COUNTRY SUMMARY REPORT

Promoting Freedom of Religion or Belief

Current Context and Pathways for Advancing the Implementation of the Marrakesh Declaration in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Mali, Nigeria, Indonesia, and Iraq

JISRA
Faith communities for peace

The Network for Religious & Traditional Peacemakers

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INTRODUCTION

Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) remains a cornerstone of peaceful, inclusive, and resilient societies. Advancing FoRB is not only a moral and legal obligation but a strategic investment in social cohesion, democratic governance, and long-term stability. Recognizing the urgency to translate commitments into transformative action, the Dutch-funded Joint Initiative for Strategic Religious Action (JISRA) is dedicated to advancing the principles enshrined in the 2016 Marrakesh Declaration — particularly the protection of religious minorities in Muslim-majority contexts and the promotion of equal citizenship for all.

This situational analysis, informed by assessments across Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, and Uganda, provides an evidence-based overview of the evolving FoRB landscape. It identifies persistent challenges, emerging opportunities, and critical intervention points. Importantly, it outlines actionable, country-specific priorities that will enable implementers, donors, policymakers, and civil society actors to drive forward the Marrakesh Declaration's vision in ways that are locally rooted, context-sensitive, and strategically coordinated.

To realize the objectives of the Marrakesh Declaration over the next decade, it is essential to develop tailored national roadmaps and action plans that align with each country's specific political, social, and religious dynamics. These plans will serve as guiding instruments to operationalize commitments, prioritize catalytic interventions, and measure progress toward the sustainable institutionalization of FoRB principles.

Through this approach, JISRA reaffirms its commitment to a holistic, multi-sphere strategy: challenging discrimination and extremism within religious communities (intrareligious sphere), strengthening bridges of solidarity between faith groups (interreligious sphere), and engaging state and international actors to ensure structural and policy reforms (extra-religious sphere). By grounding interventions in local realities while adhering to the universal aspirations of the Marrakesh Declaration, JISRA and its partners aim to forge a future where freedom of belief is protected, diversity is celebrated, and peace is enduring.

COUNTRY CASE STUDIES AND COUNTRY-SPECIFIC PRIORITIES

Effective implementation of the Marrakesh Declaration requires approaches that are not only globally inspired but also meticulously tailored to each country's unique political, social, and religious landscapes. In recognition of this, JISRA has strategically collaborated with national partners to identify and co-create priority actions that reflect the Marrakesh Declaration's shared principles while addressing complex local realities.

These country-level strategies are grounded in rigorous, context-driven assessments and are designed to translate the Marrakesh Declaration's commitments into tangible, measurable outcomes. They aim to protect religious minorities, strengthen inclusive citizenship, and advance FoRB, thereby laying critical foundations for resilient, peaceful, and pluralistic societies.

The priority interventions outlined below highlight high-impact strategic entry points, ranging from comprehensive legal and policy reform, civic and interfaith education integration, to grassroots dialogue mechanisms and advanced early warning systems. Each initiative is deliberately designed to be locally owned, gender-responsive, and rooted in faith-based and community legitimacy, ensuring both cultural resonance and long-term sustainability.

For strategic stakeholders, these initiatives provide clear, evidence-based pathways to achieve scalable and systemic impact. By engaging with and supporting these context-specific strategies, partners can directly contribute to transforming the Marrakesh Declaration into a dynamic, operational tool for fostering coexistence, justice, and peace.

The countries profiled below illustrate diverse, locally led approaches to embedding FoRB principles within national governance and community systems. These efforts build on the strong foundations established through JISRA-supported faith structures and partnerships, which concluded in July 2025, representing a compelling opportunity for strategic collaboration toward shared global objectives of promoting religious freedom and fostering inclusive, peaceful societies.

Country	Priority Actions
Ethiopia	Advance nationwide legal literacy initiatives to empower communities on rights and protections; institutionalize interfaith platforms as permanent mechanisms for dialogue and social cohesion; and strengthen the advocacy capacity of religious leaders to influence policy and counter divisive narratives.
Indonesia	Amplify inclusive and pluralistic religious narratives through strategic media engagement; scale multi-faith civic education programs to cultivate a culture of tolerance and mutual respect; and establish comprehensive monitoring and reporting systems to identify and address discrimination proactively.
Iraq	Pursue comprehensive legal reforms to ensure robust protection of religious and ethnic minorities; engage faith actors as key partners in national reconciliation processes; and support grassroots-level peace dialogues to rebuild trust and foster social cohesion in post-conflict settings.
Kenya	Institutionalize interfaith platforms at county and national levels to promote sustained dialogue and collaboration; integrate FoRB principles into civic education curricula to shape inclusive citizenship; and implement targeted awareness campaigns to empower youth and women as champions of religious freedom and peaceful coexistence.
Mali	Strengthen and expand interfaith dialogue initiatives as critical instruments for preventing violent extremism; enhance the capacity of religious leaders to serve as proactive agents in countering extremist narratives; and integrate FoRB frameworks into national stabilization and peacebuilding strategies.
Nigeria	Formulate and implement a comprehensive national FoRB policy framework; introduce trauma-informed educational approaches to address the psychosocial needs of conflict-affected communities; and foster systematic collaboration between religious and traditional leaders, youth, and security actors to build trust and resilience.
Uganda	Expand specialized FoRB training programs targeting religious and traditional leaders to enhance community leadership on religious freedoml establish community-based early warning and response systems to strengthen local peace infrastructures; and mainstream FoRB principles into national development planning and implementation frameworks to ensure inclusive and sustainable societal transformation.

Ethiopia

Implementing the Marrakesh Declaration in Ethiopia presents a complex yet transformative landscape, characterised by both persistent challenges and catalytic opportunities. Ongoing political involvement in religious affairs, including state interference in the selection of religious leadership and the governance of faith-based institutions, undermines the autonomy of religious communities and threatens the realisation of FoRB commitments. Additionally, a limited understanding and internalisation of the Marrakesh Declaration's core principles, equal citizenship, minority rights protection, and interfaith coexistence, constrain the capacity of religious and civil society actors to advocate for and operationalise FoRB effectively.

