of the Covenant provides that propaganda for war and advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence are to be prohibited by law. The Human Rights Committee has recognized that the same standard applies to freedom of assembly. [Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 37 (2020) on the right of peaceful assembly, para. 50; and general comment No. 34 (2011) on the freedoms of opinion and expression, paras. 50–52. See also the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, art. 4; Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, general recommendation No. 35 (2013) on combating racist hate speech; the Rabat Plan of Action, para. 29; and the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights.]"

General Assembly 2024 report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief (A/79/182):
"19. The need to advance peace and promote freedom of religion or belief in parallel, as integral to one another, is recognized in numerous instruments, including the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, the Declaration on the Right to Peace of 2016 and the Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights of 2017.[A/HRC/40/58, annex I, para. 7, and annex II; see also #Faith4Rights toolkit, p. 10]
40. […] Freedom of religion or belief has been described as having an internal dimension (*forum internum*) and an external dimension (*forum externum*). The *forum internum* relates to the right to have, adopt and change thought, conscience, religion or belief, which can be theistic, non-theistic, atheistic or other; [CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.4, para. 2; and A/HRC/40/58, annex I, para. 10.]
41. The freedom to interpret also offers a powerful resilience in times of polarization that may lead to violence, conflict and war. It can allow individuals to stand against the tide of conflict, refuse to accept the

distortion and utilization of their religion or belief for war – especially but not exclusively if the conflict has interreligious or intrareligious associations – and to resolutely stand for peace and human rights for all. Promoting constructive engagement on the understanding of religious texts and encouraging interpretations cognizant of a "globalized world composed of increasingly multicultural and multi-religious societies" [A/HRC/40/58, annex II, commitment III] supports this objective. […]
59. The Security Council has called on States to support "quality education for peace, including by designing and implementing policies whereby education systems promote … freedom of religion or belief". [Security Council resolution 2686 (2023), para. 8. For example, see the peer-to-peer learning methodology advanced in Ibrahim Salama and Michael Wiener, "'Faith for Rights' in armed conflict: lessons from practice", *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, 7 June 2023.] […]
73. Positive speech offers a healing tool for reconciliation and peacebuilding in hearts and minds. [A/HRC/40/58, annex I, para. 20]."

General Assembly 2024 report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association (A/79/263):
"105. To curtail anti-rights narratives, new paths for engaging in public debates and communicating about human rights are needed. The project Reimagining Human Rights by the creative studio Fine Acts is a good example, as well as the Faith for Rights framework developed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights, which helps to address the narrative portraying the advancing of rights agendas as against religions and beliefs."

Human Rights Council 2025 report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief (A/HRC/58/49):
"24. The Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights and its 18 Commitments on Faith for Rights also provide relevant guidance for faith-based actors to understand the nexus between these rights, and affirm their importance. [A/HRC/40/58, annex II, commitments I and XV.] Faith-based actors, for instance religious or humanist chaplains, can play a pivotal role in reporting torture and ill-treatment in places of deprivation of liberty, so it is vital that they are aware of existing frameworks for the protection of human rights."

Hungary mission 2025 report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief (A/HRC/58/49/Add.1):
"111. The Special Rapporteur also recommends that non-State actors, including religion or belief actors: (o) Place non-discrimination, compassion and solidarity [A/HRC/40/58, Annex I] at the heart of their orientation and actions, and hold on to their neutrality and independence, seeking to contribute to all human rights for all in collaboration with other civil society actors."

Germany mission 2026 report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression (A/HRC/62/67/Add.1):
"82. Secondly, it is imperative that Germany address urgently and comprehensively, in close collaboration with civil society, communities and other relevant stakeholders, the rising tide of hate and vitriol towards minorities and migrants. Particular attention must be given to anti-Muslim hatred, which is rising fast. Significant legal, institutional, policy and programmatic measures are needed to tackle the root causes of intolerance and to ensure that expression remains a vital pillar of a more equal and inclusive society. Speech is fundamental to individual and communal flourishing.[Beirut Declaration on Faith for Rights; and A/HRC/40/58, annex I, para. 20] Civil society has pointed out some good practices in Germany that should be emulated and expanded. […]
89. All levels of the Government must strongly condemn and combat antisemitism, Islamophobia, and hate speech against minorities and migrants, including Arabs, Palestinians, Kurds, Roma and Sinti, women and sexual minorities. In particular, they should: […] (d) Engage with political, religious and community leaders, using inclusive consultative processes and programmes to promote intercultural and interfaith dialogue, understanding and tolerance among and within the affected communities and combat negative stereotypes, including through the peer-to-peer learning methodology of the Faith for Rights framework; [See https://www.ohchr.org/en/faith-for-rights.]"

Rabat+5 symposium (December 2017)

On 6-7 December 2017, more than 100 States, national human rights institutions, regional organizations, religious authorities and faith-based civil society actors participated in the Rabat+5 symposium, which was held on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the Rabat Plan of Action.



In his opening statement, the High Commissioner urged the various stakeholders to implement and support concrete "Faith for Rights" projects, notably at the grassroots level. During the Rabat+5 symposium, sixteen civil society organizations and OHCHR's Regional Office for Middle East and North Africa presented their projects and areas of future cooperation on combatting discrimination on the basis of religion and enhancing the role of faith-based actors in the defence of human dignity.



Furthermore, an academic initiative presented the "Faith for Rights" online platform, which will serve as an inventory of relevant actors and projects in order to disseminate the 18 commitments, collect capacity building approaches and facilitate networking. This should also lead to strengthening the capacities of the existing UN human rights mechanisms by providing them with accurate and up-to-date analysis on environments, dynamics and early warning signs of incidents leading to sectarian conflicts and violence committed in the name of religion.

The Rabat+5 symposium offered an opportunity for the various stakeholders to engage with several experts who had contributed to the elaboration of the Rabat Plan of Action and the 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights" and to hear experiences in the area of combatting violence in the name of religion, both by State representatives, national human rights institutions and civil society actors.



In his final statement, the Chairman welcomed that the Rabat+5 Symposium offered a platform to exchange practices and ideas and particularly the emergence of creative action points to inspire policies and synergies of the various stakeholders.

High Commissioner's opening statement to the Rabat+5 symposium

(as delivered in Rabat by Ibrahim Salama on 6 December 2017)

I warmly welcome you to this important and timely symposium concerning the follow-up to the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of incitement to hatred, and I wish to thank the Kingdom of Morocco for hosting this symposium.



When it was adopted five years ago, the Rabat Plan of Action was an audacious start in articulating the human rights responsibilities of a number of actors, but with a specific focus on religious leaders. This was a first shift that I would qualify as a move from general interfaith dialogues to a specific articulation of three core responsibilities: Religious leaders should refrain from using messages which may incite violence, they should speak out firmly and promptly against hate speech and they should be clear that violence cannot be justified by prior provocation.

When human rights are seen as opposed to religion and merely portrayed as a Western imposition, then terrorists and violent extremists cannot dream of a better environment to prosper. Inciting to violence in the name of religion is a sophisticated intellectual effort which involves distorting religious messages and recruiting, deceiving and exploiting people. This manipulative approach of violent extremists requires a thoughtful response, to which human rights provides essential grounds and tools.

The second shift in this direction started in March 2017, when the faith-based and civil society actors participating at our expert workshop in Beirut expanded the above-mentioned "Rabat responsibilities" to the full spectrum of human rights. The visionary Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights" of March 2017 are entirely dedicated to faith-based actors, who are defined in a wide manner to include theistic, non-theistic, atheistic or other believers.

The Beirut Declaration is not "yet another declaration" but rather a profound analysis of the conceptual premises of a new relationship between faith and rights. It is also not merely a theoretical clarification but is followed by the corresponding operative 18 commitments through which faith-based actors have articulated how "Faith" can stand up for "Rights" more effectively so that both enhance each other.

In my opening statement to the Beirut workshop I stressed that religious leaders, with their considerable influence on the hearts and minds of millions of people, are potentially very important human rights actors. This is also reflected in the following quote from the Beirut Declaration: "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."

