



# 2024 Year in Review



The Network  
for Religious  
& Traditional  
Peacemakers





# Dear Friends and Fellow Peacebuilders, Greetings of Peace.

As we reflect on 2024, we are inspired by the global call for change, driven by a collective desire for a more just, peaceful, and inclusive world. This past year has highlighted the strength of communities coming together to address inequality, resolve conflicts, and support those displaced, reinforcing our shared commitment to foster inclusive, sustainable peace.

However, the start of 2025 has brought devastating hardships worldwide as a direct result from the United States' government freeze on foreign assistance. This funding plays an imperative role in providing assistance worldwide, often reaching the most vulnerable communities. The immediate impacts of the freeze were felt around the world, with the most dire impacts yet to come. We will continue to closely monitor the situation and its impacts, especially on our members and supporters. Now, more than ever, we must come together in 2025 to advocate for the lifesaving importance of foreign funding and explore new development approaches that are more flexible, responsive, and sustainable.

As we enter into 2025, we would like to acknowledge the progress we have collectively made as a network due to the enduring support and dedication of our partners and supporters. Since the Peacemakers Network's inception in 2013, the Centre for Peace Mediation of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs Finland and Finn Church Aid have championed our mission and supported our growth. We are sincerely grateful for their continued collaboration, as well as the steadfast support of the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman and KAICIID Dialogue Center, whose partnership has been instrumental in amplifying the voices of local peacebuilders and advancing the role of religious and traditional actors in peacebuilding. We also deeply value the unwavering commitment of our members, supporters, and other partners, whose trust and generosity sustain our work. Your dedication is the foundation of our progress, enabling us to strengthen the capacity of those on the frontlines of peacebuilding.

From increasing our membership, to convening interfaith dialogues in South Sudan to hosting local town halls on the role of religious actors on mental health and psychosocial support in conflict transformation in Asia and Latin America, our network continues to prioritize collaborative, localized and culturally-relevant solutions.

On behalf of the Peacemakers Network, I extend my heartfelt gratitude for your continued support and collaboration. As we navigate the new impacts to our sector in 2025, let us continue to carry forward the hope and determination that drive our shared mission.

In solidarity and gratitude,

Dr. Mohamed Elsanousi

Executive Director

*The Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers*





# Contents

<b>Strengthening the Membership of the Peacemakers Network .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Members and Supporters Convene to Launch Strategy Renewal .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Collective Action for Sustainable Peace and Engagement with the United Nations .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Advancing Inclusivity .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Regional Programming .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Africa .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Europe, Middle East and North Africa .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>South and Southeast Asia .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Working Groups .....</b>	<b>34</b>



# Strengthening the Membership of the Peacemakers Network

In 2024, the Steering Group confirmed and proudly welcomed seven new members to its membership: the [Association for the Welfare of Women and Indigenous People](#), [Canadian Friends Service Committee](#), [Enable the Disable Action](#), [Interfaith Dialogue Forum for Peace](#), [Nepal Unites](#), [Pakistan Council for Social Welfare and Human Rights](#), and [Re-Imagining New Communities](#).

These organizations bring a wealth of diverse experiences that enrich the Peacemakers Network's collective expertise and strengthen its membership strategy. Representing traditional actors, women-led and youth-led initiatives, and persons with disabilities, their unique perspectives and expertise are instrumental in advancing shared goals and fostering impactful partnerships for sustainable peacebuilding initiatives.





# Members and Supporters Convene to Launch Strategy Renewal

Throughout the Fall of 2024, a series of regional and country-level strategic consultations were held to evaluate the impact of the Peacemakers Network 2020-25 Strategy and shape the next strategic framework for 2025-30. These consultations, a shift from the traditional global Advisory Group Meeting, aimed to deepen localized engagement, strengthen partnerships, and foster greater ownership of the new strategy. Co-hosted by members, the consultations were held in: Nairobi, Kenya; Abuja, Nigeria; Washington, DC, USA; Bangkok, Thailand; and Helsinki, Finland. A final global virtual meeting was held in December.

Through collaborative discussions, participants shared experiences, provided feedback on strategic priorities, and identified opportunities to enhance the Peacemakers Network's role in fostering peace in a multipolar world. Members and partners in Nairobi emphasized innovative resource mobilization, inclusive governance, building local capacities, and enhancing trust while in Abuja, conversations focused on Nigeria's complex conflicts, advocating for interfaith and intra-faith dialogue, and women and youth inclusion in peace processes.

*Top photo: Nairobi, Kenya group photo. September 2024.*

*Bottom photo: Abuja, Nigeria group photo. October 2024.*





In Washington, DC, members and supporters underlined the importance of engaging religious and traditional actors in peacebuilding and addressing the gaps in defining religions and traditional actors, integrating civic education and intergenerational dialogue in peace initiatives.

In Bangkok, conversations resulted in recommendations in the Peacemakers Network's thematic areas of focus to include peace mediation, dialogue, and reconciliation; deepening inclusivity in peacebuilding through research and analysis; preventing and countering violent extremism, particularly state violence in authoritarian regimes; and advancing environmental stewardship and climate security as an emerging priority.



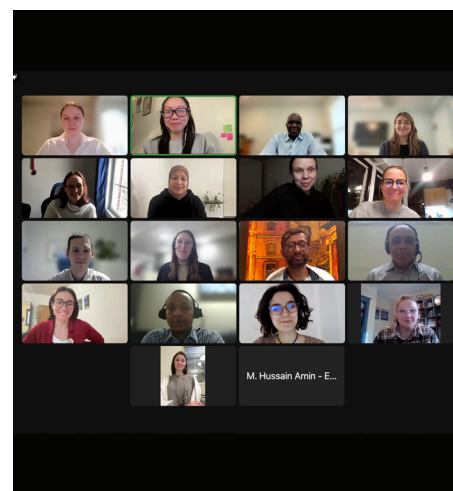
*Top photo: Washington, DC, USA group photo. October 2024.*

*Bottom photo: Bangkok, Thailand group photo. November 2024.*



In Helsinki, members raised the importance of continuing evidence-based programming and proposed prioritizing support for young peacemakers and intergenerational dialogue, climate-induced conflicts and mental health and trauma-informed approaches in peacebuilding.

The 2024 consultations concluded with a virtual global meeting, where members highlighted the need for joint advocacy and amplifying the voices of youth.



