

The Network
for Religious
& Traditional
Peacemakers



YEAR IN REVIEW 2023



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Dear Friends,

Greetings of Peace.

This year has witnessed an alarming number of new, renewed or escalated armed conflicts. Full-scale wars, hostilities and fragile cease-fires depict grim images of widespread conflicts. In this unparalleled time of a rapidly changing world order resulting from power, technology, climate change and governance disruptions, the influential role of religious and traditional actors in all their diversity becomes even more pivotal to support transformative peacebuilding and peace mediation. It is not only a moral imperative that we amplify their roles but also a practical necessity to bolster their capacity to effectively actualize the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

As the Peacemakers Network celebrates a decade of peacebuilding, it is remarkable to witness our growth from an idea to a global network of more than 100 members. Throughout this unprecedented journey, our members have played an invaluable role in formalizing our strategy, strengthening advocacy efforts towards governments and multilateral institutions to further integrate religious and traditional actors within peacebuilding and broader peace mediation, facilitating consortia projects across the world and providing swift responses to urgent global issues – from advocating for ceasefires to aiding in pandemic response and recovery efforts.

Our journey working in conflict affected countries and contexts taught us the paramount importance of a ‘whole of society approach,’ including bolstering the meaningful role and capacity of women and youth in all their diversity. We are thrilled to have increased our membership to include more women and youth-led organizations. While we have made tremendous strides in this regard, we recognize the significant journey ahead of us to further increase their role, and that of other marginalized communities.

The Peacemakers Network celebrated our 10-Year Anniversary in October 2023 with members and supporters in Helsinki, Finland. Helsinki was the birthplace of the Peacemakers Network whose development was championed by the Center for Peace Mediation of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs Finland and Finn Church Aid. Since our inception, we appreciate the continued support from the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman, as well as the KAICIID Dialogue Center.

We greatly value the long-standing support and dedication of all our members and supporters. Their commitment has been the pillar of our progress in advancing the role of religious and traditional actors in peacebuilding and peace mediation. Through continued partnership, we look forward to advancing our collaborative mission and vision over the next decade to ensure religious and traditional actors play a pivotal role in preventing violence and contributing to sustainable peace.

On behalf of the entire Peacemakers Network, I wish you a peaceful 2024.

With Gratitude,



Dr. Mohamed Elsanousi
Executive Director, *The Peacemakers Network*



10 Years

2011

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Finland & Finn Church Aid (FCA) demonstrated successful role of religious & traditional actors in peace & security in fragile contexts.

2012

Group of Friends of Mediation led by Finland & Turkey tabled General Assembly Resolution 65/283.

Ban Ki-moon issued report “Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution” (UNGA Report A/66/811, 2012).

Finnish Mission to the United Nations hosted gathering of members UNMSU/UNDPA, MFA Finland, UNAOC, OIC, RfP, FCA and civil society to identify mechanism to actualize report.

2013

Launch of the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers. FCA became Secretariat host.

Collaboration agreed upon with MFA Finland to support the core function of the Network.

2016

Conducting research projects to understand root causes of violent extremism, particularly in the Horn of Africa.



of Peacebuilding

2018 **2019** **2020** **2021** **2022** **Now**

SEA-AIR project becomes 1st of many EU-funded projects that enabled large scale support to grassroots peace builders.

MFA Finland commissioned an independent evaluator to conduct report on state of the Peacemakers Network.

5 Year Strategy adopted at AGM in Jakarta.

Faith communities support COVID-19 pandemic response & recovery.

Sultanate of Oman Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs joins Steering Group.

MFA Finland, FCA, and the Network host the National Dialogue Conference in Finland.

Commitment to Generation Equality and the WPS and Humanitarian Action Compact.

1st formalized membership structure & gathering in Oman for the 14th Advisory Group Meeting hosted by the Sultanate of Oman Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs.

Over 100+ organizations from around the world are members of the Peacemakers Network, continuing to foster an environment of collaboration and engagement to advance sustainable peace.



Celebrating a Decade of Peacebuilding



Photos by Antti Yrjönen

The Peacemakers Network was initiated in 2013 as a direct result of United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's report titled 'Strengthening the role of mediation in the peacebuilding settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution' (United Nations GA Report A/66/811, 2012) and the supporting guidance titled 'United Nations Guidance for Effective Mediation' (United Nations GA Resolution 65/283, 2012).



Photo by Antti Yrjönen

Since becoming operational, the Peacemakers Network has supported individual traditional and faith-oriented insider mediators, intra- and inter-faith dialogues, and the advancement of reconciliation efforts. The membership of the Network has grown to include over 108 members based in 40 countries, representing inter-and-intra-governmental agencies, regional bodies, academic institutions, international and national organizations, civil society, faith-based organizations, and religious and traditional peacemakers.

