

The Network
for Religious
& Traditional
Peacemakers

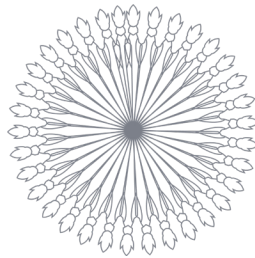


ISLAM AND FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF

**A TOOLKIT GUIDE FOR INTER-RELIGIOUS
ACTION PRACTITIONERS**







"Multi-faith" is a collaborative engagement across various faith traditions, not sacrificing our theological nor ideological identity. We acknowledge that – even in the midst of our significant differences – we share common humanity, and the best of our faiths teaches us to value every person and to work together for the good of our communities.

Imam Magid



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About the Toolkit

In recent years, identity-based conflicts, particularly those centered around inter- and intra-faith tensions, have exponentially increased worldwide. This rise is partly due to high population growth rates, porous borders, and deteriorating security conditions, leading to mass displacements and severe humanitarian crises. Additionally, the situation has been further complicated by factors such as the rise in hate speech, climate change, gender-based violence exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and serious violations of human rights, including attacks on religious minorities and the infringement of the right to freedom of religion or belief (FoRB).

To address these complex issues and promote FoRB, the Joint Initiative for Strategic Religious Action (JISRA) was launched in May 2021. This five-year interfaith program, supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, operates in seven countries with the goal of fostering peaceful and just societies where everyone enjoys FoRB. Since its inception, JISRA has employed localized, participatory approaches to address harmful norms and narratives between faith communities that can lead to conflict and violence. The initiative actively works toward shifting power to local actors, enabling communities directly affected by conflict to make their own decisions. JISRA achieves this through dialogue, capacity building, advocacy, and research.

In 2023, the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers (NRTP) joined the JISRA program to further enhance its work in Islamic theology and Muslim practices. To understand the gaps and effectively contribute to the program's advancement, NRTP established the Community of Practice on Islam and FoRB. This platform allows local partners to share insights on how NRTP can strengthen or build their knowledge and capacity on Islamic theology. Following several discussions, the Community of Practice, comprising 45 local partners from the seven JISRA countries, suggested developing a toolkit exploring the intersections between FoRB and Islam.

This toolkit is designed for FoRB practitioners, peacebuilders, and policymakers committed to promoting gender equity, mutual respect, and inter-religious dialogue. It aims to help them engage more effectively by fostering a better understanding of the intersections between Islam and FoRB.

The objectives of the toolkit are as follows:

1. To provide an understanding and relevance of FoRB and Islam to intra- and inter-faith action practitioners.
2. To offer a practical guide on engaging with communities regarding Islam and FoRB.
3. To equip intra- and inter-faith action practitioners with the knowledge to use Islamic teachings and practices in addressing social issues related to FoRB by:
 - Identifying relevant religious teachings and practices from both the early and contemporary periods of Islam.
 - Providing contextual, practical applications of religious texts and teachings to address social problems in community projects.
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This toolkit is a crucial resource for those working in space of promoting FoRB and addressing the complex issues faced by faith communities today. By equipping practitioners with the knowledge and tools needed to engage effectively, we can foster greater understanding, mutual respect, and peace among diverse religious groups. Through collaborative efforts and informed action, we can build societies where FoRB is respected and upheld for all.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

FoRB – Freedom of Religions or Belief

ﷺ – Peace Be Upon Him

ISIS – Islamic State of Syria/Iraq

Concepts, Terms, and Working Definitions

Religion	Religion is a set of beliefs, practices and systems that are organized relating to belief, worship and existence of a supernatural being who individuals and groups follow for spiritual guidance.
Hate Speech	A form of communication that includes, written, behavioural and spoken expression that is discriminatory, pejorative and attacks on individuals and groups based on religion, race, gender and other forms of identity.
Religious Intolerance	Behavior by followers of one religious group to another denying it the right to practice and express its faith freely. It is expressed in discrimination, repression, exclusion, and open religious rivalry that can lead to direct and indirect violence.
Blasphemy	Any act or speech that disrespects, degrades or makes fun of religious practices, beliefs or symbols.
Sharia Law	The Islamic legal, moral, and spiritual code covering not just prayer and fasting but all aspects of a Muslim's life. Shariah is by no means limited to criminal justice or the fixed punishments for serious crimes.
Hadith	A category of literature containing sayings of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and accounts of his daily practice (sunnah) that constitutes a major source of guidance for Muslims.
Sunnah	The praxis of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as researched by generations of scholars, forming the foundations for social life, personal law, and custom in Muslim societies.
Sunni	A shorter, alternative term for ahl al-sunnah wa'l jama'ah (Arabic: "People of the Prophetic tradition and the Community"). This refers to the Muslims who follow the Sunnah (praxis of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ). They comprise the vast majority branch of Muslims worldwide.
Shi'ah	Shi'a refers to Muslims who adhere to the teachings of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and through a succession of his family, referred to as ahl al-bayt (Arabic: "People of the House"). They hold the belief that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ designated his cousin Ali ibn Abi Talib as his successor and spiritual leader, but he was prevented from succeeding.

Unit 1: Introduction

1.1 WHAT IS FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEFS (FORB)?

Freedom of religion or beliefs is the civic right of individuals and communities to practice, express, change, and spread their faith without fear or threat to them.¹ It is an essential human right that signifies the right of individuals and communities to:

- Join a religious group independently and associate with a particular religion without coercion: This refers to the right for individuals to have personal perspectives on different religions, including the various schools of thought that exist in their religion. It also implies that individuals will not be discriminated against or excluded because they hold a different thought from the dominant religious perspectives and practices.
- Practice a faith without external limitations and control: This refers to individuals not being compelled to disclose or adopt other religious beliefs as a precondition for their safety and/or access to public services.
- Share one's religious values and teachings with others.
- Have the freedom to change religion free of fear.

1.2 WHY IS FORB IMPORTANT TO SOCIETY?

ForB is a universal right that acknowledges and respects religious diversity, guaranteeing people of faith the freedom to exercise their belief. Societies that uphold ForB rights rank highly in terms of good governance, development, and promotion of sustainable peace and security.

Although every country in the world has pledged to uphold ForB, and 84% of the world population is affiliated with a religious group, there are numerous impediments to people's ForB rights. In 2016, the number of religious restrictions imposed by governments on religious minorities increased.

¹ ForB is explicitly referenced in the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (UDHR), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948.

This trend persists even though ForB rights are enshrined in legal and policy frameworks in many countries. The lack of commitment and implementation by states and among religious actors contributes to ongoing discrimination, marginalization, and violations against religious minorities.²

In predominantly Muslim countries, governments have employed political power to undermine ForB rights for religious minorities. Serious violations of this right have undermined other human rights, such as right to own and access places of worship. In 2020, religious groups were targeted in 102 countries in property crimes where religion was a factor in the violence.³ These property crimes included overturned headstones in Jewish cemeteries, breaking of windows in mosques, arson targeting churches and vandalism of religious sites. At the community level, social harassment is committed by individuals and groups who intend to intimidate religious minorities to prevent them from practicing their faith. In some instances, global incidents have engendered religiously induced violence that has mostly affected religious minorities.

Examples include:

- According to PEW Forum rankings on religious freedom, Muslim-majority countries have considerably lower levels of religious tolerance compared to Christian-majority countries.

² Majumdar, S. (2021, September 30). Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels. Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/09/30/globally-social-hostilities-related-to-religion-decline-in-2019-while-government-restrictions-remain-at-highest-levels/>

³ Majumdar, S. (2023, June 6). In 2020, Properties in 102 Countries and Territories were Targeted in Incidents Tied to Religion. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/06/06/in-2020-properties-in-102-countries-and-territories-were-targeted-in-incidents-tied-to-religion/>

Examples continued

- There has been significant increase of harassment and threats to individuals unaffiliated to religion – atheists, agnostics and people who do not identify with any religion – by government and private groups.
- Religiously unaffiliated persons comprise 16% of the global population, Christians 31% and Muslims 25%.⁴
- In countries where religiously unaffiliated persons face harassment, another religious group formed a large majority of at least 80%. There are 18 countries that fall into this majority bracket, 12 are Muslim majority and six are Christian majority.⁵
- In 2020, 27 countries were among those that harassed religiously unaffiliated persons, a significant increase from 2012 when there were only three where they were harassed.

The forms of threats and harassment include verbal abuse, physical violence that has led to the destruction of property and deaths.⁶



⁴ Wormald, B. (2015, February 26). Latest trends in religious restrictions and hostilities. Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project. <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2015/02/26/religious-hostilities/>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Philpott, D. (2021, December 7). Are Muslim countries really unreceptive to religious freedom? The Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/07/10/are-muslim-countries-really-unreceptive-to-religious-freedom/>

Examples of Government Harassment and interference of FoRB:

- An atheist activist in Egypt was sentenced for three years in prison and fined 300,000 (\$19,000) Egyptian pounds for running a Facebook page called “The Egyptian Atheist”.
- In Croatia, a Catholic-majority country, an atheist alleged the presence of Catholic religious symbols in government buildings, such as public hospitals, courtrooms – that violated the constitution.
- In Pakistan, Islam is the official religion, and the government requires nationals to identify their faith on the national identity card and does not offer the option of indicating no-religion.
- A woman identified as an atheist in Tunisia was fined and sentenced for six months in prison for parodying a Qur’an verse on social media about the COVID pandemic.
- Instances of forced conversion of minors and members of religious groups labelled as “cults” a derogatory term to compel them to become “believers”.
- In Xinjiang Province in China, reported cases of detention of Uyghur Muslims and other ethnic and religious minority groups including separation of children from their families to limit influence of religion in homes.⁷
- In Syria, the government targeted Sunni Muslims with torture, unlawful detentions, destruction of infrastructure and use of chemical weapons.⁸
- In Sudan, 40 women were arrested for violating the Islamic dress code that was enabled by repealing of a public order that allowed such arrests in 2019.⁹

⁷ Majumdar, S. (2021, September 30). Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels. Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project. <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/09/30/globally-social-hostilities-related-to-religion-decline-in-2019-while-government-restrictions-remain-at-highest-levels/>

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

At the global level, the rise of terrorism and extremism has led to violations of FoRB, resulting in increased incidences of profiling, blasphemy and religiously motivated attacks on innocent Muslims. The existence of terrorist groups that rationalize attacks on non-Muslims using religious text has also led to the portrayal of Islam as inherently hostile to religious freedom. Examples of terrorist attacks by terrorist groups that identify as Muslims include:

- 2001: The murder of the Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh by a Muslim
- 2004: Global protest of Danish cartoons mocking the Prophet ﷺ
- 2015: Deadly shooting at the offices of Charlie Hebdo magazine in France, sparking protests in Muslim-majority countries and retaliatory attacks on Christian institutions
- Attacks by Islamic State (IS), al-Qaeda, Boko Haram and al-Shabaab

FoRB is a fundamental freedom that reinforces other human rights. In areas where basic rights are violated, FoRB is often under threat. It is also become evident that it is difficult for extremists to thrive in areas with higher levels of human rights and FoRB.