*Left photo: Helsinki, Finland group photo. November 2024. Right photo: Virtual consultation. December 2024.*



**Collective Action for Sustainable  
Peace and Collaboration with the  
United Nations**



## Building Partnerships for Peace: Finnish Ambassador Hosts Peacemakers Network's Annual Steering Group Meeting

Hosted by the Finnish Ambassador to the United Nations Elina Kalkku in New York, the annual principal-level Steering Group meeting convened in May 2024, [reaffirming the importance of collaboration in advancing the Peacemakers Network's mission](#). Representing the Steering Committee, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs Finland, United Nations Support Unit, Finn Church Aid, KAICIID, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, United Nations Women, United Nations Development Program, United Nations Population Fund, and the United Nations Office for the Prevention of Genocide convened to review the Peacemakers Network's 2020-2025 strategy, amplify the meaningful inclusion of women and youth, and strengthen partnerships with traditional actors in peace mediation.

The unwavering support and strategic guidance from the Steering Group have been instrumental in enabling the Peacemakers Network to cultivate sustainable peace globally. By fostering partnerships and prioritizing inclusion, the Steering Group ensures the Peacemakers Network's initiatives—ranging from advancing interfaith dialogue to empowering women and youth in peacebuilding—continue to respond to complex global challenges with innovative and impactful solutions.

*Principals of the Peacemakers Network's Steering Group and representatives of the Peacemakers Network meet in New York City. May 2024.*





## Continued Multi-Faith Collaboration for Peace and Security

The Peacemakers Network, alongside fellow Co-Chair member of the Multi-Faith Advisory Council (MFAC), Buddhist Tai Chi Foundation, and in coordination with the UN Inter-agency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development (IATF-Religion), UN Population Fund, the UN Alliance of Civilizations, and the UN Office of the Special Advisory on the Prevention of Genocide, organized the first MFAC-IATF meeting for 2024 at the Baha'i International Community in New York in January 2024. Participants reflected on the collaborative efforts conducted throughout 2023, sharing challenges and lessons learned.



*Members of the Multi-Faith Advisory Council (MFAC) share a group photo post meeting. January 2024.*

## Partnerships for Peace

In a week-long mission in Bangkok in March 2024, leaders from FCA and the Peacemakers Network held discussions with long-standing members and prominent international organizations dedicated to peacebuilding and humanitarian assistance. [From these meetings, it was highlighted](#) that there is a critical need for collective and united action when facing issues prevalent in the region.



*Peacemakers Network and Finn Church Aid leadership and staff with members the Institute of Buddhist Management for the Happiness and Peace Foundation (IBHAP Foundation) and the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB). February 2024.*





*Representatives from Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University; Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration of the US Department of State; Finn Church Aid Somalia and Uganda Country Office; and the Peacemakers Network participate in the panel discussion. Photo: Embassy of Finland in Washington, DC. April 2024.*

## Getting Peace Right: Strategies for Sustainable Peacebuilding and Community Development

In April 2024, the Peacemakers Network, in partnership with the Embassy of Finland in Washington, DC and Finn Church Aid (FCA), hosted a joint event, [‘Getting Peace Right: Strategies for Sustainable Peacebuilding and Community Development’](#). The gathering brought together stakeholders from the U.S. government, DC-based embassies, international organizations, private sector representatives, and civil society to discuss the importance of investing in education, inclusion, and innovative partnerships for strengthening sustainable peace and development worldwide.



*Left photo: Mikko Hautala, Ambassador of Finland to the United States. Photo: Embassy of Finland in Washington, DC. Right photo: Participants at the event. Photo: Embassy of Finland in Washington, DC. April 2024.*





*Left to right photos: Panel from 'Funding the Backlash or the Revolution? Rights, Religious, and Resistance'; Panel from 'Financing Peace for Gender Equality: Advancing the Financing of the 1325 Agenda' March 2024.*

## 2024 United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York

Throughout the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in March 2024, the Peacemakers Network and its partners held three events showcasing women's empowerment through tackling poverty and improving institutions and financing with a focus on gender:

### Funding the Backlash or the Revolution? Rights, Religious, and Resistance

Held as an official side event, this discussion focused on how anti-rights actors are evolving into well-funded movements while progressive movements remain under-funded and left behind. It was organized in partnership with the Global Interfaith Network (GIN-SSOGIE), the ACT Alliance, Act Church of Sweden, and co-sponsored by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Sweden, Canada, and Germany.

### Financing Peace for Gender Equality: Advancing the Financing of the 1325 Agenda

In partnership with the United Religions Initiative (URI), Soka Gakkai International, NGO CSW, and Women in International Security (WIIS), this event focused on what next steps and reforms needed to be taken to refinance reforms aimed supporting peacebuilding and women's rights organizations that led up to the 25th Anniversary of the 1325 Women, Peace and Security Agenda. Discussions stressed the importance of [more inclusive and flexible funding allocation](#), especially directly towards women-led and focused peacebuilding organizations.





*Left to right photos: Panel from 'Financing Peace for Gender Equality: Advancing the Financing of the 1325 Agenda'; Panel from 'The Role of Faith Actors and Institutions in Promoting Gender, Peace and Security.' March 2024.*

### The Role of Faith Actors and Institutions in Promoting Gender, Peace and Security

Partnering with the Centre for Gender in Politics at Queen's University in Belfast, Christian Aid, the Global Interfaith Network (GIN-SSOGIE), the ACT Alliance, and Act Church of Sweden, focused on how to strengthen partnerships and understanding between faith and LGBTQ+ movements and communities through utilizing the [Queering the Women, Peace and Security Toolkit](#).

## **Enhancing Indigenous Peoples' Rights to Self-Determination at the 23rd Session of the United Nations Forum on Indigenous Issues**

In April 2024, the 23rd Session of the UN Forum on Indigenous Issues, the largest global gathering of Indigenous actors, convened at UN Headquarters under the theme "Enhancing Indigenous Peoples' Right to Self-Determination in the Context of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Emphasizing the Voices of Indigenous Youth."



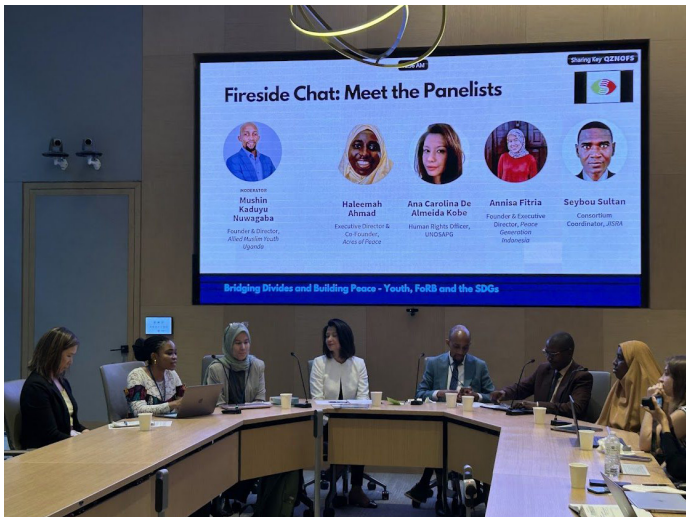
This year, the Peacemakers Network convened two tailored activities designed to support [Traditional and Indigenous leaders in peacebuilding and sustainable development](#). These engagements reinforced the Peacemakers Network's commitment to supporting Indigenous advocacy by fostering collaboration, amplifying Indigenous voices, and advancing actionable outcomes aligned with the forum's recommendations.