2023 marks the 10-Year Anniversary of the Peacemakers Network. This year, we reflected and celebrated the enhanced role and capacity of religious and traditional actors in broader mediation and peacebuilding processes.

The Peacemakers Network celebrated its tremendous milestone with a commemorative celebration hosted in Helsinki, Finland with its members and supporters, including representatives of Governments of Finland, the Sultanate of Oman, Kazakhstan, and the United States as well as the United Nations.



Photo by Antti Yrjönen

The program included remarks from several distinguished speakers: Mr. Lauri Tierala, State Secretary to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs Finland; H.E. Tarja Halonen, Former President; Ms. Tarja Kantola, Chair of Finn Church Aid Board of Directors; and video remarks from H.E. Dr. Mohammed Al Mamari, Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs in the Sultanate of Oman and Ms. Alice Nderitu, United Nations Secretary-General's Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide.

During the past decade, the Peacemakers Network has become a major platform for actors and a tool in peacebuilding and peace mediation. Partnerships have been at the core of the Peacemakers Network's work since its establishment [and] we are proud to be part of this common action of work towards sustainable, peaceful, and inclusive societies.

Mr. Lauri Tierala, State Secretary to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland

The 10th Anniversary was also celebrated in Asia through Asia Working Group strategic workshops in Thailand, Indonesia, and Philippines.

Over the years, the Peacemakers Network has gained a lot more structure and shape. I think that makes us all better collaborators with one another.

Edla Puoskari, Asia Programme Manager for the Peacemakers Network

The Peacemakers Network recognizes and appreciates the continued support of its members and supporters, enabling its successful growth within the past years. Looking ahead, the Peacemakers Network eagerly anticipates collaborating with its members, supporters and partners in working together to improve the lives of the communities it serves over the next decade.



Collective Action for Sustainable Peace



Members and International Partners Convene in Finland for the Peacemakers Network Annual Advisory Group Meeting

Since its inception in 2013, the Peacemakers Network's Advisory Group Meeting (AGM) has served as an opportunity for friends and colleagues to gather for reflection, learning and networking. This year, the [annual AGM was held in Helsinki](#), Finland where Network members and supporters gathered to reflect on its decade of peacebuilding, examine emerging trends in peacebuilding, dialogue and mediation, and areas of collaboration for 2024.

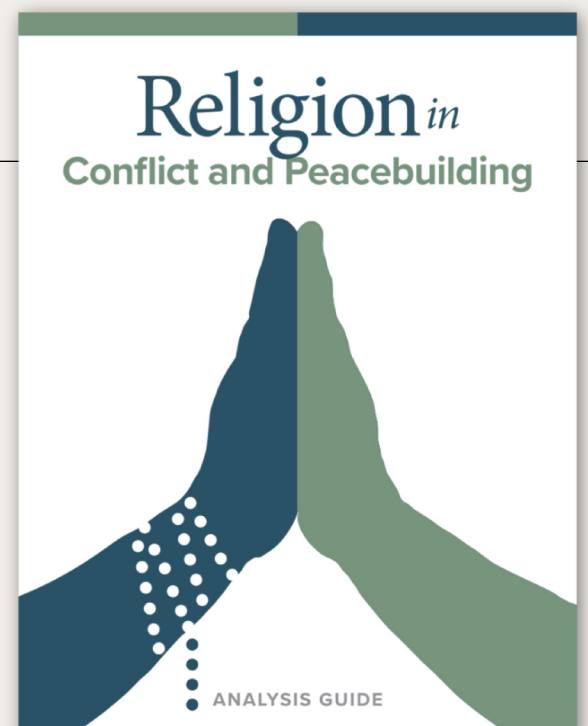
Religious Peacebuilding Action Guides

With 84 percent of the people worldwide identifying as religious, religious dimensions influence local, national and international peace and conflict. Together with the United States Institute of Peace and Salam Institute for Peace and Justice, the Peacemakers Network supported the development [a series of action guides on religion and conflict analysis, mediation reconciliation and gender-inclusive religious peacebuilding](#) to provide a practical overview of the religious peacebuilding field and the role religion plays in driving both conflict and peace.



Faith Leaders and Technology Executives Explore AI Ethics at the Vatican

The Peacemakers Network participated in a historic, first-of-its-kind meeting at the Vatican featuring prominent religious actors, including His Holiness Pope Francis, and world-renowned tech companies Microsoft and IBM to discuss and partner together to discern the [challenges facing artificial intelligence ethics](#).