Examples of Social Interference and Violations of FoRB:

- The increase in government restriction of religion or belief has paralleled a rise in government violence based on religion or belief globally.
- Violence by armed religious groups that destroy property, use and threat of violence to impose religious norms and practices.
- The link between violent conflict and religious intolerance.
- Conflict risks related to religion.

While many governments have pledged to uphold human rights, including FoRB, enforcement often is weak, and the lack of goodwill creates an environment in which religious minorities are unable to associate and express their religion. This lack of commitment and implementation is evident at both the state and non-state religious actor levels. Hence, there is a requirement for a 'whole of society approach' to tackle these challenges by empowering local actors, including religious and traditional influencers. Leveraging their comparative advantages is essential to overcoming current and future crises and fostering tolerance and mutual understanding among cultures and religions, and peoples. Examples of religious related terrorism: violent attacks leading to deaths, physical abuse, displacement, detentions, destruction of property, and fundraising and recruitment by terrorist.

Globally, religion has been a source of unity and tension between people of the same faith and people of different faiths. Shared values and traditions enable unity, while tension is caused by the difference in perceptions about values and practices that have resulted in violence, especially against religious minorities.

Examples of Threats to FoRB:

Community conflicts are often identity conflicts connected or exacerbated by religion, which is used either to mobilize or escalate the conflicts through religious divisions.

- Al-Shabaab used religion in Kenya to conduct terrorist attacks targeting Christian institutions and individuals, creating tension between Muslims and Christians. The separation of Muslims and Christians during attacks created a perception that Islam condoned violence, leading to the profiling and discrimination of Muslims. Muslim youth, identified by their names and way of dress, were discriminated against and subjected to

human rights violations. In some regions, Muslim women identified by their dress were attacked in retaliation for the violent attacks by Al-Shabaab on Christians.

- Blasphemous and negative comments about religious leaders have caused worldwide violent attacks. In 2013, caricatures published in Denmark, popularly referred to as the Danish Cartoons had a spillover effect leading to protests and changes in blasphemy laws in different localities. The *Charlie Hebdo Cartoons* in France led to destruction of churches and religious institutions and schools in Niger.
- In some countries, women are prevented from engaging in civic, social, and political participation in contexts where religious fundamentalisms are on the rise.

In many contexts, FoRB is not yet a norm. Discriminatory laws and policies restrict the engagement of religious minorities in political, economic, and religious initiatives. Minority groups are intentionally targeted, and strategies are devised to exclude them from engaging in affairs in their contexts. Violence and other forms of intimidation, including persecution of leaders and followers, have been used, leading to the killing and persecution of innocent people due to faith beliefs different from the dominant religious groups. FoRB is crucial to society because of:

- Resistance by some governments to recognize FoRB, resulting that in discrimination of religious minorities in certain contexts.
- Lack of commitment by governments to protect FoRB, imposing religious values of the majority religion on minority groups.
- The rights of individuals and communities to hold religious beliefs, practice religion, and associate with other religious groups and individuals are not guaranteed.

Creating awareness and protecting FoRB is vital for attaining human rights, supporting international human laws that uphold universal human rights and good governance, and contributing to conflict transformation. It is critical because it allows individuals and communities to enjoy their FoRB rights, thereby creating a secure and prosperous society.

1.3 INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW ON FoRB?

The concept of FoRB has deep historical roots and is often associated with the aim to address discrimination, marginalization, and violence against religious minorities. FoRB is guaranteed in article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR 1948) and subsequently in Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR 1976) and Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion and Belief (1981). Two important components of FoRB in international human rights law are:

- The freedom to have or not to have or adopt (which includes the right to change) a religion or belief of one's choice.
- The freedom to manifest one's religion or belief, individually or in community with others, in public or private, through worship, observance, practice and teaching.

In practice, today this means safeguarding religious freedoms and protecting rights and interests, including freedom of speech, gender equality, freedom from discrimination based on religion, and protection from religious hate speech, radicalization and violent extremism.

1.3.1 Advancing FoRB in Muslim-Majority Communities and Contexts

Muslim-majority countries are integral members of the global community that adhere to international human rights laws and standards. Among these universally agreed rights, are the FoRB rights mentioned above, and it is the responsibility of states

to ensure that non-Muslim religious groups within their jurisdiction can practice their faith without fear or threat as minority groups. While Muslim states draw guidance from the Qur'an and the practices of the Prophet ﷺ, aligning laws and policies related to FoRB with international human rights standards can be challenging, particularly in contexts with a history of FoRB violations and complexities such as secularism, blasphemy, apostasy, religious hate speech, and intolerance. To address these challenges and promote FoRB, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Establish dialogue platforms for intra-inter religious engagement putting emphasis on the intra to develop consensus within the Muslim Fraternity.

- Establish national ulama forums on FoRB to discuss matters from an Islamic perspective and guide the Muslim fraternity. The national ulama forums will hold annual meetings to review FoRB matters and to develop practical methods of ensuring FoRB from an Islamic perspective in alignment with Universal Human Rights standards.
- Engage the ulama forums to discussion on Qur'anic verses promoting religious pluralism.
- Engage in ulama forums to discuss the Covenants Prophet Muhammad ﷺ established with Christians to protect their rights.

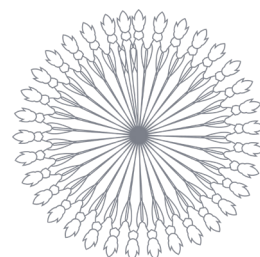
2. Establish national level Islam and FoRB task forces that will implement decisions made by the ulama forums with subnational level task forces to address local FoRB concerns.

- Establish national level and community level working groups that will be responsible for research and documentation of FoRB violations.
- Build capacity of working groups on Islamic perspectives of FoRB to address its particular and complex concerns within the context of Islamic thought.

- Organize contextual conventions on how Muslims in the context can apply Islamic teachings to cultivate a positive and legitimising outlook towards other religious traditions.
- Create a depository for all declarations and statements issued by Muslim institutions in support of FoRB.

1.3.2 Advancing FoRB in Communities

- Provide capacity building for Muslim religious leaders at the community level engaged in intense community sensitization on religious diversity.
- Establish a Muslim-Christian local taskforce, led by Muslim leaders, to show solidarity with and support for non-Muslim populations in addressing FoRB challenges they face.



1.4 ISLAM AND FORB: WHAT WE CAN DO TO ACHIEVE FORB IN OUR SOCIETY?

The theological foundations guiding the praxis of Islamic faith and delineating how to live are rooted in the divine revelations found in the Qur'an, and the Sunnah, the praxis of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as collected through the hadith tradition of Muslim scholarship. These sacred sources provide a robust guide for public and private conduct. They provide insights that apply to democracy, human freedom, human rights and civil liberties. In practical terms, this manifests as the cultivation of an environment conducive for people and communities with all their diversities.

Islam recognizes religious diversity and encourages tolerance between Muslim and other faith traditions. Muslims are called not to impose religion upon individuals against their will, in accordance with the following verse:

*“For you is your religion,
and for me is my religion.”*

[Qur'an 109: 6]

In Islam, the foundational principle of freedom of religion and conscience is deeply rooted in the story of Adam ﷺ, when God says:

*“We have honoured the
children of Adam”*

[17:70]

Other verses in the Qur'an address freedom of religion, including:

- Surah Baqarah¹⁰ (2:256) : “There is no compulsion in religion.”¹¹
- Surah Al-Kafirun (109:6): “For you is your religion, and for me is my religion.”
- Yunus (10:99): “Had your Lord so willed, all the people on earth would have believed.”

These verses serve as a foundation for promoting religious tolerance, respect for other religions, tolerance and respect for diversity in Islam. They reinforce the notion that individuals have their own autonomy to decide their personal convictions and beliefs. In practice, in the context of FoRB where there is a deficit of trust, nurturing values through intra and inter-religious engagement, including building trust, cooperation, fairness, and transparency, creates an enabling environment for tolerance and respect for diversity to thrive, leading to FoRB for every person in the community.

The Qur'an and Hadith contain resources affirming the rights of non-Muslims to exercise their faith. While the sacred texts in Islam inherently advocate for religious liberty, human rights and human freedoms, certain texts have been historically used in the past, both during the religious conquest period and in contemporary times, in ways that have been interpreted as denying these rights.

¹⁰ Al-Baqarah is the first Medinese surah, arriving 13 years into the mission of the Prophet ﷺ. The longest chapter in the Qur'an, it is one of the chief sources of Islamic law.

¹¹ According to Islamic scholars, this verse is an absolute statement within the Qur'an, meaning under no condition should an individual be forced against their will and moral beliefs to accept the religion of Islam or any other belief.

Examples of Qur'anic verses include:

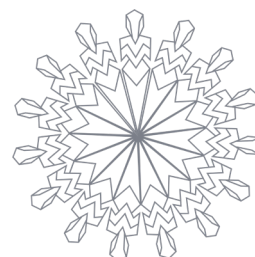
- Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the Jizyah with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued (9:29).
- The Prophet reportedly sometimes demands the death penalty for apostasy, the most obvious example of this being the Hadith, "Whoever changes his religion, kill him" (Bukhari, Sahih, 9, 84, Hadith 57).

The instruction of the verse and Hadith are abrogated by other verses and Hadith that support religious freedom, including the right to choose. Examples of such texts include:

- The truth [has now come] from your Sustainer: Let, then, him who wills, believe in it, and let him who wills, reject it. (18:29)
- Whoever chooses to follow the right path follows it but for his own good; and whoever goes astray goes but astray to his own hurt (17:15)
- There shall be no coercion in matters of faith (2:256).

These verses unequivocally affirm that the act of embracing a particular belief is a personal choice. Moreover, they underscore that no individual has been designated the role of policing, identifying, or punishing those who opt to adhere to a different system of belief. Islam grants religious freedom that includes sharing the religious beliefs with others. It emphasizes persuasion rather than use of force to promote religion.

Leading Muslim scholars have initiated discussions on renewal of religion, re-evaluation of outdated religious laws and decrees, and the cessation of excommunication to promote the rights of religious minorities in Muslim-majority societies. These scholars argue that such rulings are not universally applicable in every time and space, thus some rulings are no longer applicable in modern society. Renewal is fundamental practice in Islam. The process involves linking a verse that provides guidance on an issue, examining the purpose of the verse and considering its application to the current reality. It includes contextualizing religious revelations based on the general principles and universal purposes of their implication; and for FoRB it will challenge the extreme interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith that leads to discrimination, violence, and denial of rights for religious minorities. Renewal is a different approach from the violent and confrontational approach that characterized Muslims' relationship with other religions.