*Opening ceremony from World Union of Indigenous Spiritual Practitioners (WUISP) at the United Nations Forum on Indigenous Issues. April 2024.*



## JISRA Youth Advocacy Mission to the UN High Level Political Forum

In building upon the imperative role of youth, the Joint Initiative for Strategic Religious Action (JISRA), a five-year Dutch funded consortium organized a youth advocacy mission to New York during the United Nations High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2024. The JISRA youth delegation hosted a side event that explored [‘Bridging Divides and Building Peace – Youth, FoRB, and the SDGs’](#) which provided a platform for youth to share challenges and opportunities of young people from diverse religious, cultural, and geographic backgrounds.



***“Religious youth often fly under the radar in peace processes due to their lack of formal titles. Yet, they make a profound impact on freedom of religion or belief and the Sustainable Development Goals. It’s time to recognize and support their vital contributions.”***

***– Haleemah Ahmad, Founder of Acres for Peace in Nigeria***

*Left to right photos: Fireside Chat on Bridging Divides and Building Peace – Youth, FoRB and the SDGs; JISRA cohort networking at Global Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security event.*

*Bottom photo: Participants at the High-Level Political Forum share a group photo in New York City. July 2024.*





## United Nations Religion and Mediation Course: Focus on the Americas

The United Nations Religion and Mediation Course (UNRMC), supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, CSS/ETH Zurich, the United Nations Department for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (UNDPPA) Mediation Unit, and the Peacemakers Network, plays a vital role in enhancing mediation efforts through a lens of inclusion and religion.

This year's program focused on the Americas, utilizing an innovative hybrid approach, beginning with three half-day online training sessions and culminating in a three-day in-person workshop in October 2024 in Bogotá, Colombia. By exploring the narratives around conflict drivers, points of disputes, and historical peacebuilding processes, the course provided participants with tools to address complex challenges in Colombia, Bolivia, and Ecuador. With its emphasis on integrating religious dimensions into mediation, [the UNRMC empowers mediators to foster inclusive dialogue and build sustainable peace in diverse and multi-faith communities.](#)



*Left photo: Panel of the local Women Faith-Based Mediators in Colombia: Challenges and Opportunities Within Peace Mediation event.*

*Bottom photo: Group photo of participants at the United Nations Religion Mediation Course held in Bogotá, Colombia. October 2024.*





## Members and Supporters Participate at the United Nations General Assembly

*Faith-Based Solutions for the Pact for the Future and Beyond. Organizers and participants of the imPACT Coalition side event. September 2024.*



During the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and the accompanying Summit of the Future, [a series of high-impact events](#) actively contributed to advancing inclusive multilateralism and holistic community development. These gatherings underscored the critical role of faith-based and intergenerational collaboration in shaping the Pact for the Future and beyond.

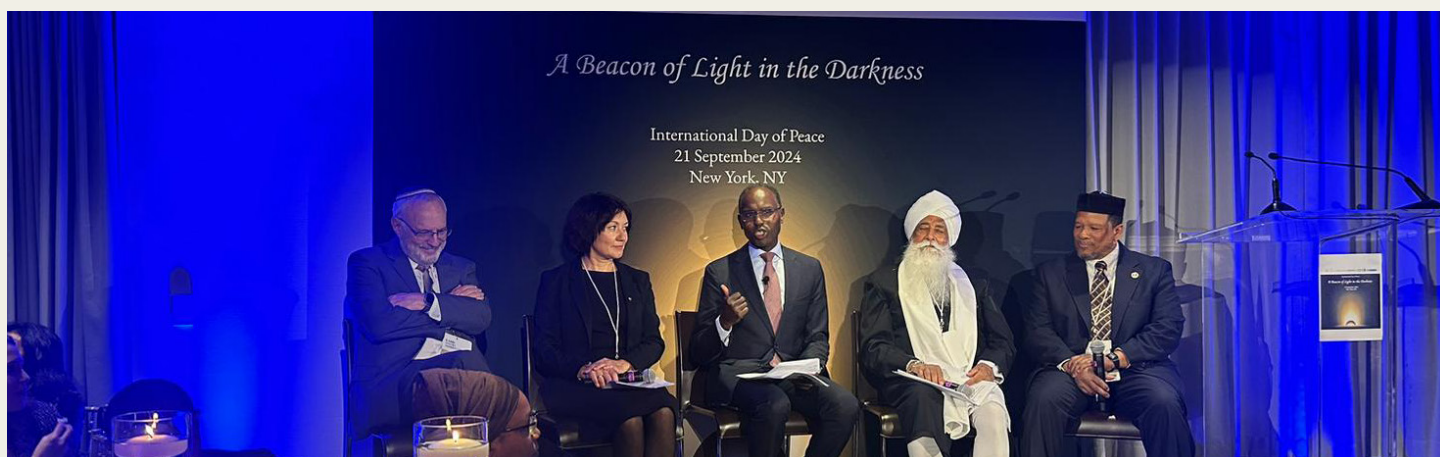
*Top photo: Network youth member Saumya Aggarwal speaking at the Opening Ceremony on Day 2 of the Youth Summit of the Future Action Days. Bottom photo: Participants for the Faith for Our Planet side event. September 2024.*





From side events highlighting faith-based solutions for climate action and equitable development to multi-stakeholder dialogues emphasizing transformative peace and interreligious fraternity, the Peacemakers Network and its partners championed actionable recommendations and grassroots initiatives. Youth voices and interfaith leaders took center stage, offering innovative perspectives on peacebuilding, climate resilience, and digital inclusion.

