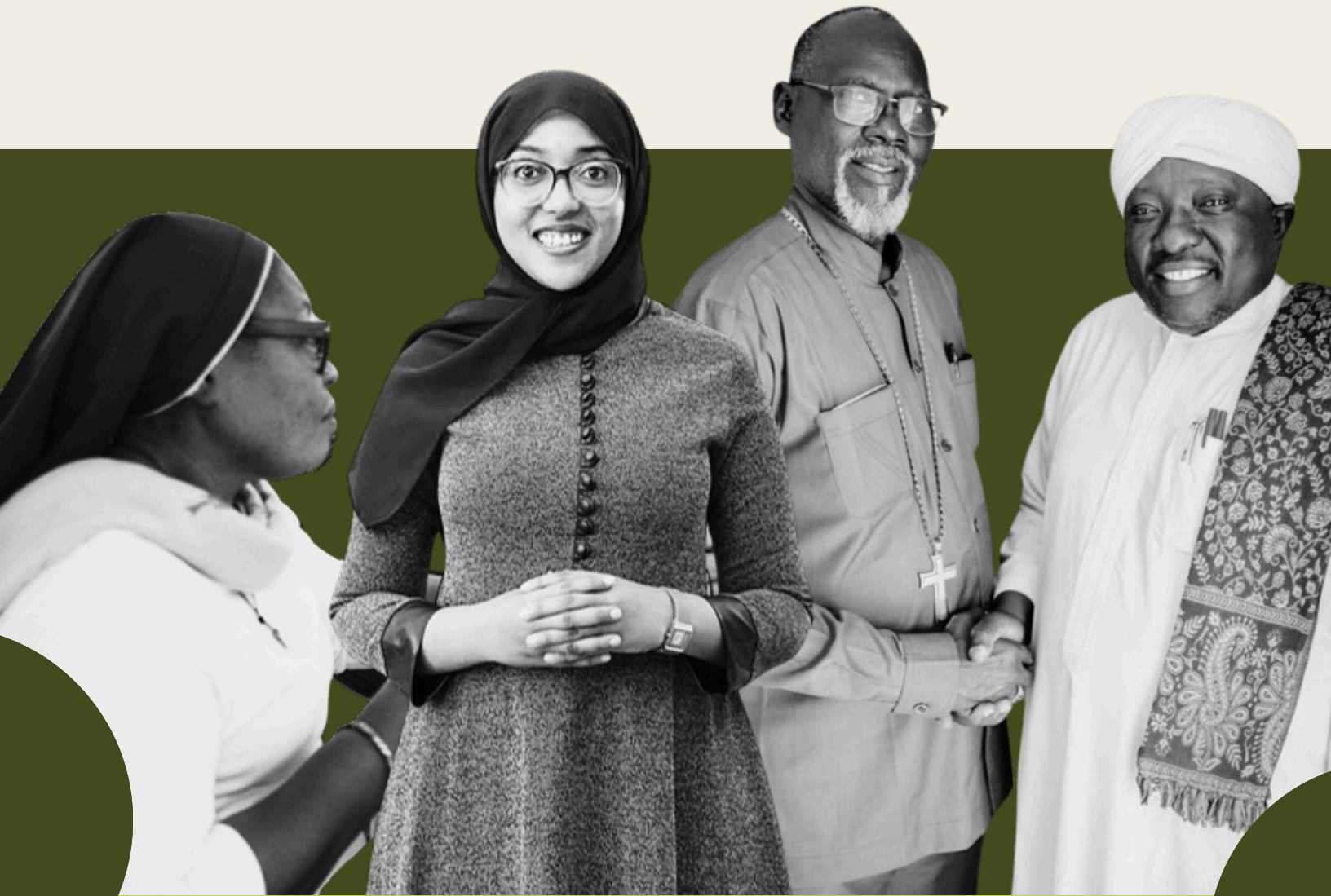


The Network
for Religious
& Traditional
Peacemakers



Ministry for Foreign
Affairs of Finland



15-19 June 2026
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Platform for Traditional and Faith-Oriented
Insider Mediators from the Horn of Africa

Meet the Participants



Ethiopia

Alem Kahsay

Program Director, *Ethiopian Youth
Dialogue for Peace Association*



Alem Kahsay is a sociologist and seasoned peace building professional with over seven years of experience navigating complex social and political landscapes in Ethiopia. Currently serving as the Program Director for Ethiopian Youth Dialogue for Peace Association (EYDPA), Kahsay has dedicated his career to bridging the gap between formal governance and community-led stability. He is an alumni of the IGAD Leadership Academy and holder of various continental awards that positions him among the influential youth leaders in Africa.