Thus these two shifts have led to conceptual clarification through the soft law standards emerging from Rabat and Beirut. The imprint of these two documents is quite impressive. Within the last five years, the Rabat Plan of Action has been referred to in more than 120 UN documents by States, civil society organizations and human rights mechanisms; this means that every second week a UN document was published with a reference to the Rabat Plan of Action.

In the past eight months, the Beirut Declaration has also been used in several reports by the Secretary-General, Special Procedures and Treaty Bodies. For example, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women raised the "Faith for Rights" framework in their dialogues with three State parties in July, and a related recommendation was positively acknowledged by the concerned delegation in the concluding observations. All this illustrates the pressing demand for guidance and action in the context of faith and human rights.

Let me also highlight the fifth Commitment on non-discrimination and gender equality, with a concrete pledge to revisit those religious understandings and interpretations that appear to perpetuate gender inequality and harmful stereotypes or even condone gender-based violence. This human rights commitment is illustrated with pertinent quotes from the Talmud, Bible, Qur'an, Hadith, Guru Granth Sahib, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the recently adopted joint UN general recommendation/comment on harmful practices. This approach in itself is more than symbolic, since it constitutes a referential bridge – instead of an ocean of divide – between faith and rights.



The next important shift is envisaged through this Rabat+5 symposium: After the successful shift from dialogue to standards we now hope to move to implementing and supporting concrete "Faith for Rights" projects by various stakeholders, notably at the grassroots level. Since human rights are by definition a multi-stakeholder exercise, the "Faith for Rights" framework is a good example of States, State religious authorities, faith-based and civil society organizations, national human rights institutions and individuals joining forces.

The Beirut Declaration encapsulates this message poignantly with its call to stand up for our shared humanity and equal dignity of each human being in all circumstances within our own spheres.

States continue to 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.

National human rights institutions are uniquely placed to be bridges that link the various stakeholders, including religious authorities and faith-based civil society organizations.

State religious authorities, some of which have centuries of history in the State, enjoy quite different privileges and legal status in the various countries. In this context, the 18 commitments pledge preventing the use of the notion of "State religion" to discriminate against any individual or group as well as preventing the use of "doctrinal secularism" from reducing the space for religious or belief pluralism in practice.

Faith-based actors and individual believers should also realize the importance of standing up for each other and acting on the basis of a shared vision. The vision has already been articulated in the "Faith for Rights" framework; concrete projects now need to give it life and impact on the ground, with full political, financial and substantive support.

Furthermore, research and academic centres have an important role in consolidating the recently emerging conceptual clarity and they should also continue comparative research on faith and rights.

No religious precept, however long established and proclaimed under whatever banner, should be shielded from scrutiny when human dignity is at stake. Education, academic freedom and freedom of expression are key ingredients for confronting new challenges as well as for facilitating free and creative thinking.

The various stakeholders should never accept the false dichotomy of "faith versus rights". Human rights are neither opposed to faith, nor vice versa. State religious authorities, faith-based and civil society actors should work jointly for the constructive approach of "Faith for Rights", which upholds human dignity and equality for all.

While religions have been manipulated across human history to divide people, faith may unite all believers in line with the Beirut Declaration's message of "unity in diversity".

Presentation of "Faith for Rights" projects by various stakeholders

During the Rabat+ symposium, sixteen civil society representatives outlined their projects and areas of future cooperation on combatting discrimination on the basis of religion and enhancing the role of faith-based actors in the defence of human rights. Please see below the list of presentations by civil society organizations (including hyperlinks to their concept notes, where available):

- Mr. Melhem Khalaf, Lebanon
- Ms. Katherine Cash, Sweden
- Mr. Masimba Kuchera, Zimbabwe
- Ms. Elizabeth O'Casey, Belgium
- Ms. Ani Zonneveld, United States of America
- Mr. Andrew Smith, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- Ms. Tahmina Rahman, Bangladesh
- Ms. Salpy Eskidjian, Cyprus
- Mr. Yehuda Stolov, Israel
- Mr. Thomas Schirrmacher, Germany
- Ms. Zainah Anwar, Malaysia
- Ms. Diane Alai, Switzerland
- Mr. Abdelwahab Hani, Tunisia
- Mr. John Graz, France
- Mr. W. Cole Durham Jr., United States of America
- Mr. Said Hammamoun, Canada
- Mr. Ismail Zien, OHCHR Regional Office for Middle East and North Africa



Chairman's final statement of the Rabat+5 symposium

At this commemoration of the fifth anniversary of the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of incitement to hatred, the participants to the Rabat+5 symposium discussed the state of use by various stakeholders of the standards and policy recommendations articulated in Rabat in 2012. I welcome the translation of these standards into several languages, including by civil society actors who have found them useful for their grassroots work. I would also like to recall the consensual Human Rights Council resolution 16/18 ("Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief"), which enjoys broad support from various stakeholders.

I also note with satisfaction that the Rabat Plan of Action has been referred to in more than 120 UN documents within the past five years. However, a larger diffusion of these standards and deeper analysis of their content would be beneficial to their implementation. New relevant stakeholders, particularly in the field of religious institutions, faith-based organisations, education, parliamentary and judicial authorities as well as the media, would contribute to optimising the beneficial impact of the Rabat Plan of Action.

I also welcome the expansion of these Rabat standards from merely the prohibition of incitement to hatred to the larger horizons of human rights responsibilities of faith-based actors. The Beirut Declaration and its corresponding 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights", adopted in March 2017, are hence an important addition that complements the Rabat Plan of Action. The various faith-based civil society actors assembled in Beirut have thus articulated common grounds and have made concrete commitments of how "faith" can stand for "rights" more effectively so that both enhance each other. One highly symbolic activity, which is also mentioned in the Beirut Declaration, is the annual walk of "Faith for Rights" each 10 December in all parts of the world.

The Rabat+5 Symposium offered an opportunity for the various stakeholders to engage with several experts who contributed to the elaboration of the Rabat Plan of Action and the 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights" and to hear experiences in the area of combatting violence in the name of religion, both by State representatives, national human rights institutions and civil society actors. The participation of a number of mandate holders of international human rights mechanisms also enriched the discussions at the symposium from a human rights perspective.

Finally, the symposium focused on concrete "Faith for Rights" projects at the grassroots level in various parts of the world. Going beyond the general narrative of coexistence among people of different origins, cultures and religions, I believe it is now vital to use the Rabat and Beirut standards in practice and conceive projects that contribute to their full implementation. I welcome that the Rabat+5 Symposium offered a platform to exchange practices and ideas and particularly the emergence of creative action points to inspire policies and synergies of the various stakeholders.



Religion & Rights seminar in Geneva (February 2018)

On 16 February 2018, the UN Interagency Task Force on Religion and Development, Musawah and OHCHR organized a seminar on "Religion & Rights: Strengthening Common Ground". The seminar introduced international initiatives that promote a rights-based understanding of religion to build common ground between faith and rights. It also explored ways to enhance collaboration and more effective engagement with the international system to promote human rights for all. Furthermore, it highlighted good practices and possible approaches towards reform of discriminatory laws and practices in the name of religion to strengthen government compliance with international commitments and treaty obligations.