*Peacemakers Network Executive Director delivers a keynote address. Photo credit: Religions for Peace. September 2024.*



*Top photo: International Day of Peace High-Level Reception with representatives from Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, Lutheran World Federation, Religions for Peace, The Nation's Mosque, and the Peacemakers Network. Photo credit: Religions for Peace. September 2024.*



*Left photo: Secretary-General of Religions for Peace providing opening remarks. Right photo: CEO of the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation and Co-chair of the MFAC highlighted the work of the MFAC during the reception. September 2024.*



## Faith, Ethics, and Artificial Intelligence (AI): Shaping a Future for Global Peace

As part of the UNGA side event, the MFAC hosted a discussion on the ethical implications of AI in peace and security. [Experts stressed the need for transparency, accountability, and faith-based engagement in AI development](#), particularly regarding autonomous weapons. Speakers highlighted the risks of removing human oversight, the push for legal regulations, and the role of diverse perspectives in shaping ethical AI. The event underscored the vital role religious leaders in ensuring technology aligns with moral and humanitarian values.



*Panelists representing religious actors, technology experts, policymakers, and broader civil society convene to discuss the nuances of artificial intelligence and its intersection with religion. September 2024.*

***“The misuse of AI allows for oppressive regimes; religious communities must advocate for strong frameworks for the use of technology and AI in surveillance, and combating violence.”***

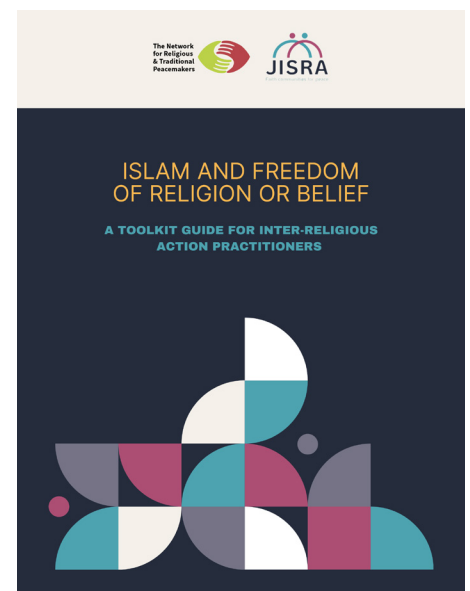
***–Dr. Francis Kuria Kagema, Secretary General at Religions for Peace***

## New Toolkit! Development of Islam and FoRB Toolkit: Guide for Inter-Religious Action Practitioners

Since 2023, the global Joint Initiative for Strategic Religious Action (JISRA) consortium has promoted freedom of religion and belief (FoRB) across seven countries including Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, and Uganda.

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. A new toolkit was [designed for FoRB practitioners, peacebuilders, and policymakers committed to promoting gender equality, mutual respect, and interreligious dialogue](#).

Funded by the Dutch MFA, the JISRA consortium is composed of members including TearFund, Search for Common Ground, Faith to Action Network, and led by Dutch NGO Mensen Met een Missie.



# Advancing Inclusivity



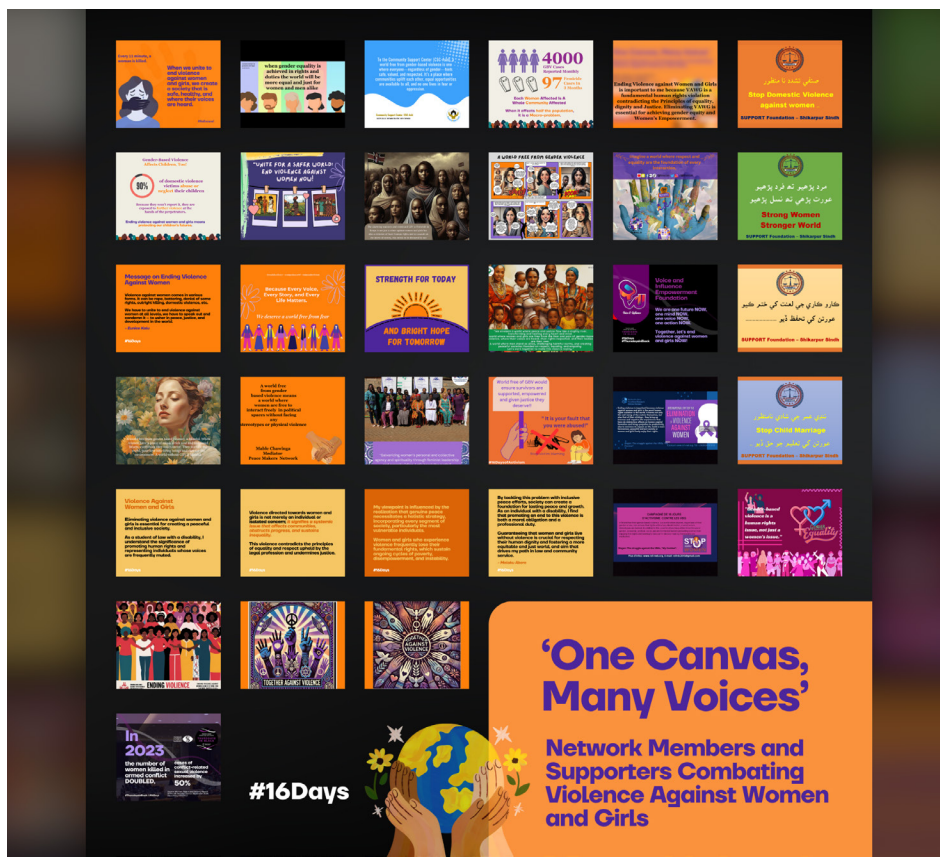
## Training Launch: Religion, Peace Mediation and Leadership for Women Faith-Based Mediators

In May 2024, a [training was held in Accra, Ghana, on religion, peace mediation and leadership for women and young women of faith-based mediators](#) (WFBM) from Ghana, Nigeria, and Cameroon. Hosted alongside the Center for Women, Faith and Leadership and the Sanneh Institute, participants strengthened their personal leadership, acknowledged personal compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma, and unpacked the dynamics of gender, religion, and mediation, and highlighted the important role of male allyship in advancing the leadership of WFBMs.