Nevertheless, Ethiopia's constitutional framework provides a robust legal foundation for the protection of religious rights. At the same time, active interfaith platforms serve as dynamic entry points for advancing dialogue, joint advocacy, and collaborative action. To fully harness these enabling conditions and address the systemic barriers, a set of strategic, high-impact interventions is proposed. Specifically, Ethiopia should advance nationwide legal literacy initiatives to empower communities with knowledge of their rights and protections; institutionalise interfaith platforms as permanent, resilient mechanisms for sustained dialogue and social cohesion; and strengthen the advocacy capacity of religious leaders to influence policy, mobilise constituencies, and effectively counter divisive narratives. These integrated, multi-level strategies will collectively create a conducive ecosystem for realising the transformative vision of the Marrakesh Declaration and fostering a peaceful, just, and inclusive society.

To fully harness these opportunities and address the prevailing challenges, a comprehensive set of integrated, high-impact strategic interventions is proposed to create an enabling environment for advancing FoRB and realising the transformative vision of the Marrakesh Declaration.

Strategic Recommendations for Implementing the Marrakesh Declaration to Advance FoRB in Ethiopia

Invest in Targeted Capacity Strengthening	
Action	Design and implement comprehensive training programs for Muslim religious leaders, women, youth, and civil society actors, emphasising FoRB principles rooted in Islamic teachings that promote pluralism, justice, and peaceful coexistence.
Objective	To empower influential actors with contextualized, rights-based theological frameworks and tailored advocacy tools to effectively localize, operationalize, and advance the principles of the Marrakesh Declaration within their communities.
Recommendation	Develop localized FoRB training toolkits that are carefully contextualized to Ethiopia's diverse religious, cultural, and linguistic landscapes, ensuring relevance, inclusivity, and practical applicability at the community level.

Launch a Straegic Communications and Media Engagement Campaign

Action	Translate the core messages of the Marrakesh Declaration into Amharic, Afaan Oromo, and Tigrinya, and strategically disseminate them through religious radio stations, national and community broadcasters, digital media platforms, and community theatre networks to ensure broad, culturally resonant, and inclusive outreach across Ethiopia's diverse populations.
Objective	To empower influential actors with contextualized, rights-based theological frameworks and tailored advocacy tools to effectively localize, operationalize, and advance the Marrakesh Declaration within their respective communities.
Recommendation	Establish strategic partnerships with credible media institutions and respected faith-based influencers to co-create and disseminate accessible, culturally resonant narratives that highlight the transformative benefits of religious freedom for fostering national unity, social cohesion, and sustainable development.

Institutionalize the Marrakesh Declaration's Principles within National Religious Structures

Action	Forge formalized, strategic partnerships with the Ethiopian Inter-Religious Council and other leading faith-based organizations to systematically embed the principles of the Marrakesh Declaration within their institutional programming, strategic frameworks, and government advisory functions.
Objective	To cultivate resilient, institutional champions for FoRB, ensuring long-term sustainability and impact that transcends individual project cycles.
Recommendation	Support the co-creation of comprehensive interfaith action plans that are fully aligned with the Marrakesh Declaration's vision and Ethiopia's constitutional commitments, thereby reinforcing cohesive, rights-based approaches at both policy and community levels.

Strengthen Legal Literacy and Access to Justice

Action	Launch comprehensive grassroots legal literacy campaigns to educate communities on constitutional protections for FoRB and available mechanisms for redress in cases of discrimination or interference.
Objective	To empower citizens, particularly marginalized faith communities, to actively claim, exercise, and defend their religious rights, thereby strengthening civic agency and social resilience.
Recommendation	Support and scale mobile legal clinics, paralegal networks, and context-sensitive civic education programs specifically tailored to reach rural and underserved populations, ensuring equitable access to justice and fostering inclusive, rights-based community environments.

Foster Inclusive Policy Dialogue and National Advocacy Coalitions

Action	Convene institutionalised, multi-stakeholder forums that bring together religious leaders, civil society actors, legal experts, media representatives, and government officials to collaboratively strategize on advancing FoRB.
Objective	To foster broad-based consensus, enhance mutual accountability, and catalyse coordinated collective action towards the effective implementation of the Marrakesh Declaration.
Recommendation	Establish a National FoRB Advocacy Coalition to harmonize efforts, facilitate knowledge exchange and best practice sharing, and strategically influence policy and legislative reform agendas.

Prioritize Gender-Sensitive Approaches in FoRB Promotion	
Action	Integrate comprehensive gender perspectives across all FoRB programming, recognizing and addressing the intersecting vulnerabilities faced by women from religious minority communities.
Objective	To ensure that FoRB initiatives actively contribute to advancing gender equality and empower women as central change agents in promoting inclusive, rights-based societal transformation.
Recommendation	Forge strategic partnerships with women-led religious and interfaith organizations to mainstream gender-responsive approaches and embed gender equity throughout all programmatic and policy levels.

Advancing the Marrakesh Declaration in Ethiopia necessitates an integrated, multi-dimensional strategy that seamlessly aligns constitutional protections with grassroots mobilisation and institutional anchoring. By investing in targeted capacity strengthening for religious and civil society actors, advancing strategic legal literacy and empowerment initiatives, institutionalizing resilient interfaith platforms, and fostering inclusive policy dialogue, Ethiopia can transform its rich pluralistic heritage into a dynamic engine for advancing FoRB, strengthening social cohesion, and promoting inclusive citizenship.

Policymakers and donor organisations play a pivotal enabling role in actualising this transformative vision. Through strategic, sustained investments, high-level diplomatic engagement, and robust support for locally led initiatives, they can catalyse a broad-based national movement toward a more peaceful, just, and inclusive Ethiopia fully aligned with the spirit and commitments of the Marrakesh Declaration.