Session 1: Perspectives and Challenges (moderated by Christine Loew, UN Women Liaison Office, Geneva)

- *Bridging Rights and Faith for the SDGs:* Dr Azza Karam, Coordinator, UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion and Development
- *Reconciling Religion and Rights to Promote Compliance with Treaty Obligations:* Ibrahim Salama, Chief, Human Rights Treaties Branch, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
- *Civil Society Interventions to Reconcile Religion and Rights*: Musawah Ways of Working: Zainah Anwar, Executive Director, Musawah

Session 2: Initiatives by intergovernmental platforms (moderated by Ambassador Hans Brattskar, Norway)

- *"Faith for Rights":* Michael Wiener, Rule of Law and Democracy Section, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
- *Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that could Lead to Atrocity Crimes:* Simona Cruciani, Office of the Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide
- *Reconciling Religion and Rights through the CEDAW Process:* Nahla Haidar, member of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Session 3: Civil Society Initiatives (moderated by Ani Zonneveld, Muslims for Progressive Values)

- *Countering Misuse of Religion, Culture, and Tradition to Undermine the Universality of Human Rights:* Isabel Marler, Communications Coordinator, Challenging Religious Fundamentalisms, AWID
- *Engaging the UN System to Reconcile Religion and Rights:* Bani Dugal, Faith and Feminism Working Group at the United Nations
- *Faith-based engagement: Building partnerships with governmental, intergovernmental, and civil society sectors:* Rudelmar Bueno de Faria, General Secretary, ACTAlliance
- *Forging an Overlapping Consensus between Muslim Legal Tradition and International Human Rights:* Dr Ziba Mir-Hosseini, Legal Anthropologist and Musawah Board Member

Session 4: Government Initiatives (moderated by Ambassador Franz-Michael Skjold Mellbin, Denmark)

- *Strengthening human rights compliance within the UN system through a feminist foreign policy:* Ambassador Dr Joachim Bergström, Swedish Representative to the OIC
- *Implementing the Rabat Plan of Action and Beirut Declaration:* Dr Faouzi Skali, Advisor, High Authority for Audiovisual Communication (HACA), Morocco
- *The 'added value' of religion: Possibilities and pitfalls in government cooperation with religious actors:* Dr Marie Juul Petersen, Senior Researcher, Danish Institute for Human Rights

Youth workshop in Tunis (May 2018)

From 2 to 5 May 2018, OHCHR organized a regional workshop in Tunis on the role of youth faith actors in promoting human rights in the Middle East and North Africa region.



25 participants from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, Qatar and Yemen attended the workshop, including young human rights activists, religious actors, women human rights defenders, human rights educators and government officials. They presented several youth-led initiatives from across the region, for example to promote tolerance in schools; social media initiatives; promoting minority rights through advocacy with United Nations mechanisms; youth entrepreneurship to combat radicalisation; and reintegration of former youth who had joined violent extremist groups. Three experts also shared their experiences, challenges and lessons learned in drafting and implementing the Rabat Plan of Action as well as the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights".

Through an interactive role play exercise, each participant briefly presented the impact they want to achieve through a project idea. Subsequently, similar project ideas were discussed in four groups with a view to developping the main components in the following areas: (a) providing capacity-building for faith actors; (b) founding a regional coalition to counter religious violent extremism and radicalisation; (c) developping an electronic platform to collect and share resources, best practices and lessons learned; and (d) capacity-building for staff in the administration of justice who interact with violent extremists. Furthermore, some standalone project ideas were discussed, such as a mobile phone application to educate children and adolescents on "Faith for Rights" through artistic and creative activities or to advocate for the creation of a new mandate of a Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Youth.

The participants of the youth workshop in Tunis made the following main recommendations for follow-up:

- Youth in the Middle East and North Africa region should be considered as a key partner in promoting tolerance and combatting radicalisation.
- OHCHR should strengthen its technical and financial support to youth-led projects.
- OHCHR should also lead the development of capacity-building and training tools, especially for faith-based actors.



Regional workshop in Marrakech (November 2018)



From 5 to 8 November 2018, OHCHR organized a regional workshop in Marrakech, in partnership with the Moroccan National Council for Human Rights and as part of the Norwegian-funded project on religious minorities in the Middle East and North Africa. The workshop on "The Role of Youth in Building a Tolerant Society" had 40 participants from 14 MENA countries (Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen), was fully gender-balanced and also included three persons with disabilities.

The experts, including the UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues and OHCHR staff members from Beirut, Doha and Geneva, trained the participants on international human rights treaties and engaging with UN mechanisms; how to protect and promote the rights of religious minorities; and ways to combat hate speech, notably through the Rabat Plan of Action as well as Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights". Furthermore, the workshop included a specific gender perspective with panel discussions on the integration of women and girls in decision-making and enhancing women's participation in public affairs through CEDAW and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The programme was interactive, with each participant presenting their national experiences, good practices and innovative ideas to take forward. The workshop included many practical exercises, e.g. to summarize each of the 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights" into a tweet of less than 140 characters, which some participants spontaneously sent to their networks from their own Twitter accounts.



The participants of the Marrakech workshop made the following main recommendations:

- Review educational programmes and curriculum in order to mainstream human rights and enhance inclusivity and diversity of societies, including in schools and universities;
- Ensure a strengthened focus on challenges faced by youth and their communities;
- Develop an advocacy plan to enhance the rights of minorities who are exposed to discrimination and better protect their human rights in the MENA region through laws, policies and practices;
- Support civil society actors who are working on human rights of young people and youth unions to engage more in national and international human rights mechanisms;
- Establish a regional youth platform to unify and empower them to better meet their needs; and
- Establish a special human rights protection mechanism on digital space to support communication strategies and multimedia campaigns for combating hate speech and enhancing equality.

Social media workshop in Tunis (October 2019)



On 21-22 October 2019, OHCHR organized the first-ever regional workshop on enhancing civic space and addressing hate speech in social media in the Middle East and North Africa region. The workshop in Tunis was attended by 36 media workers, human rights defenders, social influencers and members of religious minorities. It included 21 women and 15 men from Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

Digital technology has transformed the means through which human rights are both exercised and unduly constrained. The ability to access and use the Internet and social media platforms have been critical in the evolution of the 'Arab Spring' and beyond. They have become an indispensable tool for the realization of a range of human rights and for boosting economic and social development. New technologies and inter-connectedness have helped civil society networks to grow, including across borders.

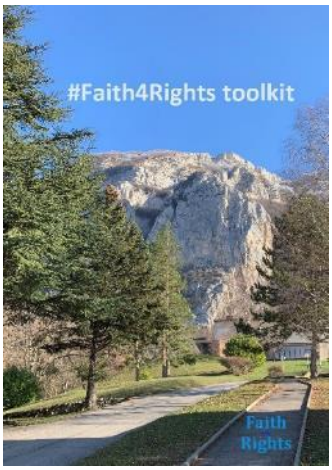
Yet, the new opportunities were followed by emerging threats to civic space. For historically marginalized groups and communities, space that was already limited is shrinking further. Referring to the global rise in anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim hatred and persecution of Christians, the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech (launched by the Secretary-General in June 2019) stresses that "social media and other forms of communication are being exploited as platforms for bigotry". As already highlighted by the Rabat Plan of Action, it is of concern that incidents which indeed reach the threshold of incitement to hatred are not addressed, whereas members of minorities are de facto persecuted – with a chilling effect on others – through the abuse of vague domestic legislation, jurisprudence and policies.

The workshop in Tunis explored how social media may be either an important tool for enhancing civic space or for spreading hatred online, which can lead to violence offline against religious minorities. Many social media platforms have therefore included in their terms and conditions specific prohibitions on 'hate speech'. Some platforms recently updated their rules against hateful conduct to include language that dehumanizes others on the basis of religion, while others have defined hate speech as a "direct attack on people based on what we call protected characteristics — race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, caste, sex, gender, gender identity, and serious disease or disability". As highlighted by the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief: "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".

The participants studied the normative framework on hate speech, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of incitement to hatred, the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights", the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, and the Christchurch Call to eliminate terrorist and violent extremist online content. Participants discussed in working groups several case studies concerning hate speech online, including from the 2019 reports of the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen and of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar (notably in its detailed findings and the compilation of its recommendations).

The regional workshop also included an interactive dialogue with representatives of social media companies to address specific queries and suggestions from the participants on ways to address challenges facing civil society in the digital space in the MENA region. The participants explored ways to broaden civic space and address hate speech on those platforms. They also considered potential activities to counter shrinking digital civic space through awareness-raising, strategic advocacy and digital partnerships, and to develop a compilation of good practices on how to address hate speech in social media.