‘Empowering Voices for Peace:’ A Consultation on the Sahel and Sudan in Nouakchott, Mauritania

Peacemakers Network member, the Abu Dhabi Forum for Peace organized a consultation convening religious and traditional leaders from the Sahel and Sudan to discuss the crisis in the region. Dr. Mohamed Elsanousi, Executive Director of the Peacemakers Network, examined how religious and traditional actors can help pave a path toward lasting peace and sustainability through dialogue and reconciliation with diverse communities. The consultation [produced a statement](#) as a call for peace.

Principles for Peace Roundtable with Religious Actors

To build momentum to enhance long-term collaboration, the Peacemakers Network hosted a meeting between the [Principles for Peace Commission](#) and religious actors and government officials in Washington, DC. Having supported hosting two rounds of regional consultations with over 111 individuals of faith, representing 49 countries, consultations revolved conversations around what the Principles for Peace should include and how to frame the Peacemaking Covenant to be more meaningful for their local contexts.





Advancing Inclusivity



“The course was very well put together and all the learning sessions, including the virtual ones, were extremely relevant, practical, and interactive. To end, I want to say, peacebuilding should not be an activity for the few who carry the burden in their heart, it should be a way of life for all.”

Joy Gitau

Deputy Executive Director, Amani Communities Africa

Equipping Youth Peace Mediators to Analyze Violent Conflicts Through an Inclusive Lens

In line with the 2020-2025 Five-Year Strategy of the Peacemakers Network and building upon the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland’s leading Youth, Peace and Security work, 40 youth with diverse backgrounds convened in Finland and the Sultanate of Oman as part of the Peacemakers Network’s launch of its religion and peace mediation course. During the training, they participated in intercultural and intergenerational discussions on techniques and approaches to engage in the work of peace mediation.

“I went back home more motivated, more equipped and more enthusiastic to continue my engagement in the field of youth, religion and mediation at the community level and beyond. I cannot wait to share with my peers what I have learned.”

Sougourounoma Henri Kabore

Founder, Burkina Faso Interfaith Youth Network



Oman Harmonious Connection Program

“Embarking on a journey towards inner peace is akin to setting sail on a serene river, where each ripple carries the promise of self-discovery and the gentle current guides the way to a harmonious existence.”

*Rishini Dilshani
Peace Ambassador, iDove*

“In connection, despite the violent conflicts sprouting around the world, youth should never ever lose hope. Today, we have even more reasons to do more.”

*Zaid Bagundang
Humanitarian and Lawyer*



World's First Global Youth Interfaith Fellowship on Climate Change

To advance the critical role of youth in address climate change, the Peacemakers Network supported a training session for the inaugural cohort of the [Youth Interfaith Fellowship on Climate Change](#), hosted at Duke Divinity School in North Carolina, USA launched by Faith for Our Planet.



Countering Racism and Discrimination: The Nexus to Building Pluralistic and Diverse Societies by Ali Mahmoud

“Being an activist in interfaith or inter-religious dialogue, I was impressed by the attention given by several entities among the United Nations offices to the importance of considering religion and faith and the tendency to engage religious leaders and faith-based actors in the peace processes.”

Ali Mahmoud
Youth Trainer and Activist



Youth Interfaith and Intercultural Forum in Doha: From a Youth Perspective

“By bringing together young people from diverse backgrounds, the Forum breaks down barriers, promotes mutual understanding, and provides an opportunity for young people to develop leadership skills.”

Ghassen Ayari
Public Relations and Partnerships Manager, Attalaki

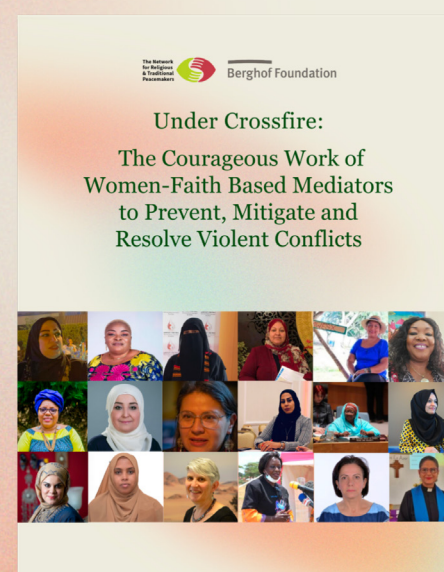
Women Deliver Conference: Transformative Partnerships with Faith Actors

Members of the Peacemakers Network participated at the [Women Deliver Conference](#) in Kigali, Rwanda. In 2023, the conference focused on opportunities to rethink approaches to empower the gender movement, including who participates and shapes the process with their unique experiences. The Peacemakers Network organized and participated in two different events on 'Transformative Partnerships with Faith Actors to Advance Gender Equality' and 'Peace for Gender Equality.'