Examples of the Practice of Renewal in Relation to FoRB:

- The apostasy law was considered a universal principle, wherein abandoning one’s religion constituted a capital offense punishable by death. The purpose of the law was to safeguard the sanctity of the religion and prevent individuals from renouncing their faith. Recognizing that Islam allows diversity of opinions regarding the interpretation of religious principles, and that such the diversity results to application of scholars ‘independent legal judgement (*ijtihad*) that is non-definitive in its meaning, Muslims scholars have initiated efforts to address questions related to apostasy and rights of non-Muslims in Muslim majority countries.
- A revision of *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) principles has been proposed to counteract the misuse of excommunication by extremist groups, preventing them from using it as a justification for killing those who disagree with their ideology. Apostasy is exploited by extremist groups to target anyone who opposes them or fail to meet their criteria of a ‘true believer. These groups are often relying on an outdated fatwa that was employed during religious wars between Muslim and Tatar groups, which is no longer applicable in the present context.
- Collection of literature and publication produced by terrorist groups in order to develop counter arguments and narratives.
- In August 1990, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) released a declaration on Islam and Human rights, utilizing the language of Islamic jurisprudence to serve as a guide for its member states. The central message of the declaration emphasizes that belief in fundamental rights and universal freedom is an integral part of the Islamic religion and tradition. It asserted that no one has the rights to interfere with or disregard the rights others, either in part or in whole.
- In 2010, a conference of Muslim religious scholars examined and reviewed the traditional classification of the world into the domains (*diyar*) according to Islamic laws. This examination addressed concepts of jihad, loyalty, enmity (*al-wala wa al-bara*), citizenship and emigration.

Space for notes:

Unit 2: Understanding FoRB in Islam - Unpacking the Qur'an and the Sunnah

Islam is a universal religion that teaches love, tolerance, and sympathy for humanity through the Qur'an, Hadith, and Sunnah. These sources demonstrate how the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ played an important role in advancing religious tolerance. The following are the religious sources used by Muslims that guide all religious practices and social interactions.

The Qur'an: The Qur'an is the holy book of Islam that provides fundamental teachings and principles for Muslims. Although the Qur'an is the main guide for Muslims, it is not exhaustive in providing specific guidance in all aspects of life.

The Sunnah: The Sunnah refers to the praxis of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as recorded and reported by his companions and generations of scholars in the science of Hadith, with rigorous referencing and source analysis. The Companions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, also known as the Sahaba, were close associates and followers; they began the tradition of hadith collection and research, transmitting this to the subsequent generation. The Sunnah was preserved in three ways:¹²

1. Observed application of the sunnah in the praxis of Muslim communities;
2. Early documentation of the Hadith through writing and memorization by the Companions;
3. Learning and narrating of Hadith, alongside their chains of transmission, in study circles.

The Hadith complements and expands upon Qur'anic teachings by providing practical examples and explanations from the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. It provides a comprehensive understanding of the Prophet's ﷺ character and exemplary way of life that make him the epitome of moral conduct and role model for Muslims to emulate.

The *Sahih Sitta* (The Six Authentic Books) are considered the core of the hadith canon, including:

- *Sahih Bukhari:* This collection of 7275 Hadiths was compiled by Imam Bukhari. It is considered to be the most authentic and comprehensive set of Hadith.
- *Sahih Muslim:* This collection of 7563 Hadiths was compiled by Imam Muslim Ibn al-Hajjaj. Comparable to Bukhari's collection in authenticity, the two are collectively referred to as the Sahihayn (Two Sahih).
- *Sunan Abi Dawud:* This collection of 4800 Hadiths was compiled by Imam Abu Dawud, a contemporary of Imam Bukhari.
- *Sunan al-Tirmidhi:* This collection of 3956 Hadiths was compiled by Imam Abu Isa Muhammad at-Tirmidhi, a student of Imam Bukhari.

An example of this collection that applies in a FoRB context:

- According to Abdullah, the Messenger of God ﷺ said: "The believer does not insult others, nor curse others, nor is he vulgar or shameless." (Sunan Tirmidhi 1977).

¹² Rehmaanee, 2002

The Authentication of Hadith

Hadith constitutes one of the sources of legislation (Shariah, or Islamic Law) for social norms and practices in Muslim societies, alongside the Holy Qur'an. Therefore, the authentication of the Hadith involves a meticulous methodological approach. Classical Islamic scholars developed specific criteria to determine authenticity (*sihha*) and reliability, ensuring that the narrator/transmitter is trustworthy, and it aligns with the overall message of the Holy Qur'an.

The earliest efforts to determine the authenticity of Hadiths can be traced to the first Muslim Caliph, Abu Bakr, who argued that a Hadith could only be accepted if it was narrated by a Companion of the Prophet ﷺ, with the confirmation of another companion. However, over time, this method of authentication became problematic as the number of hadiths increased, resulting in errors and discrepancies. Scholars, from among the Companions as well as the early Successors such as Ibn Shihab and his student Malik ibn Anas, began to develop methods to ensure the authenticity of hadith, to ensure the accurate preservation of the *sunnah*.

There are five universally accepted criteria for to determine the authenticity and credibility of a hadith:

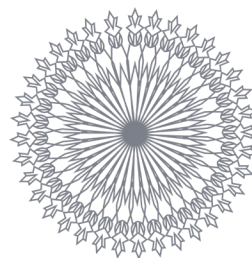
- 1. Chain of Narrators (Isnad):** Scholars examine the chain of narrators who transmitted the hadith from one person to another. While this was labour intensive and time consuming, it allowed scholars evaluate the reliability, memory, and moral character of transmitter.
- 2. Integrity of Narrators' Character (Adalat):** The moral and ethical characters of the transmitter.
- 3. Corroboration (Mutaba'at):** the hadith is compared to established sources for consistency.
- 4. Non-deficiency (Illah):** Scholars examine the hadith for any defects or inconsistency.
- 5. Non-Aberrance (Shadh):** For the hadith to not fall into an anomalous situation due to its chain.

Islam and Sects in Muslim Societies

Islam recognizes diversity, including distinct languages, race/ethnic affiliations, and religions, viewing these diversities as signs of God. However, despite this acknowledgment, it has been utilized to marginalize, discriminate against, and exclude non-Muslim minority groups in some predominantly Muslim areas.

Although Muslims worldwide share the fundamental tenets of Islam, the religion is not monolithic, and its followers have significant differences in the interpretation and application of their faith. The two major sects among Muslims are Sunni and Shia. Sunnis make up 85% of the global Muslim population, predominant in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Yemen, Pakistan, Indonesia, Turkey, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. On the other hand, significant Shia populations are found in Iran and Iraq, as well as in Bahrain, Syria and Lebanon.

Within the Sunni and Shia categories, various subcategories exist although the various Shia groups can be considered sects in their own right whereas Sunni subgroups identify with Sunnism as a whole. Shia sects include Twelver Shia (Ithna Ashari), Zaydi Shia¹³, Ismaili Shia, Alawites, and the Druze¹⁴.



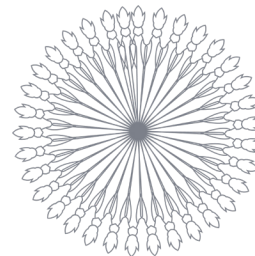
¹³ The Zaydi Shia are often considered (both by themselves and by others) closer to Sunnism than they are to any other Shia group.

¹⁴ The Druze do not consider themselves Muslim, but emerged as an offshoot of Ismaili Shi'ism.

Who are the Sunni Muslims?	Who are the Shia?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunni Muslims are the largest and widely followed sect within Islam. Sunni is short for ahl al-sunnah wa'l jama'ah, the followers of the Prophetic sunnah (praxis) and community. • Sunni Muslims accept all of the Prophet ﷺ's Companions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shia Muslims are the second largest sect of Islam. • Shia believe that Prophet Muhammad ﷺ designated Ali ibn Abi Talib as his successor. As a result, they do not accept the Companions who they believe prevented this. Shia is short for Shi'at 'Ali (the Faction of Ali)

The sects' differences are illustrated by differences in religion, political, jurisprudence and spirituality. The division between the Sunni and Shia emerged over a political disagreement over rightful leadership and succession following the death of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in 632 CE. The Companions formed a council to elect the first leader of the community, choosing Abu Bakr. The Shia rejected this result, believing that the Prophet ﷺ had specifically designated his cousin Ali ibn Abi Talib as the leader. Other differences between Sunni and Shia include:

- **Religious Hierarchy:** Sunni Islam generally has a less elaborate religious hierarchy, focusing more on electing leadership through community consensus and scholarly knowledge. Shia Islam has a more bureaucratic system, centered around the concept of Imams who are divinely appointed successors to the Prophet.
- **Interpretation of Islamic Law:** While the Sunni tradition of law is characterized by multiple schools of law that come to different conclusions but are all considered authoritative, each Shia sect follows its own individual school of law.
- **Co-Existence and Fundamental Beliefs:** Members of both sects have co-existed for centuries and share many fundamental beliefs and practices.
- **Differences in Ritual and Social Practices:** Sunnis and Shias differ in various aspects concerning rituals, norms and other practices and religious organization. For instance, one ritual that Sunni and Shia Muslims differ on is the commemoration of Ashura, in particular the events and narration of the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, the son of Ali and grandson of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.



Understanding Diversity among Muslims – The Schools of Islamic Thought

Schools of Islamic thought (referred to as madhhab in Arabic) are the paths Muslims follow, drawing from the Qur'an and the practice of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The different schools of thought emerged after the death of the Prophet ﷺ, as leading religious leaders attempted to preserve, teach, and practice the religious teachings of teachings while keeping within the Islamic traditions.

The Sunni branch of Islam encompasses four extant schools of thought, each representing different history and jurisprudential tradition. The Hanafi school (31%), founded by Imam Abu Hanifa (699-767 CE) in Kufa, Iraq, is characterized by analogical reasoning and adaptability. The Maliki school (25%), founded by Imam Malik ibn Anas (711-795 CE) in Medina, is characterized by an emphasis on the historic value of Medinese praxis as living sunnah alongside the Qur'an and Hadith. The Shafi'i school (16%), founded by Imam Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi (767-820 CE) in Mecca and Egypt, is characterized by its systemic nature, bringing together insights from his teacher Malik and from the Iraqi school of Abu Hanifa. The Hanbali School (4%), founded by Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (780-855 CE) in Baghdad, Iraq, is categorized by its flexibility.

Among the Shi'a, Twelvers describe their jurisprudence as Ja'fari, ascribed to Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (702-765 CE) in Medina, a descendant of the Prophet ﷺ and contemporary of Abu Hanifa and Malik. The Zaydi school is ascribed to Imam Zayd ibn Ali (695-740 CE), a descendant of the Prophet ﷺ and the uncle of Ja'far al-Sadiq, and displays many similarities with the Hanafi school.

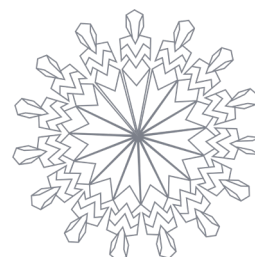
Scholars of the four Sunni schools of thought agree that Muslims possess the autonomy to choose between these four scholarly schools. This means that Muslims living within close proximity may ascribe to different practices depending on the school of thought

to which they adhere. For instance, the schools differ on the permissibility of consuming shellfish. Most take the Qur'anic permission to eat the food of the sea to mean any seafood, whereas the Hanafis interpret it to specifically mean fish in the strictest sense. A given community will have people of both positions, some consuming shellfish while others consider it prohibited, but they mutually accept each other's practice as authentic and accepted.