Collonges Declaration (December 2019)



The "Faith for Rights" framework facilitates exploring the relationship between religions, beliefs and human rights.

As stressed in the Rabat Plan of Action of 2012, religious leaders have a crucial role to play in speaking out firmly and promptly against hate speech. In 2017, the Beirut Declaration on "Faith for Rights" added that individual and communal expression of religions or beliefs 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 and beliefs. The Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments reach out to theistic, non-theistic, atheistic or other believers in all regions of the world to enhance cohesive, peaceful and respectful societies on the basis of a common action-oriented platform.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, has emphasized the importance of focussing attention on practical outreach tools, capacity-building programmes and interdisciplinary research on questions related to faith and rights. In this context, her office organized in 2018 and 2019 two workshops in Collonges-sous-Salève with faith-based and civil society actors, Special Rapporteurs and members of United Nations human rights treaty bodies.

The "Collaboration of Collonges" is the follow-up to the normative trajectory of the soft law standards emerging from the Rabat Plan of Action and the Beirut Declaration on "Faith for Rights". It also contributes to implementing related intergovernmental resolutions and action plans, such as the United Nations Human Rights Council's resolution 16/18 on combating intolerance (2011), the Sustainable Development Goals (2015), the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (2016), the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech (2019) and the UN Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites (2019).

The expert workshops in Collonges build upon the experience gained from capacity-building and collaborative events organized by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), including in Dakar, Rabat, Geneva, Tunis, Marrakesh and Djibouti. They aim at filling the identified triple gap of education, research and training on faith and human rights, through the #Faith4Rights toolkit that is attached to this Collonges Declaration.

The participants at the workshop on the campus of Salève on 18-19 December 2019, including the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief and the Special Rapporteur on minority issues as well as several members of UN treaty bodies, have refined this #Faith4Rights toolkit. It is a prototype suggested for faith actors, academic institutions and training experts, to be further enriched and adapted to the various inter-faith engagement contexts. This methodology of engagement on faith and rights is designed to be appropriated by faith actors. The toolkit may also be implemented through information technology and social media, with a particular focus on the needs of youth. It is freely available online at www.ohchr.org/en/faith-for-rights

This #Faith4Rights toolkit contains 18 modules, mirroring each of the commitments on "Faith for Rights". These modules offer concrete ideas for peer-to-peer learning exercises, for example how to unpack the 18 commitments, share personal stories, search for additional faith-based quotes or provide for inspiring examples of artistic expressions. The annex proposes several cases to debate, which expand the thematic scope, illustrate the intersectionality of the 18 commitments and enhance the skills of faith actors to manage real life situations towards the shared aims of "Faith for Rights".

The whole concept is interactive, result-oriented and conducive to critical thinking. It is open for adaptation by facilitators in order to tailor the modules to the specific context of the participants. This is the first edition of the #Faith4Rights toolkit, which will be regularly updated.

#Faith4Rights toolkit (since 2020)

The United Nations Human Rights have joined forces with faith-based groups to create a toolkit to help combat growing hate speech and intolerance.



The **"#Faith4Rights toolkit"** brings together case studies, resources and artistic expression to provide concrete ideas for discussing the relationship between religions, beliefs and human rights.

The peer-to-peer learning toolkit is based on the 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights" which aim at fostering peaceful pluralistic societies. The **High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet** had called for translating the 'Faith for Rights' framework "into practical outreach tools and capacity-building programmes."

In a presentation to the UN Human Rights Council, the **Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief** Ahmed Shaheed called the 18 commitments important guidance and inspiration for action. "It is vital to enhance the positive role of faith actors in defending freedom of religion or belief and promoting human rights at large", he stressed.

This can also help pushing back against the growing signs of incitement to hatred and violence, said UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues Fernand de Varennes.

"The causes for the rise of intolerance and hate speech are many, and so must be the approaches to tackling this scourge, including with a focus on faith-based organizations, leaders and community members, who can provide a narrative premised on hope, justice, inclusion and fairness: in other words a human rights approach," he said.

At the validation workshop recently held in Collonges-sous-Salève, France, he also announced the plan to use the #Faith4Rights toolkit in a series of regional forums on hate speech, social media and minorities, in the lead up to the global **Forum on Minority Issues** in November this year.

The toolkit is a living document that taps into social media, with a particular focus on the needs of youth and minorities. The toolkit is open for adaptation by facilitators in order to tailor the modules to the specific context of the participants.

It also includes several cases to debate, which enhance the skills of faith actors to manage religious diversity in real-life situations towards the aims of "Faith for Rights".

In 2020, moot court competitions will simulate four cases involving tensions between faith and human rights. These moot court competitions will be organized by the Universities of Pretoria and Oxford, the European Academy of Religion and the Brazilian Center of Studies in Law and Religion. They all contain elements of the 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights", with competition rounds in Beijing, Beirut, Budapest, Geneva, Johannesburg, Kyiv, New Delhi, New York, Oxford, Paris, Rome and Uberlândia.

This reflects the reality that related debates are not limited to one region or one religion; both States and non-State actors have a lot to gain from exchanging on their perspectives and lessons.

Download the #Faith4Rights toolkit (PDF) or browse through the online version.

Artistic expressions for human rights

Human rights are not only about law – artistic expressions carry them, too.

A documentary series that celebrates the diversity of beliefs makes its television debut in June. The series *Believe to See* documents the beliefs, philosophies and teachings of twelve spiritual leaders from across the globe. The series is the idea of Gaby Herbstein, an Argentina-based photographer, who has been working on the series for three years.



Herbstein said she wanted to feature religious and spiritual leaders because of a desire to show that while belief systems and cultures may be different, they share messages of dignity and equal rights of all human beings.

"I think that change in the world will come from spirituality," she said. "For my documentary series, I have travelled to Argentina, Austria, Greenland, Malta, Mexico, India, Russia and the United States to meet with spiritual leaders and participate in their ceremonies."

While looking up information about religions and human rights, Herbstein came across the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights", and she thought this initiative by UN Human Rights was a perfect fit for her project. "I said to myself 'Whoah, the messages of *Believe to See* and *Faith for Rights* are very much aligned,'" Herbstein recalled. "So I sent UN Human Rights an email, telling about Believe to See and suggesting joint outreach."

UN Human Rights agreed and offered to hyperlink her project in the #Faith4Rights toolkit as well as disseminate it among the "Faith for Rights" network. Ibrahim Salama from UN Human Rights said Herbstein's artistic project resonates well with the toolkit, as art touches both hearts and minds. "The #Faith4Rights toolkit features inspiring examples of artistic expressions, including through photos, videos, music, improvisation, dance, street art, social media, cartoons and calligraphies", Salama added. "The toolkit also includes a dozen cases to debate, which illustrate the intersectionality of the 18 commitments and enhance the skills of faith actors to manage real life situations towards the shared aims of 'Faith for Rights'."

At a virtual global consultation with religious actors and faith-based organizations, High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet recently stressed that "Joining diverse faith actors within a shared vision and framework, we hope to nourish a community of practise, learning from each other and stimulating promising initiative based on human rights and mutual collaboration and respect."

The "Faith for Rights" initiative is working with faith-based groups and individuals, in order to foster peaceful societies, which uphold human dignity and equality for all, where diversity is not just tolerated but fully respected and celebrated.

The #Faith4Rights toolkit contains 18 modules with concrete ideas for peer-to-peer learning exercises, for example concerning the impact of COVID-19 on women, girls and minorities, leveraging the spiritual and moral weight of religions or beliefs, and contributing diverse examples of artistic expressions.

The science, geography, history and culture broadcaster National Geographic were also struck by the diversity of spiritual leaders profiled for the documentary series, and have agreed to broadcast it on various channels throughout Latin America in June 2020. The series features not only leaders from the major religions but also indigenous faith leaders, offering their own words of inspiration. The series was scheduled to come out earlier, but the COVID-19 pandemic pushed back broadcast.