Key institutions to take forward the recommendations: *The Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia, Ethiopia Interfaith Forum for Development, Dialogue & Action (EIFDDA), Ethiopia Women of Faith and Interfaith Youth Networks.*

Kenya

Kenya offers a dynamic context marked by both persistent challenges and significant opportunities for advancing and operationalising the Marrakesh Declaration's vision of inclusive citizenship, religious minority protection, and FoRB. A key structural barrier remains the limited dissemination and internalisation of the Marrakesh Declaration's principles beyond urban and elite circles into grassroots communities. Rural constituencies, informal settlements, and traditional governance systems often lack awareness of and engagement with core tenets such as equal citizenship and religious pluralism. Moreover, the continued politicisation of religious and ethnic identities by political actors seeking to consolidate power undermines FoRB efforts, delegitimises interfaith initiatives, entrenches exclusionary narratives, and exacerbates intercommunal tensions.

Nevertheless, Kenya's robust civic space and established interfaith networks present catalytic entry points for transformative progress. Initiatives such as the Women of Faith Network–Kenya, Building Resilience in Diverse Communities through Grassroots Engagement (BRIDGE), and Twaweza exemplify strong capacities for cross-religious solidarity, community resilience, and rights-based advocacy. In addition, the constitutional guarantees for FoRB, enshrined in Article 32 of the Kenyan Constitution (2010), offer a powerful legal foundation for embedding the Marrakesh Declaration's principles into national legislative and policy frameworks. By strategically leveraging these assets, Kenya can serve as a model for integrating FoRB into inclusive governance and social cohesion agendas, thereby advancing a more just, peaceful, and pluralistic society that is fully aligned with the Marrakesh Declaration's transformative vision.

Strategic Recommendations for Advancing FoRB through Implementation of the Marrakesh Declaration

Curriculum Integration and Civic Education	
Action	Establish strategic partnerships with the Ministry of Education, Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), and major faith-based education networks to systematically integrate FoRB and Marrakesh Declaration principles into national, religious, and supplementary educational curricula.
Objective	To institutionalize the values of inclusive citizenship, human dignity, religious tolerance, and non-discrimination among the next generation, creating a foundation for sustained societal transformation.
Recommendation	Co-develop age-appropriate curricular content and comprehensive teacher training modules for madrasas, Sunday schools, and formal education systems. Embed human rights education aligned with Article 32 of the Kenyan Constitution and the Marrakesh Declaration to promote rights-based learning from an early age.

Grassroots Religious Literacy via Digital Platforms	
Action	Design, localize, and disseminate the Marrakesh Declaration inspired religious literacy materials using mobile technology, including WhatsApp, community radio, podcasts, and mobile learning applications, to enhance grassroots accessibility.
Objective	To bridge knowledge gaps at the community level by making FoRB concepts accessible, contextually relevant, and actionable, particularly in marginalized and conflict-prone areas.
Recommendation	Develop localized learning modules in Kiswahili, Somali, and other regional languages, and engage trusted religious influencers to champion, contextualize, and disseminate content. Foster continuous online and offline dialogues to deepen community understanding and ownership of FoRB principles.

Gender-Transforative FoRB Initiatives	
Action	Forge partnerships with women-led faith organizations, progressive Islamic scholars, and interfaith women's networks to mainstream gender equality within religious leadership, peacebuilding, and governance structures.
Objective	To promote the full and equitable inclusion of women in religious, peacebuilding, and governance spaces, in alignment with the Marrakesh Declaration and Kenya's constitutional commitments under Article 27.
Recommendation	Advocate for legal and institutional reforms to enable and protect women's participation in religious leadership. Launch strategic storytelling and media campaigns to amplify faith-aligned narratives on women's leadership and rights, enhancing public support and cultural legitimacy.

Policy Advocacy and Legal Mainstreaming	
Action	Engage key state institutions, including the Office of the Attorney General, National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), and Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) to embed the principles of the Marrakesh Declaration into national peacebuilding, security, and human rights policy frameworks.
Objective	To systematically integrate FoRB into Kenya's governance architecture to ensure religious freedom is protected, promoted, and operationalized through national and county-level mechanisms.
Recommendation	Support the development of a National FoRB Action Plan and integrate FoRB indicators into the National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism (NSCVE). Strengthen County Peace Forums and Community Peace and Security Committees (CPSC) to develop locally relevant, FoRB-sensitive peace and security plans.

Institutionalisation through Faith Councils	
Action	Mobilise major religious councils including Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims (SUPKEM), National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCK), the Hindu Council of Kenya, and evangelical alliances to formally endorse and adopt the Marrakesh Declaration as a guiding framework for interfaith and intra-faith engagements.
Objective	To foster broad-based faith ownership of FoRB principles and establish self-sustaining, institutional mechanisms for interreligious collaboration and advocacy at both national and community levels.
Recommendation	Facilitate the development of joint declarations, codes of conduct, and internal organizational charters that embody the Marrakesh Declaration's values. Organize formal endorsement and public commitment ceremonies to enhance visibility, legitimacy, and societal impact.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Systems

By embedding implementation within Kenya's robust interfaith networks, leveraging mobile and digital technologies for widespread grassroots awareness and education, and adopting a gender-responsive and rights-based approach, Kenya is well-positioned to operationalise and scale the principles of the Marrakesh Declaration. Anchoring these efforts within comprehensive policy and legislative frameworks further strengthens institutional accountability and sustainability. This integrated strategy not only consolidates social cohesion and advances freedom of religion or belief domestically but also positions Kenya as a regional exemplar and influential advocate for peaceful, inclusive, and pluralistic societies across the Horn of Africa. Through adaptive, evidence-driven MEL systems, Kenya can continuously measure progress, inform policy refinement, and catalyse broader regional learning and replication.

Key institutions to take forward the recommendations: Inter-Religious Council of Kenya, Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI), Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM), Jamia Mosque, County Engagement Forums in Nairobi, Northeastern and Coast Counties, Coast Interfaith Council of Clerics (CICC).

Uganda

FBOs and civil society actors in Uganda have emerged as critical catalysts in advancing grassroots education and advocacy on FoRB. Through targeted awareness campaigns and community centred initiatives, these actors have created safe, inclusive spaces that foster religious tolerance, interfaith solidarity, and peaceful coexistence among diverse faith communities. Their work, deeply grounded in relational trust and contextual legitimacy, effectively translates universal human rights principles into locally relevant, actionable narratives that resonate with community values.