New Research on Women Faith-Based Mediators

Against the background of the increasing complexity of 'modern' conflicts and the inadequacy of the global peacemaking system, local resources, instruments, and actors have started to gain more attention and prominence, including the role of women faith-based mediators (WFBMs). [New case studies](#) supported by the Peacemakers Network and the Berghof Foundation gave visibility to these brave women and young women, their daily struggles and their unmatched courage and perseverance.



Faith Changemakers: Affirming Human Dignity, Justice, and Freedom for All

Under the theme 'Faith Changemakers: Affirming Human Dignity, Justice, and Freedom for All,' the Peacemakers Network alongside its members, co-hosted a dialogue on advancing women's rights and gender justice, and advancing freedom of belief and inclusive communities. This [interreligious event](#) brought together over 100 participants from around the globe to increase their awareness and knowledge and provide a platform to network and build partnerships.





16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence is an annual campaign that begins on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and ends on the International Human Rights Day on 10 December. This year as part of the global campaign, the Peacemakers Network [showcased a digital exhibition](#), which featured spoken word and poetry pieces, video messages, photography, graphic art, and documentaries.



iDove Empowers Youth-Led Creative Initiatives in the Fight Against Violent Extremism

Interfaith Dialogue on Violent Extremism (iDove) provides a youth-led platform to dialogue and foster creative approaches to preventing violent extremism (PVE) drawing on the soft power of religion. iDove is jointly launched by the African Union Commission (AUC) through the Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

In 2023, the Peacemakers Network joined to support the further development of the governance structure for the iDove Network. The iDovers participating in the 2023 Intercontinental Youth Forum (IYF) held early November in Helsinki drafted the first comprehensive governance structure for iDove Network and provided training and tools for gender-inclusive project designing and implementation.

“Amidst the learnings, the Forum offered us the opportunity to build the future of iDove by building a governance framework.”

Anna Chundung, member of the Interfaith Dialogue on Violent Extremism (iDove)

Collaboration with the United Nations

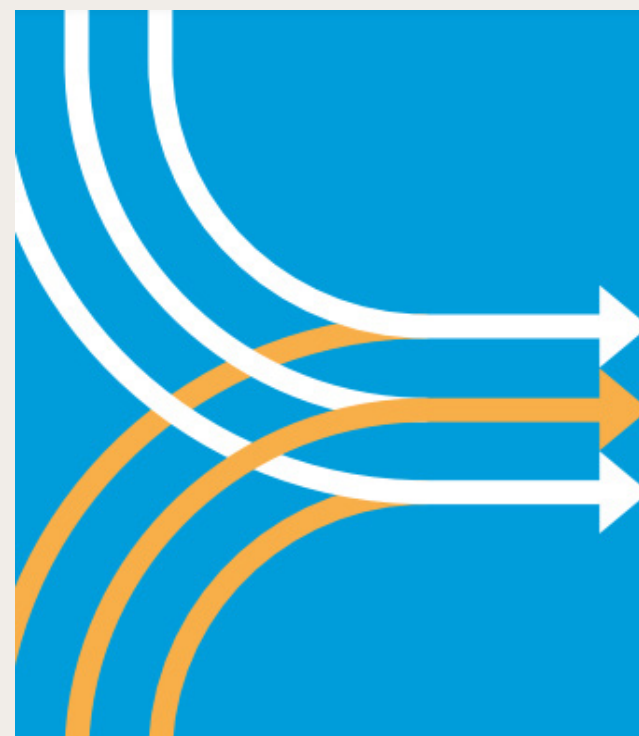


Network Steering Group Convenes at the Finnish Mission to the United Nations

In 2012, the Peacemakers Network was launched under the stewardship of a Steering Group composed of 12 entities including United Nations Member States and Agencies, civil society organizations and intergovernmental bodies. To celebrate the achievements of the Peacemakers Network over the past 10 years, and to reflect on its contributions to advance peace mediation, a [high-level meeting](#) was hosted by Ambassador Elina Kalkku, Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations.

Global Consultation on the New Agenda for Peace

In response to the United Nations Secretary-General's call for input from civil society regarding its [New Agenda for Peace](#), the Peacemakers Network contributed a comprehensive 5-page report emphasizing the vital role of religious and traditional actors in United Nations initiatives. Subsequently, the Peacemakers Network consulted with Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Head of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (UN DPPA), on exploring different avenues to further integrate the perspective of religious and traditional actors in the New Agenda. Together, the Peacemakers Network and UN DPPA convened a joint global consultation, bringing approximately 50 religious actors from diverse localities to share their experiences and insights, fostering a collaborative reflection on the United Nations's work.