See the webstory at https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2020/06/artistic-expressions-human-rights

Webinars on the impact of COVID-19

In its Call for joint action in the times of the COVID-19 pandemic (April 2020), the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women referred to its "*peer-to-peer learning webinars, in collaboration with Religions for Peace and other partners to explore how various faith communities can scale up collaboration around the diverse challenges posed by COVID-19 with a human rights-based approach with respect to women and girls. These webinars will use the #Faith4Rights toolkit as a resource. The key areas of these online webinars include gender-based violence against women, individual behaviours related to COVID-19, home schooling, working from home, creative modes of local solidarity and responding to discrimination against women in various aspects of public policies. There will be specific focus on young women working in the fields of education, media, technology and women faith actors. To achieve this, the Committee will also rely on its jurisprudence, which recognizes that education for gender equality and empowerment of women and girls is the most sustainable way to ultimately achieve the objectives of non-discrimination and equality of women and men. The Committee supports the appeal of UN Secretary-General António Guterres for a global ceasefire as well as his special appeal to religious leaders of all faiths to focus on the common battle to defeat COVID-19. The Committee also appreciates the statement of 19 March 2020 by Religions for Peace on the Coronavirus Crisis, stressing the responsibility of faith actors to translate ethical values into concrete actions and offering substantive ideas for learning, teaching, preaching and designing community development projects. […] The Committee holds the strong opinion that these unprecedented times are also an opportunity for change guided by the principle of 'Leave no one behind' of the Sustainable Development Goals, recognizing that women and national machineries for the advancement of women are central to response and recovery strategies. National human rights institutions, the UN System, the UN human rights treaty bodies and special procedures may join forces in order to show a way forward for both States and civil society actors. The CEDAW Knowledge Hub initiative, with its imminent webinars about women rights, will be the signature contribution of CEDAW to a new thinking and joint action. The Committee invites all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, to join in this initiative and hopes that it will lay the foundations, in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders, for a positive and enabling post COVID-19 environment that actualizes the principal lessons of the virus: no one is safe unless all are safe.*" Watch the webinars on confronting COVID-19 from the prism of faith, gender and human rights (May 2020), on keeping the faith in times of hate (July 2020), on religious or belief minorities (March 2021) and on gender equality (May 2021).



At the virtual consultation for a Global Pledge for Action by Religious Actors and Faith-Based Organizations to Address the COVID-19 Pandemic in Collaboration with the UN (28 May 2020), the High Commissioner noted that "*We need your far-sighted leadership; your sense of principle; and your voices of authority and concern to combat these hateful divisions. The struggle for equality and justice is at the heart of the human rights agenda, and at the heart of the UN's work. Our virtual consultation today brings together as One-UN a wide range of initiatives, including two Secretary-General Plans of Action – on hate speech and on safeguarding religious sites; the Fez Plan of Action; the 18 commitments on "Faith for Rights"; and the recent Faith4Rights toolkit. This peer-to-peer learning tool, which we have been piloting online together with Religions for Peace, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, includes exercises regarding the impact of COVID-19 on women, girls and minorities. Today's challenges related to COVID-19 may be followed tomorrow by other tests for humanity and for our universal values. My Office and our partners are committed to helping to make the Pledge for Action a powerful, results-oriented framework to advance the work of diverse faith actors at the grass roots level. Joining diverse faith actors within a shared vision and framework, we hope to nourish a community of practise, learning from each other and stimulating promising initiative based on human rights and mutual collaboration and respect.*"

This consultation resulted in the Global Pledge for Action by Religious Actors and Faith-Based Organizations to Address the COVID-19 Pandemic in collaboration with the United Nations. The Pledge includes a declaration by religious leaders and actors with assurances and commitments in response to COVID-19, and a mapping of ongoing activities and possible areas of collaboration with the United Nations. Addressing and countering COVID-19 related hate speech, interfaith dialogue and capacity-building figure prominently in the mapping both as cross-cutting issues and as specific areas where religious leaders and faith-based organizations are focusing their actions and responses to COVID-19. Furthermore, the signatories to the Global Pledge commit themselves to "stand determined to respect and protect human rights standards as the overarching framework for our policies and actions. […] We recognize the central role of education and commit to prioritize education within our mandates so vulnerable populations in particular can access remote learning when needed. We pledge to contribute to fostering capacity-building and peer-learning activities at the community level, including in partnership with the United Nations. In particular, we will cooperate with relevant UN entities, as well as international and regional human rights mechanisms, to enhance the human rights knowledge of religious actors at the grass root level, engage with them in recovery efforts and exchange experiences in a peer-to-peer learning mode." (https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Religion/GlobalPledgeAction.pdf)



With the objective of translating the Global Pledge into specific actions, the UN Alliance of Civilizations, the Office on Genocide Prevention and Responsibility to Protect and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights are organizing a series of peer-to-peer learning webinars in 2020/2021. These webinars focus on exchanging information on ongoing actions, which might stimulate new result-oriented activities and specific actions to respond to the current and future challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, see https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Religion/GlobalPledgeActionInvitation.pdf

The series of webinars covers the following topics: gender equality (December 2020); hate speech (January 2021); protection of religious sites (February 2021); religious or belief minorities (March 2021); preventing atrocity crimes (April 2021); interfaith dialogue (May 2021); and wrap-up event during the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (July 2021). A gender lens is being applied by guiding the discussions through targeted questions and interventions regarding the forms and impact of hate speech during the COVID-19 pandemic on women's rights and gender equality. Participants with experience working in the field to address these challenges present good practices and lessons learnt, and identify specific action needed. Challenges and opportunities are discussed, and options for follow-up and further collaboration are explored.

Participants include civil society actors defending freedom of expression, minority and vulnerable group's rights, women's rights and gender equality and combatting hate speech, including youth organizations and/or movements; audio-visual and media actors; law enforcement officials working in the area of hate speech; as well as religious actors and faith-based organizations (see the concept note, available online at https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Religion/GlobalPledgeActionConcept.pdf).

The series of webinars is organized under the framework of the implementation of the "Faith for Rights" Toolkit. Each session collects specific recommendations for action from the participants tailored to enhance partnership between faith actors and the United Nations in line with the Global Pledge for Action in order to build a healthier, safer, fairer and more inclusive world where no one is left behind, as a response to global pandemic. The recommendations from all six sessions, highlighting good practices and lessons learned, were collected in peer-to-peer learning snapshots. During the Arria formula meeting of the Security Council on "Religion, belief and conflict" on 19 March 2021, Mexico recognized the valuable work in implementing the Global Pledge for Action by religious actors and faith-based organizations in collaboration with the UN.

Faith for Rights commUNity of practices (since 2023)

The participants of the OHCHR peer-to-peer learning week workshops, in its fourth edition held in Geneva, both in-person and virtually, from 6 to 10 November 2023 decided to establish a network, entitled "Faith for Rights commUNity of practices". During its fifth edition from 4 to 8 November 2024, they also elaborated its rules of procedure as outlined below.

Overarching goal:

To ensure continuity and mutual reinforcement among faith-based actors who contribute to the implementation of the United Nations "Faith for Rights" framework and toolkit in situations where human rights and religion or belief have to be bridged and where "faith" can stand up for human rights.

Objectives:

To strengthen faith-based actors' ability to promote and protect all human rights for all;

- To enhance joint inter-faith action, beyond mere interreligious dialogue;
- To manage and share the knowledge generated by an expanded group of experts and practitioners on all matters related to the Faith4Rights framework and toolkit;
- To regularly inject such knowledge into the work of relevant regional and international human rights mechanisms, including UN Special Procedures, Treaty Bodies and the Universal Periodic Review, given their engagement with States;
- To learn and collect experiences from practitioners implementing the "Faith for Rights" framework and toolkit ("Faith4Rights super-users") and make them accessible to other users of the "Faith for Rights" framework;
- To generate and disseminate, both to States and faith-based actors, through relevant mandated reports by both the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, promising practices of civil society organizations, academia and other actors in the area of faith and human rights, and thus, generate and manage knowledge from practitioners on bridging religion and human rights;
- To share such knowledge in direct engagement with States, including at the Istanbul process annual events as well as States reviews under the treaty body monitoring system and the UPR, in order to enhance the optimal implementation of all international human rights norms and standards related to or affected by religion or beliefs;
- To engage directly with UN treaty bodies and Special Procedures mandate holders to draw on the jurisprudence, recommendations and authority of these bodies in support of activities under the "Faith for Rights" framework.