Women faith-based mediators and negotiators are defined as those, ‘who are working on various tracks for ceasing violence and finding agreements in order to prevent and mitigate violence. In doing this work, their tools and methods are inspired by faith, and/or they are cooperating within or with faith-based structures and/or with faith-based actors, and/or are gaining motivation and inspiration for this work through faith.’ The training was designed to address the capacity-building needs as identified in the Berghof Foundation and the Peacemakers Network’s WFBM study [‘Under Crossfire: The Courageous Work of Women Faith-Based Mediators to Prevent, Mitigate and Resolve Violent Conflicts.’](#)

*Group photo of participants and partners of the Women Faith-Based training in Accra, Ghana. May 2024.*



## One Canvas, Many Voices: A Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls with Network Members and Supporters

In support of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, the “One Canvas, Many Voices,” campaign united Peacemakers Network members and supporters to combat violence against women and girls. Featured on the Peacemakers Network website, [members and supporters shared powerful graphic art and advocacy messages showcasing their commitment to this critical cause.](#)





*Top left photo: A cross-section of Mu Gudu Tare Fellows during one of the capacity building trainings. YIAT. Top right photo: Training of Trainers training of 20 peace champions who will later cascade the knowledge in their respective villages. Nawiri. 2024.*

## Interfaith Dialogue on Violent Extremism (iDove)

Throughout 2024, Interfaith Dialogue on Violent Extremism (iDove) programme provided an intercontinental platform of exchange and learning for youth working on preventing and countering violent extremism and building social cohesion.

Through this initiative, four small grants were awarded across six countries in Africa that embraced a gender transformative approach to preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE). From [empowering young women in Nigeria](#), [challenging harmful gender norms in the Democratic Republic of Congo](#), [amplifying youth to prevent violent extremism in the region of Liptako Region](#), to [promoting gender inclusivity in Kenya](#), these projects have fostered resilience and inspired transformative change.

Through the support of the African Union Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ-GmbH), iDove Intercontinental Youth Forum convened in November in Accra, Ghana, focusing on finalizing the governance structure of iDove and on the thematic training topic of religion and peace mediation.

*Bottom left photo: Participants presenting their action plans for their initiatives in three countries. ONG Recup. Bottom right photo: Group work presenting FliptheScrit approach that support harmful traditional practices and gender inequality. Centre for Human Rights and Governance–Solace. 2024.*





## Youth, Religion and Mediation Course in Muscat, Oman

The third youth cohort participated in the Harmonious Connection Program, hosted in Oman and supported by the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman, and the Peacemakers Network's Youth, Religion and Mediation course held, in partnership with the United States Institute of Peace (USIP). The program maintains an opportunity to bring young leaders from all over the world to [foster interfaith mutual understanding, coexistence, and peace.](#)



*Top photo: Some participants of the Oman Harmonious Connection Program with trainers. November 2024.*

***“Reflecting on this experience, I can confidently say that the Harmonious Connection was a transformative journey. It taught me valuable lessons about teamwork, cultural understanding, and peacebuilding [...] and I look forward to applying the lessons learned as I continue to promote peace and harmony in my community and beyond.”***

***–Joseph Conteh, Programs Officer, Greater Banjul Area at the Gambia YMCA***

*Bottom photo: Group photo of the 2024 YRMC cohorts, partners, and trainers at the Harmonious Connection program in Muscat, Oman. November 2024.*





# Regional Programming

<b>Africa .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Europe, Middle East and North Africa .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>South and Southeast Asia .....</b>	<b>32</b>



# Africa



## Stories for Peace and Social Cohesion

As a final product from the concluded Interreligious Dialogue for Peace and Social Cohesion (ID-Peace) project in Mozambique, a new toolkit, '[Stories for Peace and Social Cohesion](#),' was designed for peace practitioners and mediators to better understand different conflict perspectives from the perspective of six illustrated stories. The stories tell true-to-life experiences with conflict, displacement, inter-religious dialogue, and how everyone can act to build peace and community cohesion. [The ID-Peace project](#) seeks to reduce inter-and-intra communal tensions and related religious freedom abuses by strengthening social cohesion and religious tolerance in Mozambique. English versions are available for wider use across the globe.



*Peacemakers Network Africa team shares key findings from a Conflict and Resilience study in Community Social Cohesion (CSC) project's target districts. May 2024.*

## Diplomatic Briefing and Networking Event in Maputo Showcases Peacebuilding Achievements and Future Opportunities

The Peacemakers Network has been actively promoting social cohesion, religious tolerance, and increasing capacity of civil society actors to address natural resource-based conflicts in Mozambique. In May 2024, a [diplomatic briefing and networking event](#) was held in Maputo, hosted at the Embassy of Finland, bringing together ambassadors and political advisors from Sweden, Portugal, Germany, France, Finland, and the European Union delegation. The briefing highlighted peacebuilding achievements, including findings from the Towards Inclusive and Peaceful Societies ([TIPS](#)) [project](#) evaluation, conflict mapping and community training under the Community Social Cohesion ([CSC](#)) [project](#), and the development of advocacy materials for the Interreligious Dialogue for Peace and Social Cohesion ([ID-Peace](#)) [project](#), while exploring opportunities for continued programming for 2025 and beyond.

## Ringling the Bell for Peaceful South Sudan and Supporting Religious and Traditional Actors on their Peacebuilding and Election Preparedness

In March 2024, the Peacemakers Network, in partnership with Finn Church Aid's South Sudan Country Office and the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC), convened 30 participants in Juba, including religious leaders, women, and youth of faith, to address the now postponed 2024 election, and strategies and strategies for deescalating tensions. The [workshop](#), supported by the Ministry of Peacebuilding Undersecretary, strengthened the role of religious leaders in local peace processes and inspired the Bureau for Religious Affairs to organize a consultative meeting on national dialogue initiatives.

Building on this effort, two policy briefs were developed presenting key findings and recommendations from religious and traditional leaders to national stakeholders and the international community, '[Preparing for Inclusive and Peaceful Elections in South Sudan](#)' and '[Ringling the Bell](#)' a Call for Peaceful Elections in South Sudan'. These briefs have been shared at various advocacy events, including the National Dialogue Forum in Helsinki, Finland, and meetings with the EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa, the EU Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) Regional Focal Point for South Sudan and the UN Commission on Human Rights South Sudan.



## Supporting Religious Leaders in their Contributions to Dialogue, Mediation and Peacebuilding in Sudan

At the start of 2024, the Peacemakers Network, in partnership with United States Institute of Peace (USIP), facilitated a strategic discussion on the role of religious actors in mediating peace in Sudan, ensuring inclusive participation of youth and women alongside traditional leaders. Held alongside a regional peer-learning event organized by USIP, Inclusive Peace, and the African Council of Religious Leaders – Religions for Peace (ACRL-RfP) in Nairobi, the convening set the stage for a two-day meeting in Juba in March 2024. This meeting brought together Sudanese and South Sudanese religious leaders, resulting in a collaborative roadmap with actionable steps to advance peace and end the conflict in Sudan.