Building on this strong foundation, Uganda presents significant strategic opportunities to advance the principles of the Marrakesh Declaration. Active interfaith networks, such as the Uganda Joint Christian Council (UJCC) and the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU), provide established, institutionalised platforms capable of convening diverse religious actors around a unified FoRB agenda. The country's constitutional guarantees of freedom of conscience and religion further reinforce a favourable policy environment for mainstreaming the Marrakesh Declaration's values into national governance and civic life.

However, critical challenges persist, including entrenched religious rivalries rooted in historical grievances, politicisation of religion during electoral cycles, and limited public understanding of FoRB rights and protections. Addressing these barriers requires a comprehensive, multi-dimensional, and locally led strategy that integrates capacity strengthening, inclusive policy dialogue, strategic communication, and sustained community engagement. By adopting such an approach, Uganda can not only advance domestic social cohesion and inclusive citizenship but also position itself as a regional leader and exemplar in promoting peaceful, pluralistic societies aligned with global FoRB commitments and the transformative vision of the Marrakesh Declaration.

Strategic Interventions for Advancing FoRB in Uganda

Expand FoRB-Focused Training for Religious and Traditional Leaders	
Action	Design and implement comprehensive, systematic capacity-building programs for religious and traditional leaders, equipping them with in-depth knowledge of FoRB principles and practical, context-sensitive advocacy skills to effectively promote inclusive, rights-based approaches within their communities.
Objective	To empower trusted community influencers with advanced, rights-based skills and contextually relevant strategies to challenge religious intolerance, promote diversity, and serve as proactive early responders to emerging tensions and act as early responders to emerging tensions.
Recommendation	Establish strategic partnerships with interfaith councils to co-create and deliver tailored FoRB capacity-building modules, fully contextualized to Uganda's socio-religious and political realities, ensuring local ownership and cultural resonance.

Strengthen Faith Diplomacy Between Religious Leaders and Political Actors

Action	Establish strategic, institutionalized relationships between religious leaders and political authorities to promote collaborative governance.
Objective	To integrate FoRB considerations into national governance and policy dialogues, while mitigating the politicization and instrumentalization of religious institutions.
Recommendation	Facilitate regular, high-level interfaith-government dialogues to embed FoRB principles into national development strategies, legislative processes, and peacebuilding frameworks.

Promote Local Community Dialogues on Religious Tolerance

Action	Facilitate inclusive, grassroots dialogue forums that convene diverse religious communities for open, constructive engagement.
Objective	To address deeply rooted misconceptions, prejudices, and fears fuelling religious divisions, thereby strengthening social cohesion and local peace infrastructures.
Recommendation	Collaborate with community-based organizations to convene participatory, inclusive forums that prioritize the voices and leadership of women, youth, and marginalized faith groups, ensuring comprehensive community buy-in.

Develop Community-Based Early Warning Mechanisms for Religious Conflict

Action	Establish localized, community-owned systems to systematically monitor, analyse, and respond to early indicators of religious tensions and conflict risks.
Objective	To enable timely, community-driven conflict prevention and mitigation through proactive mediation and coordinated local response efforts.
Recommendation	Train and equip community champions to manage and operationalize early warning and response mechanisms, integrating them seamlessly with district-level peace committees and national peace architectures.

Mainstream FoRB Considerations into Governance and Development Frameworks		Provide Technical Support to Faith-Based and Civil Society Actors	
Action	Integrate FoRB principles into Uganda's national peacebuilding, education, and governance frameworks to ensure alignment across policy and programmatic levels.	Action	Deliver comprehensive capacity-strengthening programs, technical resources, and mentorship to enhance the institutional and operational effectiveness of FBOs and CSOs engaged in FoRB advocacy.
Objective	To institutionalize religious freedom as a cross-cutting policy priority, safeguarding FoRB socially, legally, and politically within all levels of governance.	Objective	To build resilient, adaptive, and high-impact local actors capable of designing and sustaining transformative FoRB initiatives.
Recommendation	Advocate for the systematic review and revision of national education curricula, peace policies, and governance strategies to explicitly embed FoRB values, reinforcing Uganda's constitutional and international commitments.	Recommendation	Establish a dedicated FoRB capacity-building fund to support local organizations, prioritizing grassroots and marginalized actors, thereby ensuring equitable access to resources and amplifying community-led solutions.

Expand Advocacy and Financial Support for Civic Education Initiatives	
Action	Mobilize and coordinate diverse financial and technical resources to scale up FoRB-focused civic education and public awareness campaigns nationwide.
Objective	To deepen societal understanding, acceptance, and internalization of FoRB principles across all demographics and geographic areas.
Recommendation	Launch multi-platform, multilingual public education campaigns including radio, social media, community theatre, and mobile platforms leveraging foundational texts such as the Medina Charter and the Marrakesh Declaration to contextualize messages and strengthen local relevance.

Train and Support Community Champions for Localised FoRB Advocacy	
Action	Identify, train, and mentor emerging grassroots leaders including youth, women, and influential faith figures to serve as dynamic community-based FoRB advocates.
Objective	To strengthen community ownership, leadership, and sustainability of FoRB initiatives through embedded local stewardship.
Recommendation	Establish a 'FoRB Community Champions Network' to facilitate peer learning, continuous mentorship, and provide targeted micro-grants to support locally driven FoRB advocacy and action.

Integrate FoRB Objectives into Peacebuilding and Reconciliation Programs	
Action	Align and integrate FoRB priorities within national peacebuilding and reconciliation strategies to promote cohesive, cross-sectoral approaches.
Objective	To advance holistic, synergistic frameworks that position FoRB as a foundational pillar of sustainable peace and social resilience.
Recommendation	Incorporate FoRB capacity-building, advocacy, and monitoring components into all donor-supported peace, governance, and reconciliation programs to ensure comprehensive, integrated, and impactful implementation.