Peacemakers Network and United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Brings Youth Delegation to Helsinki and Geneva

In March 2023, the Peacemakers Network continued its partnership with its Steering Group member the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) on their [intercultural fellowship exchange of young people from Europe and North America and the Middle East and North Africa](#) focused on, 'Countering racism and discrimination: the nexus to building pluralistic and diverse societies,' this time focusing the exchange in Europe. The fellows traveled to Helsinki, Finland and Geneva, Switzerland to meet with key stakeholders working on this thematic focus, including policymakers, United Nations entities and broader civil society.

United Nations Counter-Terrorism Week: Religious Actors as Drivers of Change and Preventing Violent Extremism

Within the margins of the Third United Nations Counter-Terrorism Week, the United Nations Multi-Faith Advisory Council's Peace and Security Working Group and the United Nations Office on the Prevention of Genocide organized a side-event titled 'A Whole of Society Approach: Religious Actors as Drivers of Change and Preventing Violent Extremism,' to highlight the importance of the [United Nations Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors](#) as an essential tool for conflict prevention and countering violent extremism while protecting of human rights. The event emphasized the importance of contextualized violence prevention programming and inclusion of women and youth.

United Nations Religion and Mediation Course

Through collaborative efforts, the Peacemakers Network, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs Finland, CSS/ETH Zurich, and the United Nations Department for Political Affairs Mediation Unit held the [annual religion and mediation course](#) in Dakar, Senegal with a focus on the Sahel region. This year's program offered a space for more collaborative partnerships to flourish between those working with faith actors and communities and those working within the United Nations system.



United Nations Plan of Action for Traditional Actors on Countering Hate Speech and Fostering Peace Mediation and Just Societies

In collaboration with the United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention of the Responsibility to Protect (OSAPG), the Peacemakers Network and the Sultanate of Oman orchestrated a two-day global consultation in Muscat, [bringing together over 60 traditional leaders and actors to share insights](#) as part of finalizing the United Nations Plan of Action for Traditional Actors on Countering Hate Speech and Fostering Peace Mediation and Just Societies.

Innovative Intra-and Inter-Faith Peacebuilding: Advancing Freedom of Religion or Belief for the Achievement of the SDG 2030 Agenda and Beyond

On the sidelines of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Joint Initiative for Strategic Religious Action (JISRA) consortia collaborated with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Baha'i International Community on a high-level event titled, '[Innovative Intra- and Inter-faith Peacebuilding: Advancing Freedom of Religion or Belief for the Achievement of the SDG 2030 Agenda and Beyond](#).' This event highlighted the significant role of religious actors in advancing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.



Regional Programming

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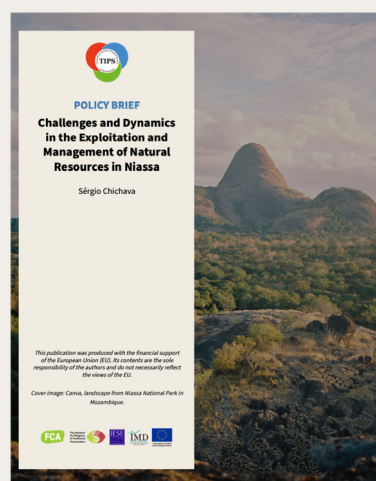
Sub-Saharan Africa



Strengthening the Role and Mandate of Provincial Forums in Mozambique

In October 2023, the [‘Towards an Inclusive and Peaceful Society in Mozambique’ \(TIPS\) project](#) organized an experience exchange with Aga Khan Foundation in Tete province to [strengthen the role and mandate of the provincial forums](#). The event hosted training on ‘Conflict Resolution, Mediation and Dialogue in the Scope of Natural Resources’ and ‘Advocacy on Natural Resources Management.’ The need to advance the communities’ role and capacity in natural resource management and mitigating resulting conflicts was emphasized throughout the training.

Additionally, the TIPS project established five Provincial Forums composed of civil society organizations and community leaders throughout 2023, to engage in discussions and seek solutions to issues related to natural resource management in a safe space. In October 2023, the provincial forum of Tete organized an event to discuss ‘The Resettlement Challenges and Conflict Prevention, Conflict Transformation and Advocacy’ to unpack the barriers that are still present when working to resolve natural resource management in the community. [Lessons learned and ways to move forward were identified.](#)



Policy Brief: Challenges and Dynamics in Exploitation and Management of Natural Resources in Niassa, Mozambique

In 2023, the TIPS project produced a policy brief on ‘Challenges and Dynamics in the Exploitation and Management of Natural Resources in Niassa.’ Mozambique is a country extremely rich in resources, most of which are still unexploited. Read the brief in [English](#) or [Portuguese](#).