Main activities:

- Support the implementation of activities under the "Faith for Rights" framework and/or using the #Faith4Rights framework in any context globally, where interpretation of religious norms might cause human rights violations or at least hamper or create tension with universally established human rights norms and standards;
- Organize annual meetings for exchange of experiences through peer-to-peer learning, analysing challenges and benefiting from opportunities in the implementation of activities under the "Faith for Rights" framework in both closed and public settings;
- Analyse trends and setbacks in the protection and promotion of human rights on the basis of or in the name of religion or belief, and compile good examples, to be made available within the "Faith for Rights" commUNity of practices and beyond with a view to achieving a sustainable cumulative effect of the generated knowledge, lessons and skills;
- Foster regular exchange among the members, with the aim to provide advice to each other in the implementation of activities under the "Faith for Rights" framework in diverse contexts at the international, regional, national and local levels.

Faith-based cooperation is vital to uphold human rights for all (2025)



"More and more conflicts are shattering lives, livelihoods and our shared future," said UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk. "In every region we are seeing increasing polarisation of societies into distinct, and hostile, groups. Ethnic minorities and foreigners are under attack, and religious minorities face rising violence and hatred."

Türk recently participated in the General Assembly of ACT Alliance, a global faith-based coalition organized in national and regional forums operating in more than 120 countries.

Türk stressed that transformation must come from the bottom-up, involving not only governments but also religious leaders, faith-based organizations and civil society, coming together to promote social cohesion, mutual respect and human dignity.

"Whether they are theistic or non-theistic believers – or indeed atheists – all human beings have equal rights, including the rights to practise their faith, to speak out, and to participate fully in society, without discrimination… To build societies in which expressions of hatred have become socially unacceptable requires inclusive faith literacy and a more holistic view of human rights education," he said.

UN Human Rights has provided a way to do just that with the "Faith for Rights" framework, which has been facilitated by the office since 2017. The framework brings together religious leaders and faith-based actors to learn from each other and jointly uphold the rights of all. It is a platform for interdisciplinary dialogue and action, to promote peaceful societies, where diversity is not merely tolerated but fully respected and celebrated.

"In the 18 commitments on Faith for Rights, religious leaders and faith-based actors pledged to stand up for the right of minorities to participate equally and effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life," Türk said.

Peer-learning is facilitated through the #Faith4Rights toolkit, which includes case studies, concrete examples and practical steps that faith leaders and communities have taken to combat hate speech, while promoting respect and dignity.

Transforming interfaith relations

Since its launch, the framework has been well received worldwide. In Cyprus, leaders of the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process advocated for people of all faiths to have unimpeded access to their places of worship, and they also condemned incitement to violence, discrimination or hostility in the name of religion. They have worked to build trust and confidence among their respective faith communities, conducting activities under the "Faith for Rights" framework.

While the Cyprus problem is not a religious conflict as such, cooperation between the religious leaders had stopped for decades when the bicommunal conflict between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots escalated more than sixty years ago.

In 2019, the U.S. Department of State honoured the Executive Director of the Religious Track, Salpy Eskidjian Weiderud, with the International Religious Freedom Award, as "an architect and facilitator of an unprecedented peacebuilding initiative in Cyprus."

"We work for human rights, religious freedom and reconciliation," Eskidjian Weiderud said.



The Office of the Religious Track has translated the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments into Greek and Turkish, making them available for women, men and children on both sides of the divided island.

"As a carefully crafted practical document, 'Faith for Rights' gives us, on the local level, the global umbrella to belong to, share, learn and together try to ensure that all the commitments are used," she said.

Members of the Religious Track also participated in the "Faith for Rights" commUNity of practices, including the hybrid interfaith event in Nicosia, Geneva and Collonges on the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Organizations have also used "Faith for Rights" in their work. In a 2024 publication, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights highlighted the "Faith for Rights" framework and toolkit as a good practice for joint action across religions and beliefs. To combat hate speech, the Council of Europe commended the UN Faith for Rights framework as a useful tool with its peer-to-peer learning methodology. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights also quoted "Faith for Rights" in its study on freedom of religion or belief.

"Networks of faith-based actors can step up to promote mercy, compassion and solidarity. They can join hands with diverse communities to promote shared goals – social, developmental and environmental," Türk said.

During the fifth annual meeting of the "Faith for Rights" commUNity of practices, participants discussed related peer-leaning initiatives, including in Abuja, Beirut, Cairo, Coimbra, Paris, Ottawa, Oxford, San José and Washington DC. For example, the University of Oxford recently launched an online course, empowering faith community leaders to protect human rights, which was led by Rabbi Alex Goldberg, the current Faith focal point of the commUNity of practices.

Rabbi Goldberg stressed the vital importance of the "Faith for Rights" framework, including to counter antisemitism, Islamophobia, and incitement to hatred against minorities or migrants.

"I do believe that 'Faith for Rights' has the ability to bridge the world of human rights and faith traditions and, by extension, faith communities," Rabbi Goldberg said. "The 'Faith for Rights' framework provides a safe space for peer-learning and joint action by faith actors to uphold the rights of everyone."

From 1-7 February, World Interfaith Harmony Week was created to encourage these messages of faith and goodwill in the world's churches, mosques, synagogues, temples and other places of worship during that week, and to promote harmony between all people regardless of their faith.

"If we can reinforce human rights commitments through the language of spiritual texts, it should touch both the minds and hearts of over six billion people who are religiously affiliated around the globe."

Rabbi Alex Goldberg, Faith focal point of the commUNity of practices on "Faith for Rights"

See the webstory at
https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2025/02/faith-based-cooperation-vital-uphold-human-rights-all

High Commissioner's statement at Wilton Park (February 2025)



Across the globe, discrimination, incitement to hatred and violence against Muslims, Jews, Christians and religious minorities are rising, online and in real life.

Sadly, these trends are often promoted by politicians, business leaders, media commentators and others, drawing from a deep well of historic hatred, atrocity crimes, paranoia and conspiracy theories based on religious ideas.

They instrumentalize the public's faith – which is grounded in bonds of compassion, solidarity and hope – to harm people and scapegoat minority groups, for their own ends. This is particularly dangerous in societies in conflict and crisis, from the Middle East to [Ukraine], Myanmar, Nigeria and beyond. But we see the same trends everywhere.

The central role of faith in the lives of believers means that if they take hold, such mistaken ideas can fuel appalling violence and even lead to atrocity crimes including crimes against humanity. In this highly charged environment, religious leaders and people of faith have a special and direct responsibility to resist efforts at manipulation, and to play a positive role, promoting mediation and healing, and seeking common ground.

I would like to mention two very practical elements of a holistic response to polarization and division based on religion or belief.

First, the law. While some progress has been made, many States still lack comprehensive legislation against discrimination, which is a fundamental tool to protect people from violence and harassment based on their faith. In addition to punishing and deterring such acts, legislation enables people from all faiths to participate more fully in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life – which, in itself, can reduce tensions and foster understanding.

I therefore urge faith leaders and political authorities to work together for comprehensive anti-discrimination laws and institutions, and to use them where they exist. Religious leaders with great influence and large networks can familiarize their communities with the law – and with ways to invoke its protection.

Second, we need more whole-of-society initiatives to promote a culture of peace, based on human rights. This is the only way to address root causes and build communities in which expressions of hatred are socially unacceptable. Such initiatives will be strongly influenced by local cultures and historical factors. Common threads could include peer-learning, collaboration, and human rights education. They may also have a gender-based element, since expressions of religious hatred often disproportionately target women and girls.