Generally speaking, Sunni schools of thought are separated on a geographic basis, with some areas such as Egypt, Syria, and Southern India featuring multiple schools due to their history as geographic and scholarly hubs.

Religious Pluralism during the Time of the Prophet ﷺ

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ lived and interacted with individuals from various religious backgrounds, including Christians. In response to religious intolerance, the Prophet entered covenants with people of other faiths, binding Muslim communities to acknowledge religious diversity and ensuring protection of non-Muslim populations in their respective areas. These covenants contributed to the foundation of inter-religious relations between Muslims and Christians during the Prophet ﷺ's lifetime. They represented pledges of peace and security aligned with Qur'anic (verses 2:256 and 10:99), explicitly prohibiting religious compulsion, forced conversion, and discrimination against non-Muslims.



Notable examples of these covenants include:

1. The Covenant of the Prophet with the Monks of Mount Sinai (Ashtiname of Muhammad ﷺ or the Testament of Muhammad):¹⁵ This covenant, issued in 624 CE, granted protection and privileges to the followers of Jesus, specifically the Christian Monks of Saint Catherine Monastery.

- The covenant, sealed with an imprint representing Prophet Muhammad ﷺ hand, promised protection to the Christian Monks and residents of the region, safeguarding them from any incursions, attacks, or attempts to overtake the Christian pilgrimage site.
- A pledge was made to protect the Monks as a group whenever they were.
- A commitment was undertaken to respect the inhabitants' choice of religion.

15 Annex II

2. The Covenant of the Prophet with the Christians of Najran:¹⁶ This covenant, regulating the relationship between Muslims and Christians, exemplifies Islam's toleration for other communities. It assured Christians security for their lives, religion, and property.

These covenants illustrate the Prophet ﷺ's high level of tolerance towards people of other faiths and Islam's stance on religious diversity. If applied by Muslims, these principles can advance FoRB for all. They serve as valuable source for Muslim religious leaders and inter-religious action practitioners engaged in promoting FoRB in religiously diverse contexts, fostering tolerance, goodwill, and deeper understanding of different religious groups.

16 Annex III

Space for notes:

Unit 3: Qur'an, Hadith and Islam and FoRB - Religious Intolerance, Hate Speech, Minority Expression

3.1 ISLAM AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

Muslims are called to explore non-violent avenues to resolving differences with people of different faiths living among them. The Qur'an specifically calls on Muslims to engage in constructive dialogue, adhering to religious teachings and principles that advocate for collaboration in multi-religious context to address disputes and overcome suspicions, trust issues, and stereotypes.

Muslims hold the belief that the Qur'an is God's final revelation and the ultimate spiritual guidance for them. The guidance is presented through narratives that involves recounting and reflecting on past experiences, offering instructions to both the past and future generations.

The Qur'an confirms the existence of earlier revelations to the Jewish and Christian communities, often referred to as the People of the Book. They key commonality among these communities are that they possess scripture that was revealed to them prior to the advent of Islam. Historically, Christians and Jews have a close connection with Muslim communities and Islamic history is a continuation of the earlier prophets. These teaching are explicitly outlined in the Qur'an as outlined in the Qur'an, where verses and stories depict constructive relationships between Muslims, Jewish communities, and Christian communities. Examples of verses included in the table below:

Verse	Explanation and application in Islam and FoRB context
<p>(3:3) It is He Who sent down to thee (step by step), in truth, the Book, confirming what went before it; and He sent down the Law (of Moses) and the Gospel (of Jesus) before this, as a guide to mankind, and He sent down the criterion (of judgment between right and wrong).</p>	<p>In this verse, Allah¹⁷ affirms that He sent us the Qur'an in truth and that it confirms the truths in the earlier books sent to Moses and Jesus, peace be upon them both.</p> <p>Islam, like Judaism and Christianity, believes in prophets and messengers of God. One interesting way of understanding the Islamic view on freedom of religion is to look at the role of the prophets and messengers.</p>
<p>"There is no compulsion in religion; truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error; therefore, whoever rejects Satan (and what he calls to) and believes in Allah, he indeed has laid hold on the firmest handhold, which shall not break off, and Allah is Hearing, Knowing." (2:256)</p>	<p>The verse emphasizes the principle of freedom of religion or belief in Islam, and it explicitly prohibits compulsions in matters of religion. Moreover, it affirms that individuals should be forced or coerced into religion; we cannot compel or expect everyone to adopt Islam. Consequently, we must respect and understand that judging a person's character should precede their declared religion. The verses concludes by underscoring that God is all Hearing, Knowing, meaning God is aware of individuals' choices.</p>

¹⁷ "Allah" is the Arabic word for God in Islam. Hereinafter, Allah and God will be used interchangeably.

Verse	Explanation and application in Islam and FoRB context
<p>“...And do not let the hatred of a people for having obstructed you from al-Masjid al-Haram lead you to transgress. And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty.” [Qur’an, 5:2]</p>	<p>Here the Qur’an provides guidance on transaction and the importance cooperating with others on the path of righteousness and piety in all aspects of life. At the same time, the verse warns that believers should not cooperate in sin and aggression. Furthermore, the verse underscores the importance of upholding moral values such as compassion and goodness above all else.</p>
<p>Entry points for intra and inter-religious engagement on Islam and FoRB to address hate speech, intolerance and minority expression – Qur’an verses.</p>	
<p>Perhaps God will put, between you and those to whom you have been enemies among them, affection. And Allah is competent, and Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.” [Qur’an, 60:7]</p>	<p>While recognizing that Allah knows best, it is crucial to refrain from living our lives based on preconceived stereotypes or notions about those who may appear different to us. We should consistently be the first to extend our hands in peace and solidarity, leaving the rest to Allah.</p>
<p>“And We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], the Book in truth, confirming that which preceded it of the Scripture and as a criterion over it. So judge between them by what Allah has revealed and do not follow their inclinations away from what has come to you of the truth. To each of you We prescribed a law and a method. Had Allah willed, He would have made you one nation [united in religion], but [He intended] to test you in what He has given you; so race to [all that is] good. To Allah is your return all together, and He will [then] inform you concerning that over which you used to differ.” [Qur’an, 5:48]</p>	<p>The Qur’an serves as a reminder that our lives and societies are intricately designed and prescribed by Allah's will. Therefore, our primary duty is to strive to be the best Muslims we can be, respecting our peaceful differences and allowing Allah to be the sole judge.</p>

Verse	Explanation and application in Islam and FoRB context
<p>“O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.” [Qur’an, 49:13]</p>	<p>The Qur’an emphasizes that our differences are not intended for conflict and argument but for understanding and celebration. We must realize the importance of staying united as a broader community, not despite our diversity, but because of it.</p>
<p>Example of inter-religious dialogue during the time of the Prophet ﷺ:</p> <p>The Peace Treaty of Hudaibiyah in the history of Islam stands as a testament to the success of interfaith dialogue. This treaty was signed in the face of differing perspectives between Muslims and non-Muslims at the time, with the Holy Qur’an acknowledging it as the greatest victory.</p> <p>At Hudaibiyah, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ chose to engage in a ten-year Peace Treaty with people of other faiths, even though his power surpassed that of the non-Muslims. Rather than exerting his strength, he prioritized peace and unconditionally accepted all their conditions, demonstrating a commitment to maintaining harmony within society.</p>	

3.2 DESECRATION AND BLASPHEMY

Qur'an Verse	Explanation and application in Islam and FoRB context
<p>“Your religion is for you: my religion is for me”. (The Qur’an: 109:6)</p>	<p>The context of this verse is the Prophet Muhammad’s ﷺ dialogue with the nonbelievers of Mecca, as such the verse encourages Muslims to engage in dialogue as an opportunity for truth to emerge rather than a doorway to offend those who hold different beliefs. Both the Qur’an and prophetic tradition instruct Muslims, as well as the followers of other faiths, to engage in meaningful dialogue, cooperation, and the agreement of basic principles without hostility.</p>
<p>“Say, O, Mohammad! O, people, Come to a word that is common between us and you”. (2:256)</p>	<p>This verse illustrates Islam’s keen interest in resolving issues in multi-religious communities, as seen in the case of Medina, by spreading the message of peace, justice, and safety to all. The conveyance of this message is to be done through an invitation to dialogue, as indicated by the Arabic word “ta álu,” meaning “come together.”</p>
<p>“Invite all to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and engage with them in ways that are best and most gracious” (16:125).</p>	<p>This verse appeals to Muslims to engage positively with adherents of other religious traditions, sharing their faith to foster mutual understanding and appreciation of each other’s beliefs. The verse uses the words “wisdom” and “beautiful preaching” to underscore the importance of conveying the message in gentle and thoughtful manner, employing wisdom in their interactions. This approach is especially relevant for Muslims in context with religious intolerance and hatred, providing an excellent way to dispel myths and misunderstandings about Islam.</p>

Example of mutual respect towards people of other faith during the Prophet Muhammad’s Time:

During Prophet Muhammad ﷺ's time, there are notable examples of respect toward people of other faith illustrating his commitment to respecting and safeguarding the rights of religious minorities:

1. Hospitality to Christian Delegation: When a delegation of Christians from the Roman Empire visited Prophet Muhammad, he extended a welcoming gesture by inviting them to stay in his mosque. Additionally, the Prophet allowed them to pray according to their own traditions within the mosque, showcasing a spirit of openness and accommodation.
2. Charter of Privilege for St. Catherine Monastery: In the year 628 AD, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ granted a charter of privilege to the monks of St. Catherine Monastery in Mt. Sinai. This charter serves as a testament to the Prophet's respect and tolerance toward other faith communities. The charter contained provisions that ensured the protection and freedom of the monastery and its inhabitants, reinforcing the Prophet's commitment to religious pluralism and coexistence.

3.3 FORB IN RADICALIZATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Muslim affiliated terrorist groups have exploited verses from the Qur'an to justify their engagement in terrorist activities. They often refer to Sura Al Haj, verses 39 – 41 that state:

- Permission to fight back is hereby granted to those being fought, for they have been wronged. And Allah is truly Most Capable of helping them prevail. (40:39)
- They are those who have been expelled from their homes for no reason other than proclaiming: "Our Lord is Allah." Had Allah not repelled the aggression of some people by means of others, destruction would have surely claimed monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which Allah's Name is often mentioned. Allah will certainly help those who stand up for Him. Allah is truly All-Powerful, Almighty. (40:40)
- They are those who, if established in the land by Us, would perform prayer, pay alms-tax, encourage what is good, and forbid what is evil. And with Allah rests the outcome of all affairs. (40:41)

Muslim religious leaders studied the verses and advised that the verses allowed Muslims to fight in self-defence by engaging the combatants and not those not present in the battlefield. Islamic scholars have interpreted these verses to imply that defence in contemporary times means to defend humanity as a whole, not just Muslims. Below are verses that advocate for non-violence.