His expertise as a mediator is rooted in his ability to facilitate high-level policy dialogue between diverse stakeholders, including government officials, civil society organizations, and youth movements. Most notably, Alem led the co-development of the Addis Declaration on Peace which was adopted and officially endorsed by the FDRE Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, where he mediated youth structures and youth leaders with different stakeholders. His approach to mediation is defined by "digital diplomacy"-utilizing digital literacy and strategic communication to counter misinformation and rebuild social cohesion in crisis-affected regions like Tigray.

Alem views mediation not merely as conflict resolution, but as a constructive tool for regional integration and sustainable development. Whether facilitating local community dialogues or coordinating continental diplomatic forums, he excels at creating neutral, inclusive spaces where marginalized voices-particularly those of women and youth-are prioritized.

Beyond his formal roles, Alem is known for his ability to translate complex issues into actionable, human-centered peace initiatives. His work continues to position him as a vital link in Ethiopia's peace architecture, fostering trust and collaboration across all levels of society.



Ethiopia

Geleta Simesso Denga



Dr. Geleta Simesso Denga is a senior international development and peacebuilding leader with over 20 years of progressive experience in strategic leadership, systems strengthening, and program management within the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, he has held senior roles, including Associate Director for Peacebuilding and Development at a major international NGO, where he successfully managed a grant portfolio exceeding 7 million Euros.

A dedicated advocate for localized development, Dr. Geleta specializes in bridging the gap between community-led initiatives and formal policy frameworks. His expertise is grounded in a "shared heritage of indigenous democracy," focusing on integrating traditional democratic values into formal governance systems to ensure culturally rooted stability. He has a proven track record in high-stakes mediation, including serving as a lead liaison in the Gedeo-West Guji conflict and coordinating multi-disciplinary teams to address complex, religiously-inflicted conflicts.

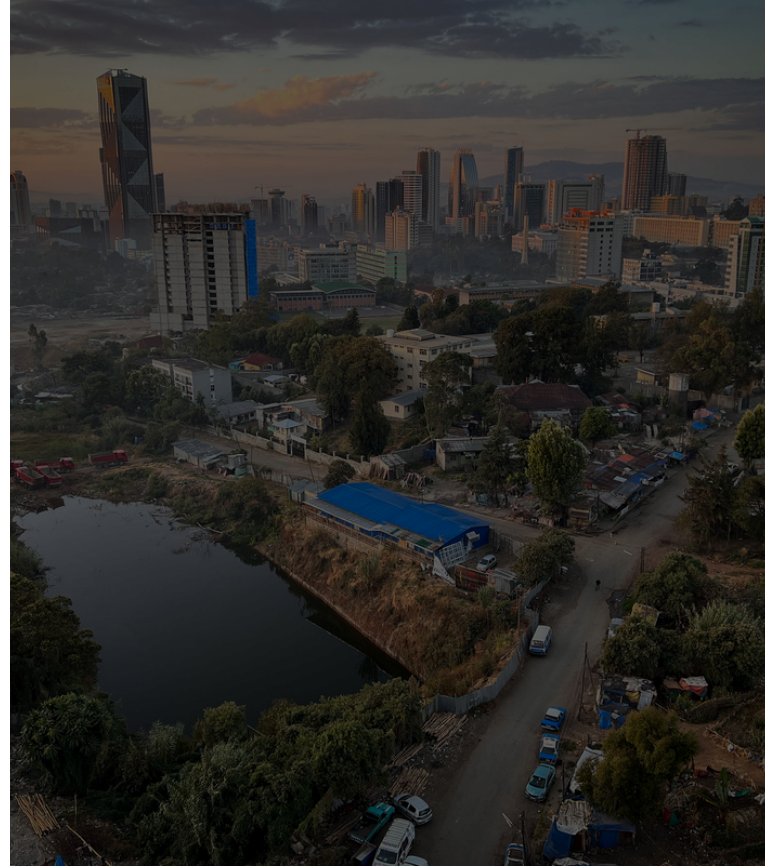
Dr. Geleta holds a PhD in International Peace, Conflict & Development Studies, alongside Master of Arts degrees in Leadership & Change Management and Intercultural Studies. His professional approach is defined by a commitment to evidence-based modeling and the use of Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, and Accountability (MELA) frameworks to demonstrate systemic programmatic impact.

In addition to his technical work, Dr. Geleta is a seasoned mentor and board leader, serving as Board Chairman for a global leadership network chapter and a national community service organization. Fluent in English, Amharic, and Afaan Oromo, Dr. Geleta is committed to empowering the next generation of "insider mediators" and building resilient, institutionalized infrastructures for peace across the Horn of Africa.