My Office is deeply committed to working on combating intolerance, discrimination and violence against people based on religion or belief. Our multi-stakeholder process, "Faith for Rights", engages governments, religious authorities and civil society, and includes a specific pledge by religious leaders to denounce any advocacy of hatred that incites violence, discrimination or hostility. Faith for Rights has been referenced by UN treaty bodies and Special Rapporteurs, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Council of Europe and the OSCE among others, and I urge you to contribute to its community of practice.

Colleagues and friends,

The ethical and spiritual foundations of religions and beliefs have an essential role in addressing the polarization and conflicts that disfigure our world, and in contributing to reconciliation.

There is an urgent need for religious leaders from all faiths to work together to promote the shared, universal principles of human dignity and compassion, and to transform them into acts of solidarity. I send my best wishes for your discussions. Thank you.

Bangkok Declaration on Dharmic Perspectives on Faith for Rights (October 2025)

The Sixth Annual Faith for Rights Meeting — convened by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in partnership with the Bodhigaya Vijjalaya 980 Institute (BGVI) and Dharma Alliance — was held in Siem Reap and Bangkok from 13 to 17 October 2025,

Recalling the Faith for Rights framework and its 18 commitments,

Recognizing the diversity of spiritual, ethical, and cultural traditions, including those of Dharmic and Indigenous communities, as a source of insight for promoting dignity, justice, and compassion,

Reaffirming the shared commitment of participants to fostering inclusive dialogue among faith communities and human rights actors,

Noting that this meeting marked the first occasion on which the global Faith for Rights community convened in a predominantly Dharmic context, thereby expanding the plurality of perspectives within the ongoing dialogue,

Emphasizing the potential of ethical and spiritual traditions to contribute to reconciliation, conflict prevention, and mutual understanding,

Recognizing the importance of continuous inquiry, reflection, and peer-to-peer learning in advancing both human rights and spiritual understanding,

Affirming that the promotion of human dignity and the protection of human rights are complementary to ethical principles that encourage responsibility toward oneself, one's community, minority groups, other beings, and the natural world,

Participants at the Sixth Annual Faith for Rights Meeting:

- **Reaffirm** the value of ethical responsibility, seeking to balance entitlements with duties, and to encourage justice grounded in empathy (*karuna*), integrity (*dharma*), and non-harm (*ahimsa*).
- **Resolve** to strengthen interfaith dialogue, fostering inclusive spaces for Dharmic, Indigenous, minority, and other traditions to engage equitably in conversations about human rights.
- **Affirm** the advancement of gender equality, recognizing that the dignity and agency of women and girls are integral both to cohesive societies and to the realization of universal human rights.
- **Commit** to supporting education for human flourishing, embedding principles of ethics, compassion, and responsibility in curricula, academic partnerships, and initiatives inspired by the Faith for Rights framework.
- **Undertake** efforts to prevent incitement to hatred, promoting mindful communication and rejecting all forms of violence or discrimination.
- **Encourage** the engagement of youth as ethical leaders, nurturing new generations who understand faith, science, and human rights as interconnected pathways toward global harmony.
- **Promote** cooperation among all actors, building bridges across traditions, regions, and disciplines to advance peaceful coexistence, inclusiveness, and the Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Resolve** to sustain the commUNity of Practice, through peer learning, joint research, and regular meetings that include Dharmic and Indigenous perspectives.

Acknowledging with gratitude the hospitality extended by the people of Cambodia and Thailand, and the commitment of the United Nations and all partners to fostering inclusive global dialogue,

Encourage alignment of inner conviction with just action — advancing reflection to responsibility, dialogue to transformation, and rights in principle to rights in practice.

Concluded at the United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok, 17 October 2025.

Dakar Plan of Action on the Role of Women in the Religious Sphere (May 2026)

Participants in the regional conference entitled "Role of women as guides and spiritual leaders in the prevention of violent extremism", debated in Dakar from 5 to 7 May 2026 the interaction between religion, violence, women and human rights.

Participants identified the following findings:

- Sacred books, in themselves, do not discriminate against women, in view of the link between text and context. Rather, it is certain human interpretations that reflect an instrumentalization of religion for political or economic ends or the perpetuation of a system of patriarchal domination. Correcting such historical drifts requires courage, lucidity and collective, interdisciplinary and rigorous work.
- Women and youth are central for preventing, detecting and combating violent extremism in their communities.
- Addressing the structural deficit in the place of women in the religious sphere is a prerequisite for addressing several interconnected challenges: the fight against violent extremism, gender-based discrimination, ideologically motivated challenges to the universality of human rights, as well as the restoration of the credibility of UN human rights mechanisms, through a concrete and measurable impact on the ground thanks to the action of women religious actors.
- Strengthening local action in favour of human rights requires a bottom-up approach, based on a detailed knowledge of family and community dynamics. In this regard, the role, legal status, funding and protection of the Mourchidates in Mauritania, the Badian Gokh in Senegal, and many women religious or community leaders, appears essential.
- The role of the competent UN human rights mechanisms is important to accompany and support in practical ways the demands and actions of women religious actors.
- The ethical and spiritual foundations of religions and beliefs can help to combat polarization and conflict, while promoting reconciliation. As the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, has emphasized, "there is an urgent need for religious leaders of all faiths to work together to promote the shared, universal principles of human dignity and compassion, and to transform them into acts of solidarity."[1]
- In her opening speech in Dakar, the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations System in Senegal, Mrs. Aminata Maïga, expressed the hope that this conference would lead to a concrete commitment of religious leaders around the principles of "Faith for Rights", and that it would pave the way for strengthened regional cooperation, in the service of the Sustainable Development Goals, focused on peace, justice and the reduction of inequalities.[2]



[1] https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/61/72, at para. 54; https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2025/02/religious-leaders-must-work-together-promote-shared-principles
[2] https://indico.un.org/event/1023654/attachments/25528/72954/RC-Senegal.pdf

Through this **Dakar Plan of Action on the Role of Women in the Religious Sphere**, the participants in the regional conference organized by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) intend to create a community of practice bringing together religious actors whose objectives are as follows:

1. Continue peer-to-peer learning exchanges, expanding the UN-led "Faith for Rights" community of practice, as well as the network of young religious actors established for the same purpose at the end of the first peer-to-peer learning session organized by the British University of Egypt in Cairo, from 1 to 5 February 2026, in collaboration with the Al-Azhar Observatory for Countering Extremism and the Dominican Institute of Oriental Studies, with the support of the European Union and OHCHR.
2. Develop, in collaboration with independent experts from UN human rights mechanisms, an interfaith commentary on the role and responsibilities of women in the religious sphere, including their status in religious institutions and fatwa bodies.
3. Through this commentary, to open a space for theological and intellectual discernment that makes it possible to distinguish the religious message itself from human interpretations and historically elaborated cultural constructions that have served to legitimize the marginalization of women in the religious sphere, in order to better deconstruct them.
4. Work on the narrative in order to rehabilitate female figures forgotten in educational and religious programs, as well as translate the #Faith4Rights toolkit and 18 Commitments on "Faith for Rights" into Arabic and local languages in order to facilitate their contextualization and use in peer-to-peer learning in West Africa.
5. To create an interfaith group of young women faith actors to coordinate follow-up activities on "Faith for Rights" in West Africa.
6. Organize regional capacity-building sessions in West Africa for young women faith actors, and share lessons learned at the annual meetings of the Faith for Rights Community of Practice.
7. Contribute to the Global Alliance for Human Rights,[3] which brings together a diversity of actors called upon to mobilize, each in their own sphere of influence, to defend, protect and promote human rights.

The participants gratefully commended the hospitality and commitment of the United Nations and all partners to promote an inclusive global dialogue.



Done in Dakar, 7 May 2026.