Awareness-Raising on Inter-Religious Dialogue in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique

In late 2023, the Peacemakers Network participated in a two-day workshop on [Intra-and Inter-Religious Dialogue for Peace and Stability](#) in Northern Mozambique, organized by the Africa Union's Interfaith Dialogue Forum (AU-IFDF). The initiative focused on empowering religious leaders and faith-based actors to contribute to sustainable peace in Mozambique through capacity building in Interreligious Dialogue (IRD) for conflict management and establishment of Conflict Early Warning and Early Response (CEWER) mechanisms. The Peacemakers Network, sharing insights from their ID-Peace and Community Social Cohesion projects, expressed a keen interest in sustaining collaboration with AU-IFDF on the IRD and CEWER project plan for Northern Mozambique.



Empowering Peacemakers in Northern Mozambique

In September and November 2023, the Peacemakers Network conducted a [conflict management training](#) to equip Village Development Organization (VDO) members in the Niassa and Cabo Delgado provinces with skills in conflict sensitivity, mediation, and resolution. The VDOs are supported by the [Community Social Cohesion \(CSC\) project](#) that seeks to strengthen social cohesion and resilience to radicalization in Northern Mozambique. The Peacemakers Network also trained government officials from target districts in the two provinces on conflict management.



Advocacy Events to Commemorate Opening of FCA Office to the African Union

Together with Finn Church Aid (FCA), the Peacemakers Network organized a two-day advocacy, networking, and [office launch event in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia](#). Network members from across the continent participated and shared about their work on conflict prevention and peacebuilding in Africa. Members had the opportunity to meet with Ambassador Frederic Gateretse-Ngoga, Senior Advisor on International Partnerships, the AU border program and regional security mechanisms in the office of the Commissioner for the Political Affairs and Peace and Security. Together with its members and supporters, the Peacemakers Network is focused on increasing the role and participation of women, youth, and religious and traditional peacemakers within the African Union systems and structures towards the achievement of the AU 2063 Agenda.

Insurgencies and Climate Change Induced Conflicts in the Eastern and Southern Africa Regions: Examining the Role of Religious and Traditional Leaders in Prevention and Mitigation

The Peacemakers Network together with ACCORD and the MFA Finland, convened a closed-door seminar to present on the [report on insurgencies and climate-induced conflicts in Africa](#) and the role of religious and traditional leaders in prevention and mitigation. Participants reported an increased understanding of climate change's direct and indirect relationship with conflicts in the Horn of Africa and Southern Africa.

Islam and Freedom of Religion of Belief (FoRB) Training: Advancing Media Literacy

In December 2023, the Peacemakers Network organized a [religious literacy training](#), focusing on Islam and Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) in Johannesburg, South Africa, as part of the implementation of the 5-year Dutch-fund program, [Joint Initiative for Strategic Religious Action \(JISRA\)](#). The training brought together local actors currently engaged in the JISRA program from Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kenya, Mali, and Uganda with a goal to enhance their understanding of Islamic theology and jurisprudence, providing necessary capacity to achieve FoRB in their respective countries.





Europe



Ukrainian Religious Leaders Visit Washington, DC

The Peacemakers Network was honored to welcome an interfaith delegation of 15 Ukrainian leaders to the United States. Over the course of the week, the delegation met with US government officials, interfaith leaders, and non-governmental organizations to discuss the state of religious freedoms in Ukraine and address disinformation surrounding it and exchange information with counterparts in the United States on how religious communities across Ukraine have responded to Russia's invasion and the high toll Russia's aggression has taken on religious life inside Ukraine. The delegation is a clear demonstration of the diversity and cooperation amongst interreligious communities in the face of the Russian aggression.



Policy Brief: Key Findings and Recommendations on Safeguarding Religious Sites, Houses of Worship and Communities

[The policy brief on Key Findings and Recommendations on Safeguarding Religious Sites, Houses of Worship and Communities](#) provides policy recommendations for European Union, member states, and faith communities, as identified during seven national policy dialogues held throughout 2022 and 2023 as part of the European Union funded 'Strengthening the Security and Resilience of At-Risk Religious Sites and Communities' (SOAR) project. Considering the rise of hate speech and crimes targeting religious sites and communities across Europe, the SOAR project became a guiding mechanism on how to safeguard houses of worship and strengthen the collaboration between the European Union and its member states, security personnel and faith communities.

Preventing and Addressing Violent Extremism through Community Resilience

Online Training Modules: Preventing and Addressing Violent Extremism Through Community Resilience

Based on research in the Middle East and Western Balkans, [five online and offline training modules](#) were developed for practitioners and local communities to strengthen their ability to promote and support inclusive, local multi-stakeholder partnerships in preventing and addressing violent extremism, with group activity exercises, tools and opportunities for self-reflection. The training modules increase understanding and capacity for creating multi-stakeholder partnerships between civil society, religious actors, and government officials to increase community resilience against violent extremism.