Priority Stakeholders

The successful implementation of the Marrakesh Declaration in Uganda depends on mobilising a core group of strategic enablers, including religious leaders, interfaith networks, civil society actors, government human rights agencies, media platforms, and local community champions. These enablers are vital in fostering local ownership, strengthening institutional frameworks, and ensuring continuous capacity development at all levels. By integrating FoRB principles into national policies and community-based structures, Uganda can sustain the Marrakesh Declaration's legacy beyond initial phases and support its wider goals of social cohesion, inclusive governance, and democratic resilience. Leveraging the collective influence and expertise of these enablers positions Uganda to become a regional leader in promoting religious pluralism, justice, and sustainable peace.

Key institutions to take forward the recommendations: *Uganda Muslim Supreme Council (UMSC), Western Uganda Faith based organizations Network, Koogere Foundation, Muslim Youth in Uganda, The Muslim Association at the Mountain of the Moon University.*

Mali

Mali's once-strong traditions of religious coexistence have been severely undermined by the declining security environment driven by violent extremism. In regions affected by conflict, increasing religious tensions diminish community resilience, disrupt intercommunal relations, and heighten mistrust. The decline of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms has created an urgent need for renewed efforts to promote FoRB as a basis for lasting peace.

To address these challenges and advance the Marrakesh Declaration's vision, Mali must adopt a strategic and conflict-sensitive approach that strengthens interfaith collaboration, counters extremist narratives, and embeds the promotion of FoRB within broader stabilisation frameworks.

Strategic Interventions for Advancing FoRB in Mali

Fortify National and Local Interfaith Dialogue Initiatives	
Action	Strengthen and institutionalize existing interfaith platforms while establishing new, inclusive forums to facilitate sustained dialogue among diverse religious communities.
Objective	To promote mutual understanding, rebuild intercommunal trust, and collaboratively address grievances that can be exploited by extremist actors.
Recommendation	Invest in advanced capacity strengthening for interfaith dialogue facilitators and develop sustainable financing mechanisms to ensure long-term operational viability of local interfaith councils.

Empower Religious Leaders to Counter Extremist Narratives	
Action	Design and deliver comprehensive training for Muslim, Christian, and traditional religious leaders on counter-messaging, peace education, and theologically grounded promotion of pluralism.
Objective	To equip religious leaders to proactively challenge extremist ideologies within their faith traditions and reclaim religious narratives in support of peace and coexistence.
Recommendation	Develop tailored training curricula that integrate theological teachings with human rights, non-violence, and peaceful coexistence frameworks, fostering context-sensitive and impactful leadership.

Integrate FoRB Promotion into Broader Peacebuilding and Stabilisation Strategies	
Action	Mainstream FoRB principles into national and international peacebuilding, reconciliation, and stabilization efforts, especially in conflict-affected and high-risk regions.
Objective	To strengthen the social contract, support reconciliation processes, and enhance community resilience against future conflicts and extremist recruitment.
Recommendation	Embed explicit FoRB objectives into peace agreements, post-conflict recovery frameworks, and donor-funded stabilization programs to ensure cohesive and inclusive approaches.

Develop Community-Based FoRB Awareness Campaigns in Conflict-Affected Regions	
Action	Design and implement civic education and public awareness initiatives on FoRB, human rights, and peaceful coexistence tailored to conflict-affected communities.
Objective	To enhance community understanding of FoRB principles, reducing vulnerability to extremist narratives and fostering a culture of tolerance.
Recommendation	Leverage trusted local actors, utilize local languages, and employ culturally resonant messaging to maximize community outreach, relevance, and impact.

Support Trauma-Informed Interfaith Mediation and Reconciliation Programs	
Action	Develop integrated programs that combine trauma healing with interfaith mediation and reconciliation processes.
Objective	Address psychological wounds of violence while rebuilding trust and fostering social cohesion across religious and communal divides.
Recommendation	Partner with local psychosocial service providers and faith-based actors to co-design culturally and contextually adapted interventions that merge mental health support with interfaith dialogue initiatives.

Build Early Warning and Rapid Response Systems for Religious Tensions

Action	Establish robust, community-based early warning mechanisms to identify and monitor emerging religious tensions and extremist mobilization patterns.
Objective	Prevent localized incidents from escalating into large-scale violence through timely, coordinated intervention.
Recommendation	Integrate local early warning systems with district- and national-level rapid response frameworks, ensuring cohesive, multi-level, and timely action.

Provide Technical and Financial Support to Civil Society and Faith-Based Organisations

Action	Enhance the operational, advocacy, and sustainability capacities of local civil society and faith-based organizations working to advance FoRB.
Objective	To ensure community-led FoRB initiatives are resilient, contextually responsive, and impactful in fragile and insecure environments.
Recommendation	Establish flexible, multi-year funding mechanisms and provide comprehensive technical training on project management, strategic advocacy, and conflict sensitivity to strengthen organizational capacity.

Engage Youth and Women in FoRB Advocacy and Interfaith Action	
Action	Actively integrate youth and women as core stakeholders in the design, implementation, and leadership of FoRB initiatives and interfaith programming.
Objective	To broaden societal support for FoRB and harness the transformative potential of traditionally marginalized voices in promoting social cohesion.
Recommendation	Develop mentorship schemes, leadership academies, and targeted advocacy platforms to build the skills, networks, and visibility of youth and women leaders engaged in FoRB promotion and peacebuilding.

Promote FoRB Messaging Through Media and Communication Platforms	
Action	Deploy radio, community media, and digital platforms to disseminate positive, inclusive narratives that promote religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence.
Objective	To counter extremist propaganda and amplify moderate, pluralistic voices across diverse audiences, fostering resilient, informed communities.
Recommendation	Partner strategically with influential media personalities, religious leaders, and social media influencers to mainstream FoRB values and strengthen community resilience both online and offline.