[3] https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2025/09/we-need-global-alliance-mobilize-influence-uphold-protect-and

Women countering violent extremism in West Africa (September 2026)

“It’s surprising it’s taken us this long to recognise and think about facilitating [women’s] role. Because once you see it, you can’t unsee it,” said Nazila Ghanea, UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief. Ghanea was referring to a conference titled “The role of women as guides and spiritual leaders in preventing violent extremism: A peer-to-peer exchange on faith and human rights”. Behind the formal title of the conference, which took place last May in Dakar, Senegal, there is a straightforward argument: that women’s religious leadership may be one of the most under-used tools against violent extremism in the region. The conference brought together religious and community leaders, human rights experts and government partners.

“Because women are at the centre of social dynamics, their role in preventing violent extremism is extremely important — they have the advantage of proximity, and the legitimacy to speak to communities,” said Fatou Dramé, sociologist and gender expert from Senegal. “Being both a woman and a religious authority, is yet a double opportunity that must be put to use to prevent this phenomenon,” Dramé added.

The women at the centre of the Dakar meeting go by different names depending on where they work: the Mourchidates — female religious guide in Arabic — of Mauritania, trained, certified and deployed by the State through the Ministry of Islamic Affairs to counter extremist narratives directly, and the Badian Gokh — neighbourhood godmothers in Wolof — of Senegal, trusted local mediators whose role began in maternal and community health and has since extended into questions of faith and social cohesion.

“They are women and young women trained in the alternative discourse to radical, violent speech: the arguments that dismantle the radicals’ arguments,” said Aminata Couro Ly, Coordinator of the Mourchidates network project in Mauritania. “They were deployed across all of Mauritania’s intervention zones and began raising awareness among several target groups,” she added.

Both networks predate this conference by years. The Mourchidates were established in 2021 as a partnership between Mauritania’s Ministry of Islamic Affairs and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which developed the training programme with the Association of Women Heads of Family — an organization Couro Ly represents. By 2022, UNODC reported the network had reached over 8,000 people, from students to former combatants and their families. It’s that existing infrastructure that the Dakar conference — organised jointly by UN Human Rights and UNODC — built on, layering the Faith for Rights framework onto years of groundwork already underway. The Faith for Rights framework was launched by UN Human Rights in 2017 to foster peaceful societies through reflection and joint action on the deep connections between religions, beliefs and human rights.

As divine texts rely on human interpretations, the Faith for Rights commitments encourage critical thinking and debate on religion or belief. They specifically commit to revisit those religious understandings that appear to perpetuate gender inequality and harmful stereotypes or even condone gender-based violence.

“We support this through peer-to-peer learning”, said Michael Wiener, Coordinator of the Faith for Rights framework. It’s also why UN Human Rights avoids certain language when it works with faith communities directly. “We usually don’t use the term ‘training of trainers,’ because ‘trainer’ implies a kind of hierarchy. Rather, we see it as facilitating a discussion,” Wiener said. “It’s very ‘unhierarchical’, as everyone has something to learn and something to contribute. So, our methodology is to facilitate the role of facilitators.”

Dramé said that this conference truly allowed them a different reading of what complementarity between religion and human rights means. “I was afraid, before coming [to the conference], that we would stay on superficial, very polite exchanges,” said Kahina Bahloul, first female Imam in France since 2019. “[Instead], I saw absolutely incredible people, incredible women who have a drive, a desire — I would say the fire and the will to change things.” But admiration wasn’t the only thing participants brought back. Repeatedly, they returned to a harder truth: the women doing this work are, in large part, unrecognised. “These women make incredible efforts. They take incredible risks, at the expense of their own lives. And despite that, they have no institutional or official recognition. They have no official status as social actors,” Bahloul said. “They work today as volunteers, and that is simply unacceptable.”

Asked directly whether UN Human Rights views the Mourchidates and Badian Gokh as human rights defenders in their own right, Wiener didn't hesitate. "Yes, they are actually strengthening local action in favour of human rights," he said. "We need such a bottom-up approach, based on a detailed knowledge of family and community dynamics."

The Plan is not aspirational language alone. Adopted by participants on the conference's final day, the Dakar Plan of Action on the Role of Women in the Religious Sphere states plainly that sacred books, in themselves, do not discriminate against women, in view of the link between text and context. But rather it's certain human interpretations that reflect an instrumentalization of religion for political or economic ends or the perpetuation of a system of patriarchal domination. The Plan goes further, arguing that faith also carries the power to repair what it's been used to justify. "The ethical and spiritual foundations of religions and beliefs can help to combat polarization and conflict, while promoting reconciliation," the Plan states.

The Plan also names what needs to change and what is the best way forward to achieve that change. The role, legal status, funding and protection of the Mourchidates in Mauritania, the Badian Gokh in Senegal, and many women religious or community leaders, appears essential. The Plan also sets out seven objectives, among them developing an interfaith commentary on women's status in religious institutions, and translating the Faith for Rights toolkit into Arabic and local languages.

Its scope also reaches beyond the West Africa region, by aiming to "contribute to the Global Alliance for Human Rights, which brings together a diversity of actors called upon to mobilize, each in their own sphere of influence, to defend, protect and promote human rights." The Global Alliance is the coalition UN Human Rights launched in Geneva in 2026 — governments, civil society, cities, faith communities and young people, organized around a call to imagine, dialogue and act, ahead of the 80th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 2028. Faith for Rights is now one of its activations. Dakar, in other words, isn't a self-contained event — it's a regional chapter feeding into a considerably larger endeavour.

Wiener said the scale of that larger picture is the point. "More than six billion people have a religion or belief as their personal affiliation," he said. That is more than 80 percent of the world's population. "It's also why we refer to the broad concept of 'faith-based actors', which also includes anyone in an informal leadership position, notably women and youth. That actually is the entry point," Wiener added.

Some participants left Dakar wary the momentum wouldn't last. "What frightens me is that this becomes one more meeting among many that remains just a moment, and isn't followed by anything concrete," Bahloul said. Dramé said that what she hopes for from this network is that it stays alive and dynamic.

That hope has precedent. Elsewhere in the Faith for Rights framework, momentum has outlasted a closing session before. Just last June, young participants from an earlier peer-learning meeting in Bangkok facilitated working group discussions in Geneva and briefed a side event of the UN Human Rights Council directly — with ambassadors listening before they get to speak.

"Usually, you have the ambassadors reading their statements at the beginning and then listening. With their agreement, we changed the order. They first listened to the youth, and then they reacted to the recommendations from our physical hubs in Cairo, Rome, Geneva and online," Wiener said. Another peer-learning week for youth faith actors in Cairo last February was cost-effective thanks to co-organization by the Al Azhar Observatory for Combating Extremism, the British University in Egypt and the Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies. "Partnerships and creativity can also make things possible," Wiener explained.

But creativity has a ceiling. Bringing people back to the table for what comes next — the interfaith commentary the Dakar Plan of Action calls for, the translations, a standing network of young women faith actors — is a different scale of ask. Dakar produced a plan, not just a pledge: seven commitments, written and adopted. What happens to them now is a question of funding. The network exists. The commitments exist. What's required is the money to carry them out.

www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2026/09/faith-not-fear-women-countering-violent-extremism-west-africa

Open list of supporters of the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments

In case you wish to add your name as a supporter of the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments, please send an email to: OHCHR-faith4rights@un.org

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FAITH FOR RIGHTS

The “Faith for Rights” framework provides space for a cross-disciplinary reflection on the deep, and mutually enriching, connections between religions and human rights. The objective is to foster the development of peaceful societies, which uphold human dignity and equality for all and where diversity is not just tolerated but fully respected and celebrated.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has stressed that religious leaders are potentially very important human rights actors in view of their considerable influence on the hearts and minds of millions of people. The 2012 Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of incitement to hatred already laid out some of religious leaders’ core responsibilities against incitement to hatred. Expanding those responsibilities to the full spectrum of human rights, the faith-based and civil society actors participating at the OHCHR workshop in March 2017 adopted the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on “Faith for Rights”.

The Beirut Declaration has been supported by and reaches out to various actors 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 which is open to all who share its objectives.

Should you have any questions or wish to add your name as a supporter of the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments, please send an email to:
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