3.4 WHAT IS JIHAD?

The Arabic meaning of the term "jihad" has no relation to "holy war" or even war in general terms. It derives, rather, from the root j.h.d., and the verbal noun of the Arabic form is "jahada," which means to "strive," "exert oneself," or "take extraordinary pains." Jihad is a determined effort with the aim of achieving God's "sirat al-mustaqim," the path of uprightness, and hence is a praiseworthy action for the sake of Islam and the Muslim ummah (community). The concept of jihad has been highly dynamic and adaptive, and its forms can be divided between the Meccan and Medinan versions.

Qur'an Verse	Explanation and application in Islam and FoRB context
<p>Invite all to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and kind advice, and only debate with them in the best manner. Surely your Lord alone knows best who has strayed from His Way and who is rightly guided (16:125).</p>	<p>This verse was revealed during the Battle of Uhud¹⁸ to Prophet Muhammad, commanding him to end the war peacefully. The emphasis is on the diverse means that can be used to present Islam to non-Muslims without engaging in any form of violence. Examples of suggested non-violent methods for engagement include "hikma," which involves rational and evidence-based arguments and rather than coercion.</p>
<p>There is no compulsion in religion; truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error; therefore, whoever rejects Satan (and what he calls to) and believes in Allah, he indeed has laid hold on the firmest handhold, which shall not break off, and Allah is Hearing, Knowing. (Qur'an 2:256)</p>	<p>This verse emphasizes the importance of freedom of religion, underscoring the need to respect the choice of other human beings and protect their religious freedom. It prohibits Muslims from forcefully converting people to Islam.</p>

¹⁸ The Battle of Uhud was fought between the Muslim community and Quraysh tribe of Mecca in 625 CE. It was marked by severe brutality and torture by the Qurayshi forces, which the Muslims did not reciprocate.

During the early years of Islam in Mecca, when the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and the Muslims were persecuted, jihad mostly addressed sins, especially idolatry and paganism. Therefore, the Qur'an and the hadiths on jihad during the Meccan period mostly deal with a believer's inner "striving" and "struggle" towards a righteous path.

During the Medinan period, the concept of jihad came to include a martial component. In Qur'an 2:190-194, Muslims are given permission to fight the enemy if their lives are threatened but not to commit transgression: "Indeed Allah does not like transgressors."

According to some hadiths, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ referred to jihad of the sword as "lesser jihad," telling Muslim warriors returning from battle that they now faced the "greater jihad" of self-rectification and purification of the heart in peacetime.

It is a misconception to conclude that the conception of classical jihad in both Sunni and Shia traditions rests entirely in the Qur'an and hadiths. In fact, jihad is a product of broad cultural influence over centuries of history and development. Following the end of the Rashidun Caliphate, it was Muslim scholars who defined jihad in the sense of "missionary warfare."

During the eighth and ninth centuries, religious scholars such as Mohammed al-Shaybani and Ja'far al-Sadiq took it upon themselves to develop the context and meaning of jihad for the Islamic community. In part, these thinkers' attitudes and beliefs were heavily influenced by the conquests of the Companions, which expanded the borders of the Muslim world to lands such as Syria, Egypt, and Persia and indeed improved the lives of local non-Muslim populations as well, such as the Christians of Egypt who were spared the oppression that they experienced under Roman rule. Nonetheless, Muslim thinkers distinguished the two forms of jihad by concluding that the struggle against the self is "greater jihad" (*al-jihad al-akbar*), whereas warring in the path of God is "lesser jihad" (*al-jihad al-asghar*).

3.5 ISLAM AND FORB IN SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

While the status of women in many parts of the world has seen advances in areas previously closed to them, the pervasive issue of violence against women persists. Unfortunately, this form of violence transcends national, cultural, racial, and religious borders, affecting women globally. It is important to note that Islam unequivocally condemns all forms of violence against women. The fundamental Islamic principle of equality between women and men cannot be fully realized as long as violence against women continues to prevail. Addressing and eradicating such violence is essential to achieving genuine equality and justice in accordance with Islamic values.

Examples of Gender Based-Violence in Muslim Majority Communities:

- **Rape and Victim Blaming:** Rape is unfortunately a common form of violence against women in some Muslim communities. Disturbingly, victims are often blamed for being subjected to such violence. It is essential to clarify that Islam views rape as a violent crime against the victim, society, and God. The perpetrator bears moral and legal responsibility for committing a crime. The victim, being an unwilling participant forced into the act, carries neither blame nor stigma. Ostracizing or condemning the victim contradicts Islamic laws, as the victim was compelled and, therefore, blameless.
- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):** Female genital mutilation is another form of violence against women, but it is crucial to emphasize that this practice has no basis in Islam. Instead, it is a cultural phenomenon that must be eradicated through education and the empowerment of women. Islam does not endorse or support such harmful practices, and efforts should be made to dispel misconceptions and promote gender equality within Muslim communities.

<p style="text-align: center;">Qur'an Verse</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Explanation and application in Islam and FoRB Context</p>
<p>And among His wonders is this: He creates for you mates out of your own kind so that you might incline towards them, and He engenders love and tenderness between you: in this, behold, there are messages indeed for people who think! (30:21)</p>	<p>In the institution of marriage, both men and women deserve respect and the right to live a life of dignity, free from any form of abuse—whether it be physical, emotional, or financial. Any abuse directed at either spouse within the confines of marriage is deemed unacceptable. To safeguard men and women in Muslim society from such abuse, it is imperative to expose the perpetrators, putting an end to the mistreatment and disrespect, as all members of the community are responsible for each other. Men, women, and religious leaders must unite in defense of those who are abused and disrespected.</p>
<p>As for those of you who [henceforth] separate themselves from their wives by saying, “Thou art as unlawful to me as my mother”, [let them bear in mind that] they can never be [as] their mothers: none are their mothers save those who gave them birth: and so, behold, they but utter a saying that runs counter to reason, and is [therefore] false. But behold, God is indeed an absolver of sins, much-forgiving (58:2)</p>	<p>In the Muslim community, women facing abuse in relationships often hesitate to speak out due to the fear of stigma, embarrassment, and a lack of social and economic support if they decide to leave the marriage. The verse referenced highlights the status of women and emphasizes the need for their honor, especially when marriages come to an end. Islam mandates that husbands treat their wives with respect, explicitly prohibiting any form of physical or emotional abuse. The Qur’an underscores the importance of spouses treating each other with love and mercy, while repeatedly cautioning against the use of injurious statements by husbands against their wives. This emphasizes the Islamic principles of compassion, justice, and equality within the marital relationship.</p>
<p>Examples of how Prophet Muhammad addressed Gender Based Violence in Pre-Islamic era:</p> <p>In pre-Islamic Arabia violence against women began at birth in the form of female infanticide. Islam prohibited the practice of female infanticide. Not only did the Qur’an prohibit this practice, but it also mocks those who view the birth of a girl child with contempt. (16:58-59).</p>	

3.6 THE PROPHET ﷺ'S FAREWELL SERMON

During the Hajj in 632 CE (10 AH), the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ delivered an address that is commonly referred to as his Farewell Sermon.

"O People, lend me an attentive ear, for I know not whether after this year, I shall ever be amongst you again. Therefore, listen to what I am saying to you very carefully and take these words to those who could not be present here today.

O People, just as you regard this month, this day, this city as Sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that you will indeed meet your Lord, and that He will indeed reckon your deeds. Allah has forbidden you to take usury, therefore all interest obligation shall henceforth be waived. Your capital, however, is yours to keep. You will neither inflict nor suffer any inequity. Allah has Judged that there shall be no interest and that all the interest due to Abbas ibn 'Abd'al Muttalib shall henceforth be waived.

Beware of Satan, for the safety of your religion. He has lost all hope that he will ever be able to lead you astray in big things, so beware of following him in small things.

O People, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women, but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives only under Allah's trust and with His permission. If they abide by your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with any one of whom you do not approve, as well as never to be unchaste.

O People, listen to me in earnest, worship Allah, say your five daily prayers, fast during the month of Ramadan, and give your wealth in Zakat. Perform Hajj if you can afford to.

All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over black nor a black has any superiority over white except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim which belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly. Do not, therefore, do injustice to yourselves.

Remember, one day you will appear before Allah and answer your deeds. So beware, do not stray from the path of righteousness after I am gone.

O People, no prophet or apostle will come after me and no new faith will be born. Reason well, therefore, O People, and understand words which I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the Qur'an and my example, the Sunnah and if you follow these you will never go astray.

All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and may the last ones understand my words better than those who listen to me directly. Be my witness, O Allah, that I have conveyed your message to your people."

The Prophet's Farewell sermon emphasized principles for FoRB

1. Honour the life, dignity, and property of others:

The Prophet ﷺ equated the sanctity of life and humankind with this sacred month, emphasizing the importance of humanity and the value of respecting one another's rights in Islam. This includes respecting people's property, even in positions of authority. In a religiously diverse society, reverence and respect are due to all, valuing people's rights, recognizing sacredness of lives.

2. All human beings are equal, free from injustice and oppression:

Throughout the sermon, the Prophet ﷺ emphasized the importance of rights for all humankind. Humans are judged solely based on their righteousness, irrespective of religion, gender, race, colour or socioeconomic status. The Prophet ﷺ stated that no nation is superior, and differences among humankind is meant to improve relations and foster mutual learning.

3. Recognize the rights of women: The Prophet in his mission reformed several pre-Islamic patriarchal practices that allow women to have a voice and present grievances allowing them to play a significant role in the development of Islam. In the farewell sermon, the Prophet ﷺ emphasizes that men and women are partners and are meant to complement one another. It means that they each have rights and responsibilities over each other and have a responsibility of creating a harmonious environment free of any form of violation. The sermon emphasizes that women are not the property of men, and their rights are given by God and cannot be taken away.

4. Practice the true teachings of Islam: The Prophet ﷺ in the sermon reminded Muslims that there are two primary sources to guide the lives of Muslims – the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

3.7 THE MARRAKESH DECLARATION

In January 2016, a significant event took place in Marrakesh, Morocco, where more than 300 Muslim religious scholars, including both Shia and Sunni representatives, as well as scholars from other faiths, convened to address the rights of religious minorities in the Muslim majority states. This gathering resulted in the Marrakesh Declaration, which is based on the famous Madinah Charter, a compelling call for the protection of minority rights, particularly in Muslim majority communities.¹⁹

The Marrakesh Declaration not only addresses human rights issues but also illustrates the harmony between Islamic teachings and international human rights laws. It serves as a valuable tool applicable in religiously diverse contexts, offering Muslim religious leaders and inter-religious collaborators the means to promote shared values and mutual coexistence. The declaration emphasizes the importance of upholding common values in communities marked by religious diversity, irrespective of which religious group constitutes the majority.

The Declaration was intended to address the following challenges:

- **Religious Discrimination and Human Rights Violations:** Religious minorities, both Muslim and Christian, faced discrimination, harassment, and persecution in Muslim-majority countries. Examples include attacks by ISIS on Christian Yazidis and Shia Muslims in Syria and Iraq, targeted violence against Shia Muslims in Pakistan, attacks on Hindus and their temples in Bangladesh, and discrimination against Bahais in Iran based on their faith.
- **Misuse of Islamic Teaching by Terrorists Groups:** The rise of terrorist groups was a concern, particularly those invoking and distorting Islamic teachings to justify violence against ethnic and religious minorities.