Key institutions to take forward the recommendations: *Interfaith Council for Peace, Alliance of Muslim and Christian Religious leaders of Mali, The National Council for Arabic speakers in Mali, Laboratory for Research on the Arab-Muslim World (laRMA) at Yambo Ouologuem University of Bamako.*

Nigeria

Nigeria represents one of the most intricate and high-stakes contexts for advancing FoRB. Deep-seated religious and ethnic cleavages, particularly pronounced in the Middle Belt and Northern regions — continue to drive intercommunal tensions, cyclical violence, and widespread societal fragmentation. While Nigeria benefits from a robust ecosystem of interfaith platforms dedicated to dialogue and reconciliation, persistent impunity for religiously motivated violence and inadequate enforcement of legal protections undermine public trust and perpetuate cycles of retribution.

Implementing the vision of the Marrakesh Declaration in Nigeria requires a comprehensive, multi-tiered, and conflict-sensitive strategy grounded in systemic transformation. This strategy must prioritise institutional and legal reforms to strengthen the rule of law and accountability frameworks; promote psychosocial healing to address intergenerational trauma and rebuild intercommunal trust; and foster grassroots empowerment to enhance community-led resilience and locally owned peacebuilding mechanisms. Furthermore, cultivating strategic partnerships with faith-based actors, civil society organisations, and state institutions is essential to creating an enabling environment for sustained FoRB advancement.

Nigeria's long-term stability and social cohesion are contingent upon integrating FoRB as a foundational pillar of national peace and security policies, bridging legal protections with psychosocial interventions, and fostering inclusive governance structures that reinforce pluralism and equal citizenship.

Strategic Interventions for Advancing FoRB in Nigeria

Implement a Comprehensive National FoRB Policy wit Robust Enforcement Mechanisms	
Action	Facilitate the formulation, adoption, and operationalisation of a National FoRB Policy that explicitly protects religious freedom, harmonises statutory, customary, and religious legal frameworks, and embeds FoRB into national governance architecture.
Objective	To consolidate legal guarantees, establish clear accountability structures, and deter impunity for religious violations while affirming the state's unwavering commitment to FoRB.
Recommendation	Constitute a high-level multi-stakeholder task force comprising government institutions, civil society actors, religious leaders, and legal experts to co-create the policy framework, oversee its implementation, and monitor compliance across all administrative levels.

Introduce Trauma-Informed Education in Conflict-Affected Areas	
Action	Develop and roll out trauma-responsive educational curricula integrating religious literacy, human rights principles, and peace education within formal and informal learning environments.
Objective	Promote psychological healing, foster resilience, and cultivate empathy and tolerance among individuals and communities impacted by religious violence.
Recommendation	Embed trauma healing and FoRB modules into madrasa, Sunday school, and mainstream public-school systems, ensuring alignment with local cultural and religious contexts.

Foster Collaboration Between Religious Leaders and Security Agencies	
Action	Establish structured partnerships and institutionalised communication protocols between faith actors and security institutions to enable coordinated, community-sensitive responses.
Objective	To mitigate the politicisation of religious identities, strengthen inclusive early warning systems, and safeguard at-risk populations.
Recommendation	Design and implement joint capacity-building programs focused on FoRB sensitivity, community policing approaches, and human rights principles for religious and traditional leaders, youth, and security personnel.

Strengthen Interfaith Dialogue Platforms at State and Local Levels	
Action	Expand, formalise, and sustainably finance interfaith dialogue mechanisms connecting Christian, Muslim, and traditional religious leaders.
Objective	Deepen trust, build resilient social fabrics, and counteract extremist narratives and political instrumentalization of religion.
Recommendation	Provide sustained technical assistance and long-term funding to grassroots interfaith councils, prioritising conflict-prone states.

Develop and Support Community-Based Early Warning Systems	
Action	Establish decentralised early warning mechanisms capable of detecting emerging religious tensions, monitoring hate speech, and triggering rapid preventive interventions.
Objective	To proactively prevent escalation and manage religious conflicts at their inception.
Recommendation	Train local volunteers, youth groups, and religious networks as community-based focal points, linking them to regional rapid response structures and national crisis management systems.

Enhance Legal Literacy on FoRB Among Community Leaders and Citizens	
Action	Launch nationwide legal literacy and rights awareness campaigns targeting traditional authorities, religious figures, and grassroots communities.
Objective	To empower local actors with knowledge of constitutional and legal protections for FoRB and enhance grassroots advocacy capacities.
Recommendation	Collaborate with civil society organisations to co-deliver training workshops, facilitate community dialogues, and disseminate culturally adapted, user-friendly legal toolkits in local languages.

Leverage Media to Promote Positive Narratives of Religious Tolerance	
Action	Engage mainstream and digital media to promote compelling stories of peaceful coexistence, interfaith collaboration, and societal resilience.
Objective	To disrupt divisive narratives and embed religious pluralism as a societal norm.
Recommendation	Design and implement a national multimedia campaign showcasing successful interfaith initiatives, youth and women-led peacebuilding efforts, and local FoRB champions as inspirational figures.

Provide Targeted Support to Youth and Women Peacebuilders	
Action	Strengthen youth and women's leadership capacities, enabling them to act as key advocates and bridge-builders within their communities.
Objective	To harness the transformative potential of youth and women in reshaping social norms, fostering dialogue, and sustaining intercommunal harmony.
Recommendation	Establish dedicated FoRB leadership academies for youth and women, complemented by mentorship schemes, seed funding opportunities, and targeted technical support.

Institutionalize FoRB Principles Within Broader Goverance and Development Agendas	
Action	Embed FoRB objectives across Nigeria's national development strategies, governance reforms, peacebuilding initiatives, and humanitarian frameworks.
Objective	To institutionalise FoRB as a cross-cutting priority integral to human rights, inclusive governance, and sustainable peace.
Recommendation	Advocate for the integration of FoRB-specific indicators within MEL frameworks at both national and subnational levels, ensuring accountability and continuous learning.