Ethiopia

Haji Sultan Mohamed



Haji Sultan Mohamed is a programs coordinator, religious leader, and Freedom of Religion and Belief (FoRB)/human rights lead trainer with over 15 years of experience in peacebuilding, mediation, reconciliation, and community development across Ethiopia. As a mediator, Haji Sultan has successfully facilitated inter-religious and inter ethnic dialogues that ended violent conflicts in southeastern Ethiopia. There, he brought together Abbaa Gadaa (traditional Oromo leaders), Hadhaa Siinqee (women traditional peacemakers), and religious leaders from both Muslim and Christian communities. Through sustained mediation and reconciliation processes, the group transformed devastating conflict into lasting peace, allowing displaced families to return and properties to be rebuilt.

His organization serves as the development wing of the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC). In this role, Haji Sultan provided full operational and technical support to the Ulammas during their successful mediation between the Somali Regional State and Afar Regional State ending recurrent border and resource-based violence.

As a lead trainer, Haji Sultan has delivered training-of-trainers (ToT) on FoRB, human rights, conflict transformation, transitional justice, and reconciliation equipping religious and community leaders across the country. He has also established conflict early warning systems and integrated social media monitoring into peacebuilding strategies to counter online hate speech. He holds an MPH from Jimma University and BSW from the University of Gondar and remains committed to empowering traditional and religious leaders as agents of change and building resilient, harmonious communities in Ethiopia.



Ethiopia

Hulluf Weldesellasie Kahsay

Secretary General's Special Envoy
to the African Union, *ACRL*



Hulluf Weldesilassie Kahsay has over 13 years of experience in peace building, conflict sensitivity and analysis, promotion of interfaith dialogue and peace processes across Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. Kahsay is currently working as the Secretary General's Special Envoy to the African Union with the African Council of Religious Leaders - Religions for Peace (ACR - RfP). His roles at Inclusive Peace (IP), the Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia, and the African Council of Religious Leaders – Religions for Peace (ACRL-RfP) demonstrate a track record of engaging at various levels of peace processes, such as supporting national dialogue, mediating between different parties and prevent violent conflict. This includes high-level advisory functions, insider mediation, conflict sensitivity mainstreaming, women's inclusion in peace processes, and evidence-based analysis.

At Tigray Public Diplomacy group, Kahsay contributes to immediate de-escalation of tension to engaging in activities that promote social cohesion in Tigray and beyond through interfaith harmony, trauma sensitivity, and protection for vulnerable individuals, particularly in post-conflict contexts. He has been involved in regional consultancy and research, covering peace structures, cross-border dynamics in the Karamoja Cluster, and baseline assessments across Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, and Uganda.

In the academic front, he has a MA in Counseling Psychology and is at the thesis stage in PhD in Peace Studies from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA). He also is a board member and East Africa Director with the Canadian Foundation for Refugee Education (CFRE) and member of Tigray Public Diplomacy group that tries to mediate between Tigray and Federal government of Ethiopia. Kahsay has deep contextual knowledge of Ethiopia's and the Horn's socio-political dynamics, interface between peace and faith, governance and climate change.



Ethiopia

Nejat Oumer

Women and Youth Focal Point,
Ethiopian Interfaith Forum



Nejat Oumer is a peacebuilding practitioner with experience mediating conflicts within and between religious communities. In her role as Women and Youth Focal Point at the Ethiopian Interfaith Forum, she has facilitated structured dialogues that bring together diverse religious leaders, faith actors, and community stakeholders to address tensions and foster collaboration. Her approach ensures that women and youth voices are not only included but actively shape mediation processes.

Oumer has led mediation initiatives in different parts of Ethiopia engaging faith communities in addressing intra-religious disputes and building bridges across inter-religious divides and in the National dialogue process. She has designed and tested dialogue toolkits that integrate traditional practices with structured facilitation methods, enabling communities to resolve grievances while strengthening resilience against violence and extremism. Creating safe spaces for trust-building and reconciliation has been central to her work.

Beyond local practice, Oumer contributes to regional and international platforms. As Chair of the East Africa Faith Actors for Gender Justice, she mobilize collective advocacy across the region. Through her role on the EU Delegation's Youth Sounding Board, she influences policy dialogue and advocate for locally owned solutions, ensuring that community perspectives shape international engagement. Oumer is also a member in the IGAD Community of Practice on PCVE and have represented Ethiopian interfaith women and youth in international spaces.