*Top photo: Participants at the consultative workshop convened by the South Sudan Council of Churches, Finn Church Aid, and the Peacemakers Network. March 2024.*



*Bottom photo: Religious leaders at the strategic discussion on the role of religious actors in mediation peace in Juba, South Sudan. March 2024.*



## Sahel in Focus: Strengthening the Role of Religious and Traditional Leaders, Women and Youth

In May 2024, the Peacemakers Network, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Finland and the Finnish Embassy to Senegal, convened over 20 religious and traditional leaders, women, and youth representatives from Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, including the Liptako Gourma region to [strengthen their role in conflict prevention and peacebuilding in the Sahel](#).



*Representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Finland, the Peacemakers Network, and religious and traditional leaders and actors from Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso at the Sahel Workshop in Dakar, Senegal. May 2024.*

This consultative workshop enabled participants to advocate directly with policymakers and civil society, highlighting challenges related to extremist violence and fragile states and identifying their specific support needs. The event also facilitated regional connections, fostering shared learning and common solutions, and provided a platform for participants to present key messages to over 25 international stakeholders, donors, and policymakers. As a result, recommendations and key messages from the participants were produced in [English](#) and [French](#).

## Supporting the South Sudan Tumin Peace Process

In 2024, Peacemakers Network and Finn Church Aid supported the role of religious actors in the peaceful transition and in preventing election-related violence. In June, the Peacemakers Network co-organized a [Regional Inter-Faith Consultative Dinner Meeting on the South Sudan elections](#), where esteemed faith leaders from ten African countries were brought together in an effort to amplify the role of religious leaders in mediating peace and addressing the ongoing challenges in South Sudan. The main outcomes of the meeting included a strong commitment from religious leaders to continue collaborating in promoting reconciliation and dialogue in South Sudan.



***“[We the leaders and international communities must unite] to speak for the voiceless citizens who cannot speak for themselves. [We] should be catalysts of peaceful resolution of the conflict.”***

***–Dr. Ayak Chol, Representative of the civil society***

*Participants listening to the panel discussion at the Regional Inter-Faith Consultative Meeting for South Sudan. June 2024.*

## Religious Actors Advance the Implementation of the Marrakech Declaration

As part of the Joint Initiative for Strategic Religious Action Programme (JISRA) a [two-day consultation in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia](#), convened over 20 religious leaders and actors from across Sub-Saharan Africa.



These leaders represented diverse communities and worked to advance the implementation of the Marrakech Declaration (2016). This Declaration was issued by over 300 Muslim scholars, politicians, activists, and interfaith observers as a concerted response to the persecution and violence against ethnic and religious minorities in Muslim-majority states.

*Participants engaging in interreligious dialogue at a two-day consultation in Addis Ababa to advance the Marrakech Declaration. June 2024.*

## Women of Faith Conference: Advocating for Freedom of Religion and Belief in Africa

In June 2024, in partnership with the JISRA Project, the Interreligious Council of Kenya, the African Council of Kenya, the African Council of Religious Leaders, and the Ethiopian Interfaith Forum participated in the Development, Dialogue and Action for the Women of Faith Conference focusing on advancing freedom of religion and belief in Africa.



The Conference held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, provided the opportunity for 24 women of faith from Africa, representing diverse religious traditions to increase their capacity in advocacy training as well as advocacy efforts towards the African Union and other international stakeholders. Further, a one-day training was held on women faith-based mediation, engaging the Political Affairs, Peace and Security division of the African Union within the training. The Conference ended with a [press conference](#), producing a [statement on ending female genital mutilation](#).

*Participants and trainers at the Women of Faith Conference: Advocating for Freedom of Religion and Belief in Africa. June 2024.*



## Bridging Faith and Peace: Insights from the 2024 Religion and Mediation Course in Zanzibar

In September 2024, the Religion and Mediation Course (RMC) equipped 35 participants with tools to analyze the religious dimensions of armed conflicts on the Horn of Africa and the Swahili-speaking Coast of East Africa, with case studies from Somalia, Tanzania, and Kenya. The course facilitated a cross-regional exchange on practical ways of engaging with religion in mediation processes and peacebuilding efforts.



The learning emerging from this course is expected to contribute to the development of widely acceptable governance and peaceful co-existence between communities with different religious and traditional backgrounds. The course was organized together with the Culture and Religion in Mediation Program (CARIM) at the Center for Security Studies ETH Zurich (ETH-CSS), the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA Finland).

*Participants, trainers, and partners at the Religion and Mediation Course (RMC) in Zanzibar. September 2024.*

## Supporting National Reconciliation Through Psychosocial Support, Trauma Healing, and Conflict Resolution and Peacemaking Circles in Somalia

Since 2021, FCA Somalia and the Peacemakers Network have been implementing the MIDDEYE project, meaning “unifier” in Somali, to promote national reconciliation and inclusive governance across Somalia. In collaboration with the Somali Gender Equity Movement, [four regional trainings focused on conflict resolution and peacemaking circles](#), building the capacity of women, the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), Federal Member States (FMS), and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).



In partnership with Green String Network, four psychosocial support and trauma healing sessions trained on the [Well-being and Resilience Framework](#), a healing-focused peacebuilding approach. These sessions engaged key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation (MoIFAR), Ministry of Women and Human Rights, Ministry of Youth and Sports, civil society, traditional elders, and religious leaders, to address the impact of stress and trauma in violence-prone environments.

*Participants in a peace mediation training circle in Mogadishu, Somalia. October 2024.*



# Europe, Middle East and North Africa

## Support Initiatives in Ukraine for Resilience and Interfaith Cooperation

Ukrainian religious leaders, actors and peacemakers were supported in working together more effectively both locally and nationally by convening different collaborative initiatives such as consultation and workshops. The Peacemakers Network's engagement throughout 2024 aimed at supporting Ukrainian communities, including religious communities to have increased resilience in the prolonged war context as well as assisting religious peacemakers in gaining recognition and resources.





## South and Southeast Asia



*Left photo: Youth for Peace International, India. 2024. Right photo: Beydaar Society X Brhythm Creatives, Pakistan. 2024.*

### Asia Small Grants Trained 170 Youth from Across the Region

In 2024, the Peacemakers Network provided [small grants to four youth-led projects advancing peace across Asia](#). In Pakistan, Beydaar Society/Brhythm Creatives trained young religious leaders and activists to counter religiously motivated terrorism through networking and digital campaigns. Digital4Peace Foundation in Thailand equipped youth with media literacy skills to combat misinformation and foster interfaith dialogue. The Myanmar Youth Foundation focused on mental health resilience and interfaith collaboration for Burmese youth along the Myanmar-Southern Thailand border. In India, Youth for Peace International empowered youth leaders in Jaipur to address violence through peace education and community dialogue. These initiatives reflect the Network's commitment to innovative, grassroots peacebuilding.