Key institutions to take forward the recommendations: *Inter-Religious Council, Inter-Religious Advisory Council, Nasrul-Lahi-il Fathi Society of Nigeria (NASFAT), Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP), Federation of Muslim Women's Association in Nigeria (FOMWAN), Women Wing of Christian Associations in Nigeria (WOWICAN), Muslim Students Society (MSS), Christian Students Society (CSS), Centre for Islamic Civilization and Interfaith Dialogue at Bayero University in Kano and University of Ibadan.*

Indonesia

Indonesia's national philosophy, Pancasila, formally enshrines religious diversity and pluralism as core pillars of its national identity. However, despite strong constitutional guarantees, religious minorities continue to encounter systemic discrimination, social marginalisation, and periodic violence. The inconsistent enforcement of legal protections is often influenced by political expediency and entrenched societal biases that perpetuate a persistent gap between normative commitments and lived realities. This disjuncture undermines Indonesia's social cohesion and threatens the inclusive ethos foundational to its national unity.

Advancing the vision of the Marrakesh Declaration in Indonesia requires a comprehensive, multi-dimensional, and sustained strategy. This strategy must prioritise the promotion of inclusive and pluralistic narratives, institutionalise robust legal and policy frameworks safeguarding FoRB, and deepen grassroots engagement to build local ownership and resilience. Strategic interventions should include strengthening the rule of law mechanisms, enhancing interfaith and intercultural dialogue, empowering vulnerable and minority communities, and fostering cross-sectoral partnerships that bridge government, civil society, and religious institutions.

Through deliberate and coordinated action across these domains, Indonesia can close the gap between constitutional ideals and societal practice, reinforcing its commitment to pluralism and laying a stronger foundation for durable peace and inclusive national development.

Strategic Interventions for Advancing FoRB in Indonesia

Promote Inclusive Religious Narratives Through Mainstream and Social Media	
Action	Design and implement comprehensive multimedia campaigns that amplify positive narratives of interfaith solidarity, religious diversity, and peaceful coexistence.
Objective	To transform public discourse by countering hate speech, religious stereotyping, and misinformation, thereby fostering a culture of acceptance and social cohesion.
Recommendation	Forge strategic partnerships with religious leaders, social media influencers, media houses, and civil society organisations to co-create culturally resonant content across television, radio, print, and digital platforms, explicitly linking FoRB to Indonesia's foundational values under Pancasila.

Integrate Multi-Faith Civic Education into the National Curriculum

Action	Embed FoRB principles and pluralism education systematically within national and local education curricula.
Objective	To cultivate a generation of youth that embraces religious diversity and practices peaceful coexistence as a core societal norm.
Recommendation	Collaborate with the Ministry of Education, religious councils, and curriculum development bodies to co-design age-appropriate, faith-sensitive educational resources aligned with the Marrakesh Declaration and Indonesia's constitutional commitments.

Establish Robust Monitoring and Responsive Mechanisms for FoRB Issues

Action	Develop and operationalise national and subnational monitoring frameworks to systematically track, document, and address religious discrimination and related human rights violations.
Objective	To strengthen accountability, enable data-driven policy interventions, and enhance early warning and rapid response capabilities.
Recommendation	Institutionalise partnerships with civil society watchdog organisations, national human rights commissions, and local government units to ensure mechanisms are inclusive, transparent, and integrated with legal redress and policy reform processes.

Strengthen Legal Literacy on FoRB Among Communities and Local Officials

Action	Launch extensive legal literacy and rights awareness initiatives targeting citizens, community leaders, and local government officials.
Objective	To empower key actors to safeguard and advocate for constitutional and international standards on religious freedom.
Recommendation	Deploy a multi-channel outreach strategy encompassing community dialogues, radio programs, mobile legal clinics, and capacity-building workshops, with a focus on rural, underserved, and high-risk areas.

Empower Religious Leaders as Champions of Pluralisms and Interfaith Cohesion

Action	Provide tailored training, mentorship, and dedicated platforms to strengthen religious leaders' capacity to promote pluralism and mediate interfaith relations.
Objective	To position faith leaders as central actors in advancing social harmony and countering divisive ideologies within their constituencies.
Recommendation	Establish interfaith leadership academies and peer-learning networks to facilitate knowledge exchange, joint advocacy, and collaborative initiatives aligned with the Marrakesh Declaration.

Mobilise the Private Sector in Advancing FoRB and Social Inclusion	
Action	Engage corporate actors, technology firms, and media companies as active stakeholders in FoRB promotion through targeted corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies.
Objective	To broaden the coalition of actors championing religious freedom and inclusive practices beyond the traditional civic and governmental spheres.
Recommendation	Incentivise the adoption of inclusive workplace policies, support for FoRB-focused media initiatives, and private sector sponsorship of multi-stakeholder platforms that reinforce interfaith collaboration and societal pluralism.

Support Youth-Led Interfaith and Peacebuilding Initiatives	
Action	Invest in youth-driven interfaith dialogue platforms, social innovation projects, and leadership development programs.
Objective	To leverage the creativity, digital fluency, and transformative potential of young people to challenge exclusionary narratives and foster community resilience.
Recommendation	Create youth innovation funds, mentorship pipelines, and incubators to support digital storytelling, community-based peace campaigns, and grassroots service projects advancing FoRB values.

Bridging the gap between Indonesia's constitutional ideals and the lived realities of its diverse religious communities necessitates a comprehensive, multi-sectoral, and sustained strategy. Advancing FoRB demands the collective mobilisation of government institutions, civil society organisations, religious leaders, youth, and the private sector as co-architects of social cohesion and pluralism. By operationalising this strategic roadmap through inclusive policy reforms, robust legal and educational interventions, strengthened interfaith leadership, and dynamic community engagement, Indonesia can translate its constitutional commitments into tangible protections and transformative societal norms. In doing so, Indonesia will not only reaffirm its dedication to religious freedom but also fortify the spirit of Pancasila and embody the principles of the Marrakesh Declaration, laying a resilient foundation for inclusive, peaceful, and democratic national development.