Policy Guidelines for Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration for Supporting Community Resilience

Drawing from the Preventing and Addressing Violent Extremism through Community Resilience in the Western Balkans and the MENA' (PAVE) project research findings, the Peacemakers Network developed [Policy Guidelines for Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration for Supporting Community Resilience](#). The six policy guidelines offer concrete recommendations for designing and implementing coordinated multi-stakeholder approaches for the prevention of violent extremism to be used by policymakers, practitioners, faith-based actors and organizations, and civil society actors working in cooperation at the local level.





Middle East and North Africa



Iraq After the Territorial Defeat of Islamic State: Slow recover or danger of after-effects?

['Iraq After the Territorial Defeat of Islamic State: Slow recovery or danger of after-effects?'](#) sheds light on key challenges of peacebuilding, reforms, and reconciliation in Iraq with specific focus on north-western parts of the country, areas that formed between the years 2014-2019, the base of the international terrorist organization Islamic State. The report maps the key local governance structures relevant to peacebuilding, working together with the main ongoing international and national policy frameworks and processes.

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IRAQ AFTER THE TERRITORIAL DEFEAT OF ISLAMIC STATE:

Slow recovery or danger of after-effects?

BY

Marko Juntunen

Senior Specialist,

The Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers

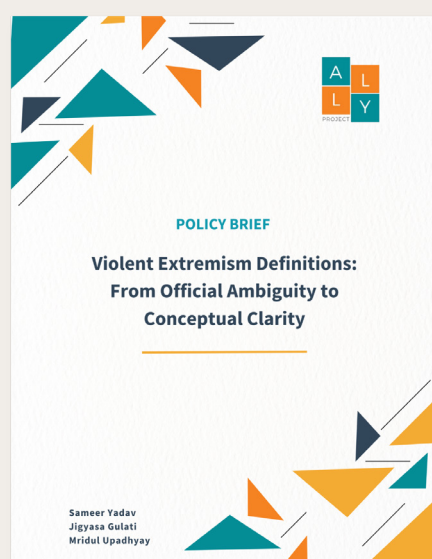
marko.juntunen@fca.fi

South and Southeast Asia



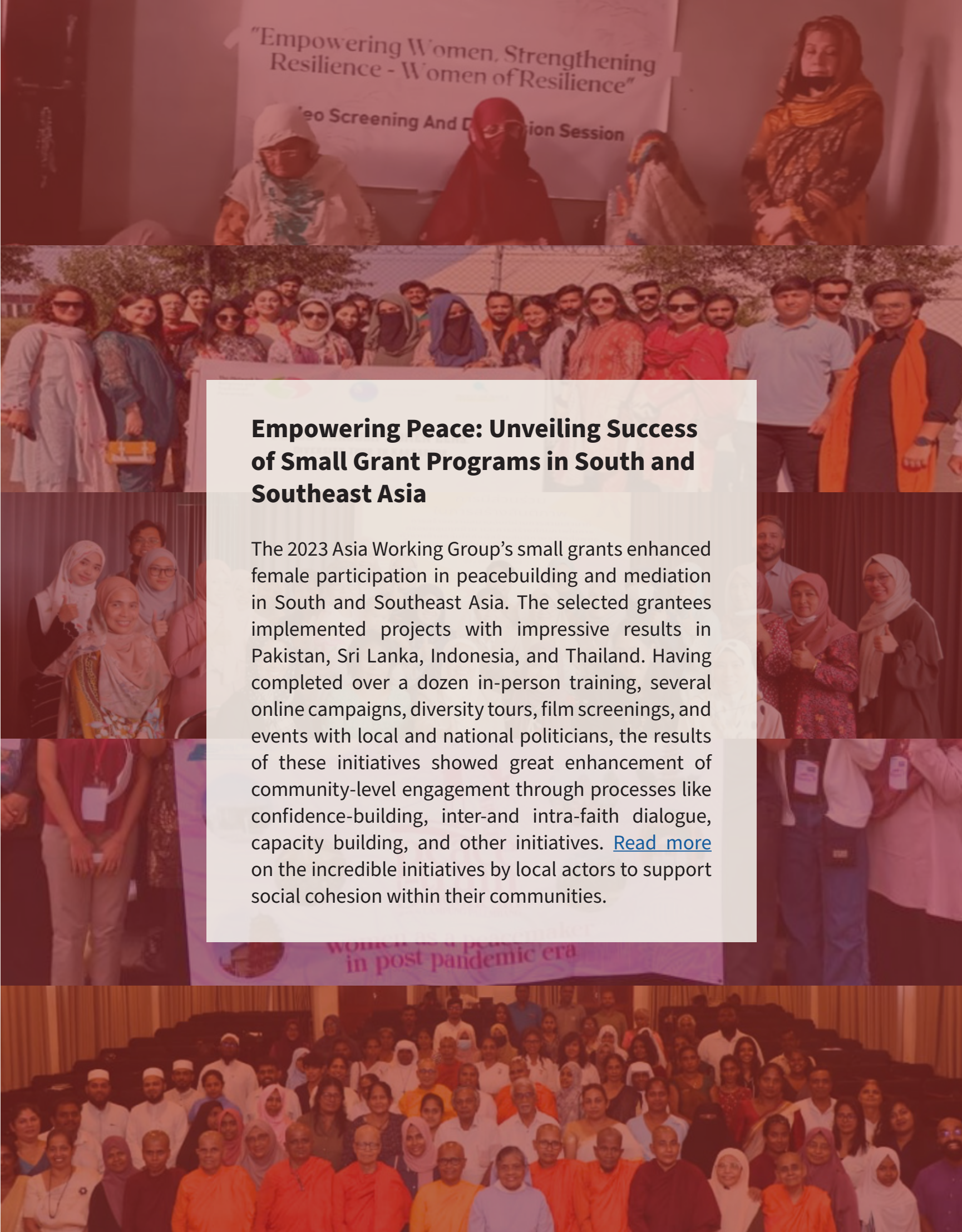
Asia Working Group Hosts Workshops in Southeast Asia