***“Everything I’ve learned during this fellowship should be shared in my Friday sermons at the mosque, because it’s all about tolerance and peace. [...] It has given me an entirely new perspective on religious norms and values.”***

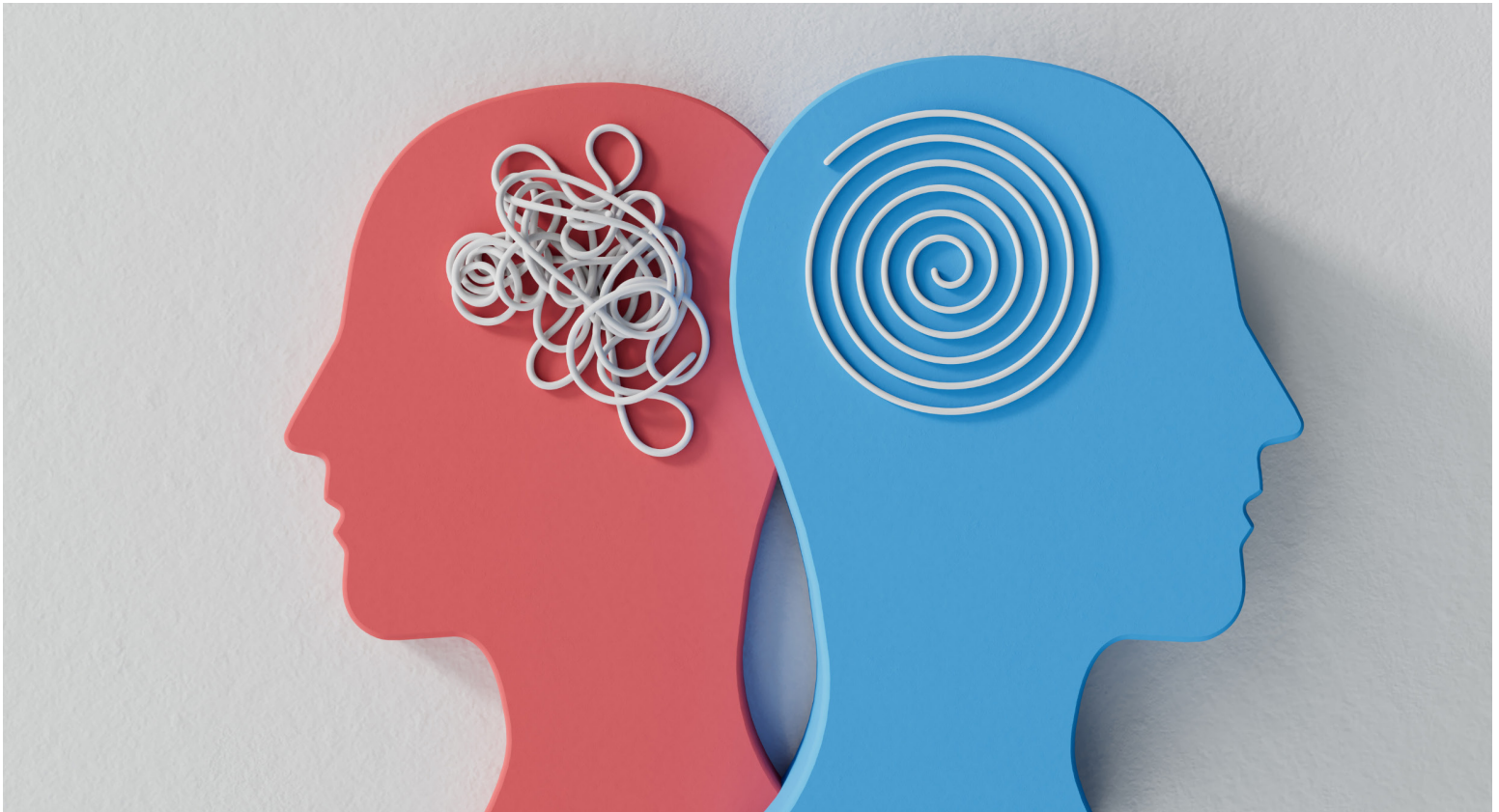
***–Israr Hussain, Young Religious Scholar***

*Left photo: Digital4Peace Foundation, Thailand. 2024. Right photo: Myanmar Youth Foundation (MYF) for SDGs. 2024.*



## Lessons for Addressing Myanmar’s Mental Health Crisis

In partnership with the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) a Focus Group Discussion and Community Readiness Assessment Validation Session was held in March 2024 to inform the ‘Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) for Displaced Trauma Survivors from Burma’ project. Regional actors, including religious actors who serve in conflict-affected communities, [generated recommendations](#), delivering culturally and religiously sensitive recommendations for MHPSS interventions including addressing basic needs and operational constraints, youth support, generational trauma, community-based solutions, culture and gender sensitivity, and addressing stigma surrounding mental health.



## Town Hall on Exploring the Role of Religious Actors in MHPSS and Conflict Transformation

The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) and the Peacemakers Network held a ‘[Mental Health and Psychosocial Support \(MHPSS\) Town Hall](#)’ meeting in August 2024, which shed light on the critical role of religious faith in mental health support for conflict-affected communities. The Town Hall featured case studies from Myanmar, Latin America, and Kashmir, centering discussions on how religious leaders can help heal trauma and foster resilience. With over 30 participants sharing insights, the Town Hall emphasized the importance of collaboration between mental health professionals and faith-based actors.



# Working Groups

## Africa Working Group

The Africa Working Group hosted more than 170 individuals working with peace and conflict prevention in Africa. The first meeting of the year was co-hosted with South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) and focused on ‘Supporting Religious Actors for Peaceful Elections in Sub-Saharan Africa.’ Participants explored the [impact of religious and traditional actors on peacebuilding in South Sudan](#) and shared reflections from their own context working with religious leaders, women, and youth in creating supportive, safe, and transparent election processes. Building on the findings from the synthesis paper ‘Under Crossfire: The Courageous Work of Women Faith-Based Mediators (WFBMs) to Prevent, Mitigate and Resolve Violent Conflict’ from the Peacemakers Network and Berghof Foundation WFBM project, the second working group held a deep-dive session to examine [‘The Vital Role of Women Mediators in Conflict Resolution’](#) in the context of Cameroon, Nigeria, and Uganda. The working group’s final meeting of the year focused on ‘Youth’s Role in Peacebuilding and P/CVE,’ where discussions revealed [critical insights into the evolving challenges and opportunities for youth in peacebuilding and preventing violent extremism](#).