Key institutions to take forward the recommendations: *Forum Komunikasi Umat Beragama (FKUB or Interfaith Communication Forum) which is a multi-faith body formed under a government mandate to facilitate communication and cooperation among religious communities and promote tolerance. Organisations such as The International Conference on Religion and Peace (ICRP), Interfidei Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation, Indonesia Women's Ulama Congress and Asian Muslim Action Network (AMAN).*

Iraq

Iraq's religious and social fabric remains profoundly fractured because of decades of violent sectarian conflict. While recent political transitions have created openings for interfaith dialogue and national reconciliation initiatives, religious minorities continue to experience systemic discrimination, forced displacement, and targeted violence. The persistent politicisation of religious identity, frequently instrumentalised for political gain, continues to undermine efforts to foster an inclusive, unified, and democratic Iraqi society.

Strengthening FoRB in Iraq requires a comprehensive, multi-dimensional roadmap that simultaneously addresses legal, social, and political drivers of intolerance while empowering local actors to rebuild relationships across sectarian divides. This strategic approach should prioritise institutional reforms to consolidate legal protections and reinforce accountability mechanisms, alongside social norm transformation initiatives aimed at rebuilding trust and nurturing intercommunal relationships. Furthermore, it should empower religious leaders, youth, and civil society as key stakeholders in peacebuilding and embed FoRB objectives within national reconciliation and development agendas.

By operationalising such a coordinated and context-sensitive strategy, Iraq can begin to bridge deep societal divides, consolidate an inclusive national identity, and lay the foundation for a peaceful, pluralistic, and resilient future.

Strategic Interventions for Advancing FoRB in Iraq

Legal and Policy Reforms to Protect Religious Minorities	
Action	Undertake a comprehensive review and revision of national legislation to explicitly protect religious minorities from discrimination, forced displacement, and violence.
Objective	To harmonise Iraq's domestic legal framework with its constitutional commitments and international human rights obligations on FoRB.
Recommendation	Establish a multi-stakeholder legal reform task force, including representatives from religious minorities, civil society, and human rights experts, to draft and advocate for strengthened protective legislation.

Position Religious Leaders as Catalysts for National Reconciliation

Action	Facilitate structured and sustained engagement of religious leaders in national dialogue processes, reconciliation commissions, and peacebuilding initiatives.
Objective	To elevate religious leaders as credible actors in healing societal divisions and promoting inclusive coexistence.
Recommendation	Develop inter-religious councils at national and local levels tasked with convening reconciliation dialogues and issuing joint communiqués advocating for peaceful coexistence and social cohesion.

Expand Grassroots Interfaith Dialogue and Peacebuilding Initiatives

Action	Establish and strengthen localised interfaith and intercultural dialogue platforms, particularly in conflict-affected and high-risk areas.
Objective	To rebuild trust across sectarian divides, foster empathy, and create collaborative spaces for shared peacebuilding objectives.
Recommendation	Provide targeted technical and financial support to local civil society organisations to lead grassroots dialogue initiatives, ensuring the active inclusion of youth and women as key peace actors.

Develop Early Warning and Rapid Response Systems for Sectarian Violence

Action	Establish robust mechanisms to systematically monitor religious tensions, identify potential flashpoints, and coordinate preventative interventions.
Objective	To Enable timely, coordinated responses to emerging sectarian threats, reducing the risk of escalation and protecting vulnerable communities.
Recommendation	Collaborate with local media, civil society actors, and security agencies to create community-based early warning networks linked to well-resourced rapid response teams.

Strengthen Protection Mechanisms for Religious Sites and At-Risk Communities

Action	Work collaboratively with government authorities and international partners to enhance the security of places of worship and minority neighbourhoods.
Objective	To signal a national commitment to safeguarding religious diversity and deterring targeted attacks against minority communities.
Recommendation	Launch a joint protection program that includes training security personnel on FoRB principles and promoting community-sensitive security practices.

Integrate FoRB into Civic Education and Post-Conflict Reconstruction Programs

Action	Embed FoRB principles into civic education curricula, transitional justice processes, and national reconciliation programs.
Objective	To address the root causes of sectarian violence and foster a rights-respecting, pluralistic culture of citizenship.
Recommendation	Partner with the Ministry of Education and transitional justice bodies to develop FoRB-centred educational modules for schools and community-based learning initiatives.

Promote Religious Coexistence Through Strategic Media Engagement

Action	Launch comprehensive media campaigns that highlight narratives of religious tolerance, solidarity, and national unity.
Objective	To counteract hate speech and sectarian propaganda by shifting public discourse towards acceptance, inclusion, and shared national identity.
Recommendation	Engage leading media outlets, influencers, and digital content creators to amplify positive stories of interfaith collaboration and peaceful coexistence.

Provide Comprehensive Psychosocial Support for Survivors of Religious Violence	
Action	Establish trauma healing programs that integrate culturally sensitive psychosocial support with interfaith reconciliation activities.
Objective	To establish trauma healing programs that integrate culturally sensitive psychosocial support with interfaith reconciliation activities.
Recommendation	Collaborate with health services, religious leaders, and civil society organisations to deliver integrated psychosocial support systems in conflict-affected and high-risk regions.

In Iraq, systemic barriers to the realisation of FoRB persist despite constitutional protections and recent political openings. Addressing these deeply entrenched challenges requires a comprehensive, multi-level strategy that combines robust legal and policy reforms with transformative grassroots initiatives, empowered interfaith leadership, and strategic communication efforts.

Building on Iraq's complex lived realities and informed by community insights, advancing the vision of the Marrakesh Declaration necessitates a deliberate fusion of national-level legal protections, strengthened security frameworks for vulnerable communities, and inclusive social norm transformation. By rooting FoRB initiatives firmly within Iraq's unique social, cultural, and political context and integrating lessons learned from local experiences, stakeholders can create pathways for meaningful and lasting change.

Through this coordinated and context-sensitive approach, Iraq can begin to rebuild trust across sectarian divides, consolidate an inclusive national identity, and create a resilient, peaceful society where religious diversity is both protected and celebrated as a vital pillar of national unity and future stability.

Key institutions to take forward the recommendations: *Peace & Freedom Organisation (PFO), Peaceful Coexistence Commissions in Sheikhan and Kirkuk, Ministry of Endowment of North Iraq, offices of religious leaders in all cities, Peaceful Youth Steering Committees in Kirkuk and Sheikhan, Peace, Religion Supporter Association.*