The Peacemakers Network's Asia Working Group convened members from Myanmar and Thailand for a strategic workshop in Bangkok, Indonesian partners in Banda, Aceh, and members from the Philippines in Manila for strategic workshops. These dynamic gatherings featured representatives from various backgrounds, including faith-based actors, universities, and a range of local and international NGOs. The focus of the workshops was a comprehensive analysis of the peace and conflict dynamics in the countries and discussions on joint action. During the workshops, participants collaboratively explored potential partnerships, funding opportunities, and the roles that religious and traditional peacebuilders can play within their respective networks. [Read more here about the workshop in Bangkok.](#)



Policy Brief: Violent Extremism Definitions: From Official Ambiguity to Conceptual Clarity

What is the difference between countering and preventing violent extremism? The policy brief, '[Violent Extremism Definitions: From Official Ambiguity to Conceptual Clarity](#),' is the culmination of extensive research by [ALLY fellows](#) to understand the existing ambiguity around the definition of Violent Extremism to bring to light its implications for young peacebuilders and their work.



Empowering Peace: Unveiling Success of Small Grant Programs in South and Southeast Asia

The 2023 Asia Working Group's small grants enhanced female participation in peacebuilding and mediation in South and Southeast Asia. The selected grantees implemented projects with impressive results in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and Thailand. Having completed over a dozen in-person training, several online campaigns, diversity tours, film screenings, and events with local and national politicians, the results of these initiatives showed great enhancement of community-level engagement through processes like confidence-building, inter-and intra-faith dialogue, capacity building, and other initiatives. [Read more](#) on the incredible initiatives by local actors to support social cohesion within their communities.

Working Groups

Inclusivity-based Community of Practice

Throughout 2023, the Inclusivity Community of Practice (CoP) delved into pivotal discussions and actions centered on fostering inclusivity across multiple fronts. The first meeting of the year focused on unpacking and addressing colonialist practices, racism, and other forms of discrimination in their work, and what best practices and lessons learned could be applied in future work. Further, the Community of Practice explored the links between faith, climate, and conflict, aiming to understand how these connections shape actions and impact environmental challenges. The group also created recommendations to address strategies to bridge and bolster synergies between the WPS and YPS Agendas, including synergy areas around advocacy, research, financing and programming. Finally, the group placed an emphasis on promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in peacebuilding efforts.



Asia

The Asia Working Group's (AWG) annual plan of 2023 advances three thematic focuses: 1) the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) agendas; 2) responding to AWG members' country contexts; and 3) protection of persons engaged in interfaith actions (including attention to psychosocial support). Throughout 2023, AWG members collaborated in developing a WPS/YPS guide through survey, interviews and focus group discussions and the guide will be completed in early 2024 to inform AWG work in this area and broader peacebuilding efforts.

Sub-Saharan Africa

The Peacemakers Network's Sub-Saharan Africa Working Group (SSA WG) has been re-launched, with two meetings taking place during 2023 - a meeting focused on Sudan's current political situation and the other focusing on healing-centered peacebuilding. The SSA WG seeks to provide a channel for communication, networking, planning, analysis, and knowledge exchange between religious and traditional actors and other key stakeholders in peacebuilding, mediation, and conflict transformation.

Europe & MENA

The Peacemakers Network's Europe and MENA Working Group was relaunched in the fall of 2023 and held two closed sub-regional meetings with focuses on Russia's war against Ukraine and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.



For more info, visit our site at
peacemakersnetwork.org