## Asia Working Group

The Asia Working Group 2024 annual plan advanced three thematic focuses: 1) the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) agendas; 2) responding to AWG members’ country contexts; and 3) protection of persons engaged in interfaith actions (including attention to psychosocial support). Throughout 2024, AWG members collaborated in developing a WPS/YPS guide through survey, interviews and focus group discussions. The guide will be completed in early 2025 to inform AWG work in this area and broader peacebuilding efforts.



## Europe and Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Working Group

The Europe and MENA Working Group met for joint reflection and sharing on the escalation of the Israel-Palestine conflict by sharing concrete scriptural and theological examples in how to create an interfaith narrative of peace.



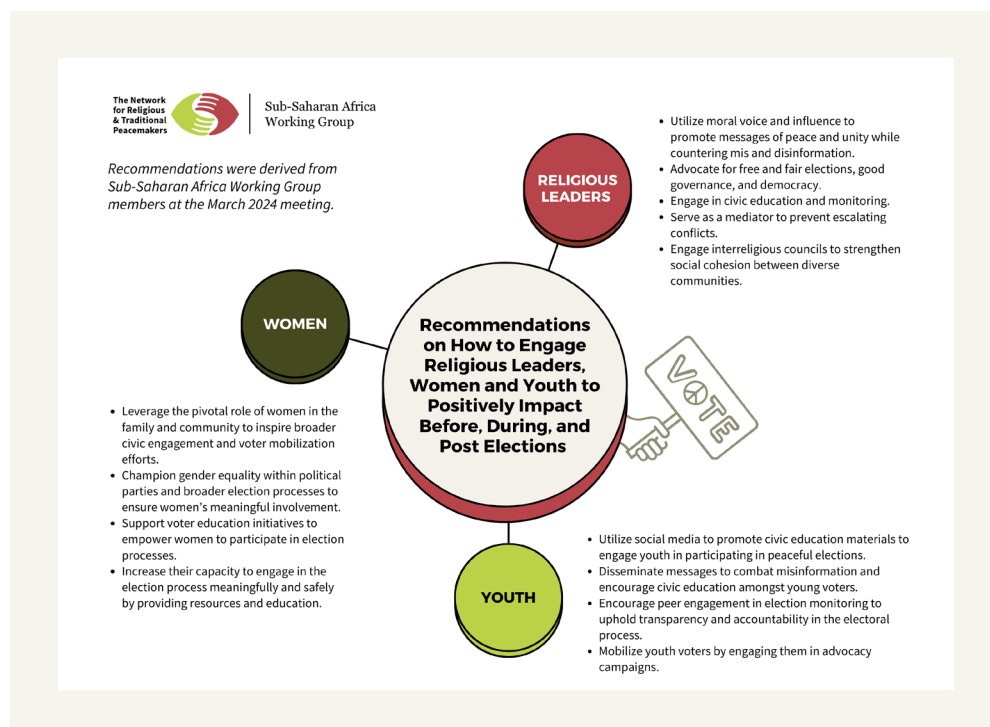
## Inclusivity-based Community of Practice (CoP)

Led by its [Steering Committee](#), the Inclusivity Community of Practice delved into pivotal discussions and actions centered on fostering inclusivity across multiple fronts. The first meeting of the year focused on ‘Promoting the Freedom of Religion and Belief Through the Inclusion of Religious Minorities in Peacebuilding’, and provided a space where members of the CoP shared [how they are advancing the inclusion of religious minorities](#) in their work. With emerging themes like tech and AI being more integrated into peace work, the CoP explored opportunities to ‘Synergize Peace Tech, Inclusion and SDG 16 in Connection to the Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology, and Innovation for the SDGs’, aiming to [understand how peace tech can advance inclusion in peacebuilding](#). The group also explored [how faith and LGBTQ+ communities can form better partnerships](#) to ‘Advance the Inclusion and Rights of LGBTQ+ of Faith in Peacebuilding’, while utilizing the Queering the Women, Peace and Security toolkit, a resource identified from CSW68 engagements. Finally, the CoP convened with Traditional and Indigenous peacebuilders and leaders to learn how we can ‘Strengthen the Inclusion of Traditional and Indigenous Peoples in Peacebuilding Efforts,’ and [form stronger partnerships with Indigenous and Traditional communities and peace organizations](#).



## Key Findings from Working Group Meetings

*“Recommendations on How to Engage Religious Leaders, Women and Youth to Positively Impact Before, During, and Post Elections.” Outcomes from an Africa Working Group meeting. March 2024.*



**The Network for Religious & Traditional Peacemakers | Inclusivity-based Community of Practice**

### How Members of the Inclusivity Community of Practice are Advancing the Inclusion of Religious Minorities

- Practicing the culture of respect, tolerance and inclusion, including through engaging and building the capacities of women and youth of faith.
- Fostering collaboration, partnerships and meaningful engagement with civil society organizations, academics and government or other institutional entities on areas of mutual interest, such as environmental initiatives.
- Deepening the community's understanding on the needs and challenges faced by religious minorities and raising further awareness.
- Advocating for policies and the rights of religious minorities in decision-making processes.
- Increasing religious literacy and education to support understanding of different religions.
- Practicing intra-religious collaboration to strengthen inter-religious collaboration.
- Utilizing faith as a platform for open dialogue.
- Centering efforts around human rights.

*“How Members of the Inclusivity Community of Practice are Advancing the Inclusion of Religious Minorities.” Outcomes from an Inclusivity Community of Practice. March 2024.*

**The Network for Religious & Traditional Peacemakers | Inclusivity-based Community of Practice**

### How Are You Utilizing Peace Technology to Advance Inclusion in your Work?

- Hosting and disseminating information quickly** to those most vulnerable, including those in conflict areas and in refugee camps.
- Organizing collective communication campaigns** to advocate for social cohesion, including through showcasing digital storytelling.
- Organizing training sessions** on how to best use online platforms in an inclusive manner and media literacy for youth.
- Hosting online dialogue activities** to foster trust between communities.
- Offering opportunities for partnership** and mentorship.
- Engaging persons with disabilities** in peacebuilding activities.
- Using social media to gather data** information and opinion polls.
- Showcasing safety maps for peacebuilders and human rights defenders** to help navigate away from physical harm.
- Being intentional through inclusive graphic design.**
- Addressing censorship, hacking and cyberbullying.**

*“How Are You Utilizing Peace Technology to Advance Inclusion in your Work?” Outcomes from an Inclusivity Community of Practice meeting. May 2024.*



**Visit the Peacemakers Network's  
website to learn more:  
[peacemakersnetwork.org](https://peacemakersnetwork.org)**

**Connect with the Peacemakers Network  
over social media!**