¹⁹ See Annex

The declaration aimed to confront the deterioration of human rights conditions in various Muslim-majority regions and combat the use of violence to impose religious values on minority communities, whether Muslim or Christian. The executive summary of the declaration underscores these key points.

"In the Name of God, the All-Merciful, the All-Compassionate

"Executive Summary of the Marrakesh Declaration on the Rights of Religious Minorities in Predominantly Muslim Majority Communities

"25th-27th January 2016

"WHEREAS, conditions in various parts of the Muslim World have deteriorated dangerously due to the use of violence and armed struggle as a tool for settling conflicts and imposing one's point of view;

"WHEREAS, this situation has also weakened the authority of legitimate governments and enabled criminal groups to issue edicts attributed to Islam, but which, in fact, alarmingly distort its fundamental principles and goals in ways that have seriously harmed the population as a whole;

"WHEREAS, this year marks the 1,400th anniversary of the Charter of Medina, a constitutional contract between the Prophet Muhammad, God's peace and blessings be upon him, and the people of Medina, which guaranteed the religious liberty of all, regardless of faith;

"WHEREAS, hundreds of Muslim scholars and intellectuals from over 120 countries, along with representatives of Islamic and international organizations, as well as leaders from diverse religious groups and nationalities, gathered in Marrakesh on this date to reaffirm the principles of the Charter of Medina at a major conference;

"WHEREAS, this conference was held under the auspices of His Majesty, King Mohammed VI of Morocco, and organized jointly by the Ministry of Endowment and Islamic Affairs in the Kingdom of Morocco and the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies based in the United Arab Emirates;

"AND NOTING the gravity of this situation afflicting Muslims as well as peoples of other faiths throughout the world, and after thorough deliberation and discussion, the convened Muslim scholars and intellectuals:

"DECLARE HEREBY our firm commitment to the principles articulated in the Charter of Medina, whose provisions contained a number of the principles of constitutional contractual citizenship, such as freedom of movement, property ownership, mutual solidarity and defense, as well as principles of justice and equality before the law; and that, "The objectives of the Charter of Medina provide a suitable framework for national constitutions in countries with Muslim majorities, and the United Nations Charter and related documents, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, are in harmony with the Charter of Medina, including consideration for public order.

"NOTING FURTHER that deep reflection upon the various crises afflicting humanity underscores the inevitable and urgent need for cooperation among all religious groups, we

"AFFIRM HEREBY that such cooperation must be based on a "Common Word," requiring that such cooperation must go beyond mutual tolerance and respect, to providing full protection for the rights and liberties to all religious groups in a civilized manner that eschews coercion, bias, and arrogance.

"BASED ON ALL OF THE ABOVE, we hereby: Call upon Muslim scholars and intellectuals around the world to develop a jurisprudence of the concept of "citizenship" which is inclusive of diverse groups. Such jurisprudence shall be rooted in Islamic tradition and principles and mindful of global changes.

"Urge Muslim educational institutions and authorities to conduct a courageous review of educational curricula that addresses honestly and effectively any material that instigates aggression and extremism, leads to war and chaos, and results in the destruction of our shared societies;

"Call upon politicians and decision makers to take the political and legal steps necessary to establish a constitutional contractual relationship among its citizens, and to support all formulations and initiatives that aim to fortify relations and understanding among the various religious groups in the Muslim World;

"Call upon the educated, artistic, and creative members of our societies, as well as organizations of civil society, to establish a broad movement for the just treatment of religious minorities in Muslim countries and to raise awareness as to their rights, and to work together to ensure the success of these efforts.

"Call upon the various religious groups bound by the same national fabric to address their mutual state of selective amnesia that blocks memories of centuries of joint and shared living on the same land; we call upon them to rebuild the past by reviving this tradition of conviviality, and restoring our shared trust that has been eroded by extremists using acts of terror and aggression;

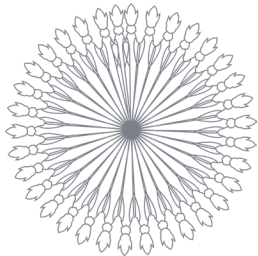
"Call upon representatives of the various religions, sects and denominations to confront all forms of religious bigotry, vilification, and denegation of what people hold sacred, as well as all speech that promote hatred and bigotry; "AND FINALLY, AFFIRM that it is unconscionable to employ religion for the purpose of aggressing upon the rights of religious minorities in Muslim countries.

"Marrakesh
"January 27th, 2016"

The Marrakesh Declaration draws inspiration from the Prophet's Last Sermon, serving as a contemporary adaptation of the farewell sermon. This modern version is designed to address injustices and foster harmonious relations among people of diverse genders, nations, and religions. Rooted in religious principles, the declaration reaffirms the right to citizenship as outlined in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. By invoking these sacred sources, the declaration aims to promote inclusivity, justice, and peaceful coexistence among individuals of different backgrounds and beliefs.

3.8 SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE MARRAKESH DECLARATION AND THE PROPHET’S FAREWELL SERMON INCLUDE:

- Address social challenges and injustices by re-emphasising human and citizen rights in modern Muslim countries by guarantying the rights of religious minorities.
- Promote freedom of religion and co-existence in religiously diverse contexts – it involves cooperation and collaboration between people of different faiths based on mutual respect. It also involves protection of rights and liberties for all religious groups by upholding the international human rights.



Steps toward applying Marrakesh Declaration and the Prophet’s Farewell Sermon in FoRB contexts.

- **Step 1:** Conduct a FoRB analysis in the context to understand the issues affecting religious minorities and violations caused by misinformation and distortion of Islamic values and principles.
- **Step 2:** Engage Muslim religious leaders and actors in contextualizing application of the declaration and the sermon in the context.
- **Step 3:** Identify knowledge gaps and capacity needs among the Muslim religious leaders needed to address the issues from an Islamic perspective and identify how to fill the gaps.
- **Step 4:** Religious leaders engage to identify shared and common values across religious groups that will be the foundation for dealing with FoRB challenges identified.
- **Step 5:** Develop a strategy and plan for Muslim religious leaders to develop religious resources that will be used to sensitize and educate the Muslim community on FoRB issues e.g., developing community narratives against radicalization of youth, a community campaign against sexual and gender-based violence, the responsibility of Muslims on non-Muslims etc.

Space for notes:

Unit 4: How can intra and inter-religious practitioners strengthen engagement for FoRB?

Intra and inter religious collaboration for effective FoRB

Intra and inter-religious engagement occurs through bilateral and multilateral dialogue and action, aiming to build trust and respect within and across religious communities. In the Islamic context related to FoRB, this engagement involves cross religious discourse encounters covering topics such as understanding the religious "other", religion as a factor in community violence, religious collaboration in religiously diverse contexts, among other relevant topics. Meaningful intra and inter – religious engagement and collaboration encompasses the following:

- Intra and inter religious dialogue and theological reflection on issues affecting the context, as a means of developing inter-religious solidarity to promote peace, justice and social cohesion among people of different faiths.

Effective engagement with people of different faiths for a better understanding of Islam and FoRB requires:

- Understanding the complex role of religion in the context.
- Assessing the impact of Islam and the practice of Muslims that impact religious dynamics.
- Mapping and respecting the presence of other religious groups and religious leaders in the context.
- Working on issues from an intra and inter religious perspective.
- Adopting a Do No Harm/conflict sensitivity approach when engaging on Islam and FoRB matters.
- Enhancing the capacity of all religious groups present, regardless of their numerical strength, on issues of Islam and FoRB.

Religious pluralism in Islam and Muslim Societies

Islam recognizes and advocates religious freedom. Its teachings prohibit forced conversion and emphasizes that human beings have the free will to make choices about which religion to belong to. Muslims have the responsibility of conveying the message of Islam, and the individuals make the decision on whether to follow Islam or not.

In contemporary religiously diverse context, sharing the message of Islam, especially in situation where FoRB rights are violated, can help address misconceptions. Moreover, it can also lead to internal conversation of how to interpret religious teachings to address contemporary challenges, utilizing the teachings of Islam and the practice of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Steps toward intra and inter-religious collaboration for FoRB

[In Muslim majority contexts]

Step 1: Establish an intra-religious initiative to discuss FoRB issues in the context – build a coalition of like-minded religious leaders who are open to have difficult conversation on the rights of non-Muslims to practice their religion in the context. Ensure all groups are included in the coalition.

[Checklist]

Are all Muslim sects in the coalition?

Step 2: Organize a reflection session on the status of FoRB in the context – have an honest conversation and identify all FoRB issues. Have an internal dialogue and discussion using an Islamic Framework of renewal in relation to religious diversity.

[Guiding questions for the intra discussions]

1. From an Islamic perspective, how does religious diversity look like in contemporary society?

2. How can Qur'an and Hadith teaching on religious diversity apply in FoRB issues in the community?

3. What are the FoRB issues in the context? List all the issues.

Step 3: Have renewal discussions on the FoRB issues listed in Step 2 and identify Qur'an verses and Hadith that speak to the issues. Reassess outdated religious laws and orders and build consensus on contemporary application of religious laws and orders to address each of the FoRB issue in the context.

Step 4: Develop a strategy and plan for Muslim religious leaders that is contextualized leveraging existing platforms including media to enlighten the community on the need to re-examine outdated religious practice that is violating peoples FoRB rights.

[Additional guiding questions]

1. Which are the Qur'an verses that are misinterpreted, leading to FoRB violations?

2. Which Hadith can we use to address the FoRB violations?

3. What are the different interpretations by different imams on FoRB issue?

Step 5: Engage in inter-religious dialogue to present the position of Muslims on the FoRB issues and develop a plan to jointly engage in inter-religious dialogue and action to address the issues.

[Guiding questions for the inter-religious discussions]

1. Are we conflict sensitive when engaging with people of different faiths?

2. What disputes where religion is a factor and religious stereotypes are there in the context? What is the potential to escalate or initiate conflict between people of different faith groups?

3. How can we engage people of different faiths to ensure that the divisions and tensions that exist do not interfere with FoRB for the different faith groups?

4. What structures exist in the context that are a symbol of unity for the different faith groups that can be leveraged to advance FoRB?

Unit 5: Conflict Sensitive Islam and FoRB

5.1 WHAT IS CONFLICT SENSITIVITY?

Conflict sensitivity is a process that involves understanding how a project in a conflict context interacts with existing conflicts and what the consequences are – either negative or positive. The purpose is to ensure that the project does not escalate existing tensions or create new ones. Instead, this systematic approach to understanding the conflict and context ensures that the project maximizes positive effects and minimizes negative effects by addressing risks and maximizing on opportunities.

The conflict sensitivity process involves:

- Conducting a context and conflict analysis.
- Unpacking the project to understand how it interacts with the context.
- Using this information to avoid negative effects by addressing risks and maximizing positive effects by capitalizing on its opportunities.

Why is conflict sensitivity important for Islam and FoRB? Share your thoughts below:

5.2 CONFLICT SENSITIVITY IS IMPORTANT FOR ISLAM AND FORB BECAUSE:

- In contexts where FoRB projects are implemented experience conflict where religion is a factor and there are human rights violations that affect religious minorities.
- There is a lot of misinformation and disinformation about religious beliefs of different faiths, resulting in negative perceptions and attitudes towards the religious other.
- Wrong interpretations of Islamic religious texts, when applied, lead to gender injustices and inequalities.

5.3 APPLICATION OF ISLAMIC TEXTS

Implementing Islam and FoRB projects effectively in areas with religious tension requires project staff to have the knowledge and skills for conducting a conflict sensitivity assessment to understand how interpretations and application Islamic sacred texts and practices interacts with the context and potential consequences. Conflict sensitivity is conducted and applied alongside existing FoRB programs, including project implementation, advocacy, communication, and a review of activities.

5.4 THE FOLLOWING ARE THE CS STEPS FOR ISLAM AND FORB

Step 1: Conflict analysis requires conducting a systematic and structured assessment to identify the factors driving conflict and violence, the actors involved (including identifying the various religious individuals and groups), their economic, political, social interests, key trends, and any entry points or opportunities to build society’s capacities for dealing with differences or pursuing objectives non-violently.

Step 2: Conflict sensitivity analysis for Islam and FoRB involves using the findings from the analysis to assess how a new FoRB program or ongoing FoRB program activities are interacting with the ongoing conflict(s) by examining the impact of the activities on existing risks and opportunities.

The assessment will determine if the activities or project design will be adjusted to reduce risks of harmful impacts on the conflict, and where opportunities exist, explore how to use that to promote peace and build intra and inter religious relations.

Step 3: Conflict sensitive implementation involves ensuring Islam and FoRB implementing partners can operate in a conflict sensitive manner. This means that conflict situations are updated regularly to capture any changes in the conflict dynamics that may negatively affect project implementation or opportunities that can positively impact the program and the context.

Examples of risks	Possible negative impact on Islam and FoRB program/activities
Religious leaders from different denominations/schools of thoughts in Islam have different interpretations and application of scripture will cause tension, fear, hatred, and segregation of followers of the distinct groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accusations of bias if FoRB program activities involve only one group or has many participants from one group. • Delay in project activities because participants are afraid of openly being associated with the minority group.
Religious discrimination and contentious intra-religious relations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation of only one group among the existing Muslim diverse groups in ForB activities. • Fear of non-Muslim participants to engage in the project to avoid perception of supporting either group.
Examples of opportunities	Possible negative impact on Islam and FoRB program/activities
Consensus among religious leaders from diverse Muslim traditions to work together.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved intra religious relations that strengthen inter religious engagement contributing to social cohesion across faith traditions.
Muslim religious leaders from different schools of thought unite to address misinterpretation and application of Qu'ran and Hadith that leads to gender injustices (e.g. early marriages) and violence (involvement of youth in violent extremism).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved collaboration within and with other religious actors to address violent extremism and deradicalization.

Step 4: Conflict sensitivity monitoring involves a regular refresh of the analysis, monitoring of:

Islam and FoRB Sensitive Conflict Analysis

Islam and FoRB Conflict analysis is a systematic assessment of conflict causes and actors, focusing on how religion acts as a driver or factor in the conflict. In contexts where religion plays a role, conflicts often stem from religious intolerance, discrimination, and violations of Islam and FoRB rights. Examples of religious intolerance include:

- 1. Persecution, discrimination, and violence against people belonging to non-Muslim religious minorities and communities who are defending their individual and community rights to manifest their religion or belief, to change or leave their religion or belief.
- Misinterpretation of religion to prevent minority individuals and groups from constructing houses of worship.

- 2. Instances of blasphemy leading to violence or the desecration of religious symbols.
- 3. Misinterpretation of religious text restricting women and youth from engaging in public affairs.
- 4. Interpretation of religious text to enforce cultural norms that violate individual rights e.g. use of religion to support early child marriages.
- 5. Establishing laws against blasphemy that leads to the targeting of minority religious groups and denying them the space to practice their religion.

FoRB-sensitive conflict analysis assesses how the rights guaranteed in FoRB-manifest in the conflict. Some guiding questions below:

1. Do all actors enjoy freedom of thought, conscience and religion equally?

2. Can individuals change their religion or belief without fear or any risks to their lives?

3. Do individuals have the freedom to manifest their religion and belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance either alone or in community with others and in private or private without fear or risks to their lives?

Annex I: The Islamic Declaration of Human Rights

In the Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

“O’ Mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and have made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another. Surely, the noblest of you with Allah is the one who fears Allah most.”

(The Glorious Qur’an, 49:13).

Believing in Allah, the lord of the worlds, the creator of everything and the giver of all favours, the one who created man in the highest form, bestowed honors upon him, appointed him his successor on earth, entrusted him with cultivating and reclaiming it, charged him with divine duties, and made subservient to man all that is in the heavens and the earth.

Believing in the message of Muhammad ﷺ, as the Messenger of Allah who brought divine guidance and true faith as a mercy for mankind, liberator of the enslaved and destroyer of tyranny and oppression, declared equality for all human beings, admitting no superiority for anyone except through piety, abolishing all differences and hatred among all people whom Allah had created from the same spirit.

Starting from faith in pure Tawhid (Monotheism) on which is founded the structure of Islam, and which invites the entire mankind to worship no one but Allah, and to associate no one with Him and to take no other gods besides Allah, and which lays the true foundation for the real freedom of men and their eternal dignity, protecting the faith, the soul, the intellect, the honor, the wealth and the generation, distinguished for its comprehensiveness and moderation in all its attitudes and judgments, thus producing a linkage between Matter and Spirit, gathering reason and heart together.

Confirming the historical and civilizing role of the Islamic Umma, which Allah designed to be the best, bequeathing to humanity a balanced universal order that links this world with the Hereafter, inter-linking science and faith: what is expected today from this Umma is to guide humanity, contused in the middle of diverse competing currents and beliefs, to undo the chronic difficulties besetting the materialistic civilization.

Participating in the ongoing efforts concerning formulation of human rights which aim at protecting man from exploitation and suppression, and for confirming his freedom and his rights ensuring an honorable life in accordance with the Laws of Islam.

Being confident that humanity having progressed in various fields of the physical sciences to a high degree has been, and will remain, in dire need of economic resources for maintaining its civilization, and also in need of an effective deterrent to maintain close watch over these rights.

And believing that the basic rights and public liberties in Islam are it part of the Muslim's faith and nobody has the right to, wholly or partially, abolish, violate or neglect the divine precepts and duties enjoined by Allah in His Books, and with which He sent His last Messenger, and by which He completed what had earlier been conveyed through divine communications, and whose observance became devotion, and whose neglect or rejection became sin; since everybody is personally responsible for them, and the Umma is, jointly and severally, responsible for them, the member - states of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, consequently declare the following: [page 41]

ARTICLE 1

The human beings are all a single family, joined together in servitude to Allah and filiation to Adam. All people are equal in their original human dignity, obligation and responsibility, without any distinction of race, color, tongue, sex, faith, political beliefs, social status or any other consideration. In fact, following the correct faith is the best guarantee for the development of this dignity and the road to human perfection.

- All creatures are Allah's subjects and the most favored by Him is the one most beneficent to His dependents, and no one is preferred over another, except on the basis of Taqwa (Piety) and good deeds.

ARTICLE 2

Life is a gift from Allah. It is guaranteed to all. Individuals, communities and states are responsible to protect this right against any transgression. No life may be destroyed without due legal process.

It is prohibited to resort to means which annihilate mankind.

Preserving the continuity of human life, as long as Allah wills, is a religious obligation.

The human dead body must be shown due respect; it must not be violated. It may not be subjected to autopsy without proper legal authority, and the states are responsible to ensure that.

ARTICLE 3

In case of war and armed conflicts, it is not permitted to kill those who do not take part in the fighting, such as the old, women and children. The wounded and the sick have the right to be treated, and the captives to get food, lodging and clothing. It is prohibited to mutilate the corpses. Exchange of prisoners should be allowed as well as the rejoining at families separated by the conditions of war.

Cutting trees, damaging seed and breed, destroying the enemy's non-military buildings and installations through bombing, shelling and similar means is prohibited.

ARTICLE 4

Every individual has his personal respect and has the right to protect his reputation during his life and after his death. The state and the society are obliged to protect his body and grave.

ARTICLE 5

The family is the basis for building the society, and marriage is the basis of forming the family. Men and women have the right to marry, which cannot be prevented by such obstructions as race, colour or nationality.

The society and the state are obliged to remove the barriers from the way of marriage, to facilitate it and to protect the family and care for it.

ARTICLE 6

Woman is equal to man in human dignity, and she has rights much as she has obligations. She has her civil status and independent financial resources, and the right to keep her name and lineage.

The man has to carry the burdens of financially supporting his family and be responsible for it and take care of it.

ARTICLE 7

Every child, ever since its birth, has the right over its parents, the society and the state for nursing, education and financial, mental and moral care.

Similarly, the fetus and its mother have the right to protection and specialized care.

The parents or their substitutes have the right to choose the kind of education they wish for their children, taking into consideration their interests and future in the light of moral values and religious precepts.

The parents have rights over their sons, and the relatives have rights over their relatives according to the precepts of the Islamic law.

ARTICLE 8

Everyone has the right to exploit his lawful capacity concerning assigning and undertaking obligations. On losing or diminished legal capacity in law, his guardian acts in his place.

ARTICLE 9

Seeking knowledge is obligatory and providing facilities for learning is an obligation of society and the state. They have to make provision for it. Facilitate its ways and means and ensure its diversities to implement the interest of the society and help man to know the religion of Islam, the facts of the universe and how to exploit them for the good of humanity.

Everyone has the right upon the different establishments of education and learning, such as the family, the school, the university, the mass media and the like, to have them educate man in religion and worldly knowledge affording a thorough and balanced education, strengthening his belief in Allah, respecting rights and obligations, and safe guarding them.

ARTICLE 10

As man is to follow Islam, the religion of the innate nature, it is not permissible to subject him to any kind of compulsion, nor is it permissible to exploit his poverty, weakness or ignorance to force him to convert his faith to another faith or to atheism.

ARTICLE 11

Man is born free, no one may enslave, humiliate, oppress, or exploit him; nor force him to servitude to any other than Allah, the Exalted.

Imperialism in all its manifestations being the worst kind of enslavement, is totally prohibited, and the peoples suffering from it have the right to free themselves from it and gain self-determination. All states and peoples are duty bound to support them in their liberation struggle aimed at liquidating all kinds of imperialism or foreign domination. All peoples have the right to safeguard their independent identity and to control their wealth and natural resources.

ARTICLE 12

Everyone has the right, within the framework of Islamic law, to freely move and choose the place of his residence inside or outside his country. In case of being subject to persecution, he has the right to seek asylum in another country. The country granting him asylum is bound to protect him until he reaches a safe haven, provided that the reason for seeking refuge was not a crime forbidden in religion.

ARTICLE 13

Work is a right guaranteed by the state and the society for whoever is able to work. Everyone has the right to choose the work most suitable for him, with the aim of attaining his and the society's interests. The worker has his rights to security, safety and all forms of social insurance. He is not to be ordered to do what is beyond his capacity, nor is he to be forced, exploited or harmed.

The worker, male or female, has the right to get a fair wage for his work without delay. He is to enjoy his holdings, allowances and the promotions he deserves. He has the duty to be sincere and strict. In case of a dispute between the worker and their employer, the state is obliged in interface to settle the dispute, remove injustice, establish justice and keep equity with impartially.

ARTICLE 14

Man has the right to lawful work without monopoly, cheating or causing harm to oneself and to others. Usury is decisively prohibited.

ARTICLE 15

Everyone has the right to own by lawful means and to enjoy the right to ownership without harming oneself or other individuals or the society. Arbitrary expropriation is not allowed except for the public interests, but for immediately paid fair compensation.

It is prohibited to confiscate or seize property except by order of the law.

ARTICLE 16

Everyone has the right to be benefited by the fruits of his practical, literary, artistic and technical labour, and he has the right to protect his relevant literary and financial interests, provided that the said products are not contrary to religious commandments.

ARTICLE 17

Everyone has the right to live in an environment free from evil and from moral corruption, so as to be able to morally develop himself. The society and the state are obliged to facilitate for them the implementation of this right.

Everyone has the right upon his society and state to receive medical and social care through the provision of public facilities needed by him within the available resources.

The state is to ensure for everyone his right to an honorable life, sufficiently providing for him and his dependents. This covers food, clothing, lodging, education, medical treatment and other basic needs.

ARTICLE 18

Everyone has the right to live in security for himself, his faith, family, honor and belongings.

Everyone has the right to be independent regarding his private affairs in his house, family, wealth and communications. It is not allowed to spy upon him, have an eye on him or offend his reputation. He is to be protected against all arbitrary meddling.

Privacy of residences is to be respected in all cases, and they should not be trespassed unlawfully and without the owner's permission. They should not be pulled down, requisitioned, nor should their dwellers be driven out.

ARTICLE 19

All people, whether rulers or the ruled are equal before the law.

The right to resort to the law is guaranteed to all.

Responsibility is basically personal.

No Offence and no penalty except according to the adjudication by the law.

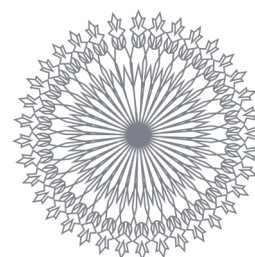
The accused is regarded innocent until he is proven guilty in a fair trial ensuring provision of all that is necessary to defend him.

ARTICLE 20

No one may be arrested, detained, exiled or punished without due process of law. He may not be subjected to physical or psychic duress, nor to any kind of humiliating, cruel and degrading treatment contrary to human dignity. No one is to be subjected to medical or scientific experiments without his consent, and provided that his health and life may not be endangered, nor is it allowed to frame exceptional laws allowing the executive authorities to practice it.

ARTICLE 21

Taking a person as hostage is prohibited in any form and for any purpose.



ARTICLE 22

Everyone has the right to steely express his opinion in a way not contradicting the principles of the law.

Everyone has the right to enjoin good and forbid evil according to the Islamic regulations.

Publicity is a vital necessity for society, but it is forbidden to be exploited and misused, or to abuse sacred religious sanctuaries or show disrespect to the prophets and whatever may disgrace higher values and cause society to be disorganized, disrupted, harmed, or to forsake faith.

It is not allowed to instigate national and religious hatred, and whatever may stir racial discrimination in different forms.

ARTICLE 23

Authority is a trust; it is emphatically prohibited to, be despotically practiced; or to be misused, since it is guarantee for basic human rights.

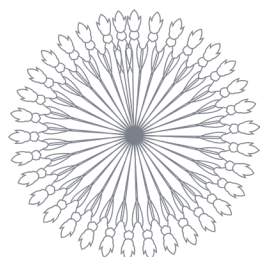
Everyone has the right to take part in the management of the country's general affairs, directly or indirectly. He also has the right to hold public posts according to rules and regulations.

ARTICLE 24

All the rights and liberties stated in this Declaration are in accordance with the precepts of the Islamic Law.

ARTICLE 25

The Islamic law is the only source for the interpretation or explanation of any Article of this Declaration.



Annex 2: The Covenant of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ with Christians

The Covenant of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ with Christians.

In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful and seeking help from Him

Copy of the Covenant which Muhammad bin Abdullah, The Messenger of Allah may peace and blessings be upon him, has written.

To all Christians.

This is a letter which Muhammad bin Abdullah has sent to all people.

He is the giver of good news, a Warner, a trustee on the trust of Allah regarding His creature, so that people would not have been left with any argument after the Messengers (came) to them. And Allah is Dominant, Wise.

He wrote it to all his people and to all those who believed in Christianity (in the land of the East and West), either near or far, either eloquent or dumb, either known or unknown.

This letter stands as a pledge. Whoever breaks this pledge and goes against it and exceeds what it ordains, is to be considered as a breaker to the pledge of Allah and His covenant and a ridiculer of His Deen.

He will bring curse upon him. It doesn't matter whether he be a Sultan or anyone else from among the Muslims, the Believers.

If a monk or Pilgrim takes shelter in a mountain, valley or a cave or a populated area, or a plain or sand or Synagogue I would be behind them to protect them from their enemy. By myself and my helpers and my people and my followers as if they are my subject and those in my protection. I will remove the harm from them.

Regarding such provision on which the people of covenant are asked to pay tax except what they pay with their own pleasure. They are not to be forced and no compulsion is allowed at all.

No bishop is to be removed from his diocese, nor any monk from his monastery, nor the one confined to his cell for it, nor a pilgrim from his pilgrimage.

No house belonging to their churches or Synagogues is to be demolished. No money belonging to the Church is to be used in building a mosque or a house of a Muslim.

Whoever does any of that has broken the pledge of Allah and opposed His Messenger.

No tax nor penalty is to be asked of any Monk or Bishop or the one engaged in worship. And I am there to protect them wherever they are in the land or in the sea, in East, west, north or south. They are in my protection and my covenant and my security from any type of despised things. Similarly, anyone who devotes himself to worship in Mountains or in sacred places, is not required to pay tax on product nor tithe on their crops. They do not even halve it. They are only to bring out, at the time of harvest, a cup only from each Ardab (equal to 2.500 pounds in weight) according to their own calculations.

They are not to be asked to come out at the time of a battle, nor to pay Jizya (Tax) nor to be treated among those who give Tax on products, those of wealth, assets and trades more than twelve dirham annually. With no one among them is to be forced into labor.

Nor are they to be argued except in the best way. They are to be treated with mercy.

Wherever they go and wherever they are, they are not subjected to any discipline despised (by them).

No Christian woman is allowed to marry a Muslim man except with her consent. She should be allowed to attend prayers in her place of worship. She must not be prevented from observing her religion.

Whoever opposes the pledge of Allah and does contrary to it, has disobeyed His pledge and His Messenger.

They are to be helped to renovate their places of worship, (Synagogues and Churches).

That is a symbol of helping them to carry out their religion in accordance to the spirit of this pledge.

None of them is to be forced to transport weapons but this is the duty of the Muslims to defend them and never go against this pledge till the last hours and the end of the world.

Witnessed to this pledge which Muhammad bin Abdullah, the Messenger of Allah has written to all the Christians and all the conditions which are to be fulfilled, all those whose name and testimony is recorded here in the end:

Ali bin Abi Talib, Abu Bakr bin Abi Quhafa, Umar bin Al Khattab, Uthman bin Affan, Abul'darda, Abdullah bin Masood, Al- Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib, Fudail bin Abbas, Al-Zubair bin Al Awwam -Talha Bin Abdullah Sa'eed bin Mu'az, Sa'ad bin Ubada, Thabit bin Qais, Zaid bin Thabit, Abu Hanifa bin Utba, Hashim bin Utba – (Abdul Azim bin Hasan), Abdullah bin Amr bin Al-As.

And Ali bin Abi Talib wrote this pledge with his handwriting in the Mosque of the Prophet (May peace and blessings be upon him) on third Muharram in the 2nd year of Hijra.

A copy is deposited in the treasury of Sultan and was stamped by Prophet's stamp. It was written on a leather skin.

Blessings be upon those who act upon them. Let him be among those who expect forgiveness from their Lord, Allah.

Annex 3: The Covenant of the Prophet with the Christians of Najran

In the Name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful This is a security document from Allah and His Messenger to those who have been given the Book (Bible) from among the Christians, those who follow the creed of Najran and whoever follows the beliefs of Christianity written to them by Muhammed son of Abdullah, the Messenger of Allah to all people, a covenant to them from Allah and His Messenger.

It is a covenant which is entrusted to the Muslims after him (after the Prophet's demise) and which they must comprehend, recognize and safeguard for them. Neither a ruler nor any man who is strengthened by the authority of a ruler has the right to revoke it, nor to replace it with something else, nor to overburden the believers (Muslims) with anything other than the terms stated in this document. Anyone who safeguards it, observes it and fulfils its contents is surely on the straightforward covenant and is loyal to his commitment to the Messenger of Allah. And anyone who reneges on it or changes it to something else or substitutes it with something else shall bear the burden of his sin, and he is one who betrays the trust of Allah, who reneges on his pledge, who disobeys Him and disobeys His Messenger, and he is counted by Allah among the liars:

FIRST

That I protect them—the Christians—and defend them, their churches, places of worship, places of their prayers, places of the monks, the (sacred) areas which they tour wherever they may be in a mountain or a valley or a cave or a city or a plain or a sandy track.

SECOND

That I guard their religion and their faith wherever they may be, on dry land or on a sea, east or west, with whatever I guard my own self and whatever belongs to me and the followers of Islam from my creed.

THIRD

That I include them in my trust, in my covenant, in my security against any harm or anything shunned or any burden or any responsibility, and that I shall be behind them to protect them from any enemy that intends to harm me and their own selves, to do so with my own self, with my supporters, with my followers, with the people who follow my creed.

FOURTH

That I keep away from them any harm of burdens which people who perform jihad bear, from any assault or khiraj (land tax) other than what they willingly pay without being forced or coerced into doing any such thing.

FIFTH

That I do not remove a bishop from his bishopric, nor a monk from his monastery, nor a pilgrim from his pilgrimage, nor demolish any of their churches, nor let any construction of a mosque infringe on their own buildings, nor should any house of the Muslims do so; anyone who does any of these things reneges from his covenant with Allah, disobeys His Messenger and swerves from the covenant of Allah.

SIXTH

Neither a monk nor a bishop, nor any of them who worships or wears woolen clothes or seeks solitude in the mountains or in areas that are isolated from cities should ever be required to pay any jizya (protection tax) or khiraj.

SEVENTH

Whoever follows the Christian faith must not be forced into becoming a Muslim; mercy must be spread for them and anything harmful must be kept away from them wherever they may be in the land.



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