Somalia

Abdisalam Ahmed

Senior Advisor for Reconciliation
and Governance, *FCA Somalia*



Abdisalaam Ahmed holds a master's degree in International Conflict Management from IDIS, University of Nairobi, Kenya, LLM and a postgraduate diploma in legal studies at the Somali National University, with a bachelor's degree of Islamic Studies and Arabic at the Somali National University. Additionally Ahmed holds postgraduate diplomas in rural and community development and project management from the Central Institute of Management and Technology in India. He earned a professional certificate in International Arbitration from the Justice Academy in Egypt.

Abdisalaam has augmented his academic qualifications with diverse training courses from renowned institutions such as Leiden, Harvard, Geneva, and USIP, focusing on peace and conflict thematic issues. In advisory roles, Abdisalaam served as Senior Advisor for Reconciliation to the Office of the President of Somalia from 2017 to 2018, and as Senior Advisor to the Ministry of Interior and Federal Affairs (MOIFAR) from 2018 to 2019, contributing to the development of the National Reconciliation Framework (NRF). Since 2019, he has held the position of Senior Advisor for Reconciliation and Local Governance at FCA-SOCO, where he leads and participates in district council formations and reconciliation efforts.

Outside his professional engagements, Abdisalaam was a lecturer in postgraduate studies at the Somali National University, specializing in Horn of Africa conflict studies and customary law (Xeer). He has been honored as a titled elder since 1994 for his role in resolving clan conflicts and fostering community cohesion. Since the collapse of Somalia in 1991, he has actively participated in numerous community emergencies and fundraising initiatives for development.



Somalia

Ahmed Mohamed

Executive Director, *Horn of Africa
Centre for Peace*



Ahmed Abdi Mohamed (Ahmed Shakir), and is a Somali peacebuilding leader, mediator, and youth affairs activist. He currently serves as the Executive Director of the Horn of Africa Centre for Peace (HACP), where he leads donor-funded governance and reconciliation projects such as the Strengthening Democracy and Inclusive Local Governance (STRONG) Project and the SIDA-funded governance initiative. In this role, he has facilitated peace dialogues, council formation, and community awareness programs across Galmudug, Jubbaland, and Banadir regions.

From 2021 to 2023, he worked as Director of the Department of Reconciliation at the Ministry of Interior and Reconciliation Affairs, Galmudug State. There, he designed reconciliation frameworks, mediated clan dialogues, and coordinated inclusive governance processes to strengthen trust between government and communities. Between 2018 and 2020, he served as Community and Government Liaison Officer with the Center for Research and Dialogue (CRD), where he bridged grassroots actors and government institutions to promote dialogue, social cohesion, and conflict resolution.

Mohamed has built his career on combining Indigenous Somali conflict-management approaches with formal governance structures, ensuring legitimacy and inclusivity in peace processes. As a youth affairs activist, he is committed to empowering young people and marginalized groups to play active roles in reconciliation and governance. Mohamed is fluent in English and Somali, with intermediate Arabic, and is dedicated to advancing sustainable peace and humanitarian impact across the Horn of Africa.



Somalia

Habiba Noor Shale

Chairlady,
Somalia Women Peace Platform



Habiba Noor Shalea is a dedicated peace mediator and influential leader in Somalia's peacebuilding landscape, with extensive experience in conflict resolution, community dialogue, and women's empowerment. Shalea currently serves as the Chairlady of the Somalia Women Peace Platform, where she leads strategic initiatives to amplify women's voices in decision-making processes and promote inclusive peace efforts across communities.

With strong engagement in programs funded by the United Nations Peacebuilding, she actively contributed to advancing grassroots peace mediation and strengthening local capacities for conflict prevention. Her work focuses on addressing complex conflict dynamics, particularly those affecting women, youth, and marginalized groups, ensuring their meaningful participation in peace processes. Shalea was widely recognized as a skilled peace mediator, known for her ability to navigate sensitive community disputes and facilitate dialogue among diverse stakeholders, including clan elders, women leaders, and youth groups. Through her leadership, she had successfully supported reconciliation efforts, reduced tensions, and fostered trust within fragile communities.

In addition to her mediation work, she had played a key role in advocacy and influencing initiatives, promoting gender inclusion in governance and peace structures. Her efforts have contributed to shifting perceptions around women's roles in leadership, particularly in traditionally male-dominated spaces. Her commitment to sustainable peace is reflected in my hands-on approach, combining local knowledge with structured mediation techniques. As a respected chairlady and peace practitioner, she continues to champion inclusive, community-driven solutions that strengthen social cohesion and build long-term peace in Somalia.



Somalia

Halima Abdullahi

Director General, *Somali Women
Peace and Security Centre*



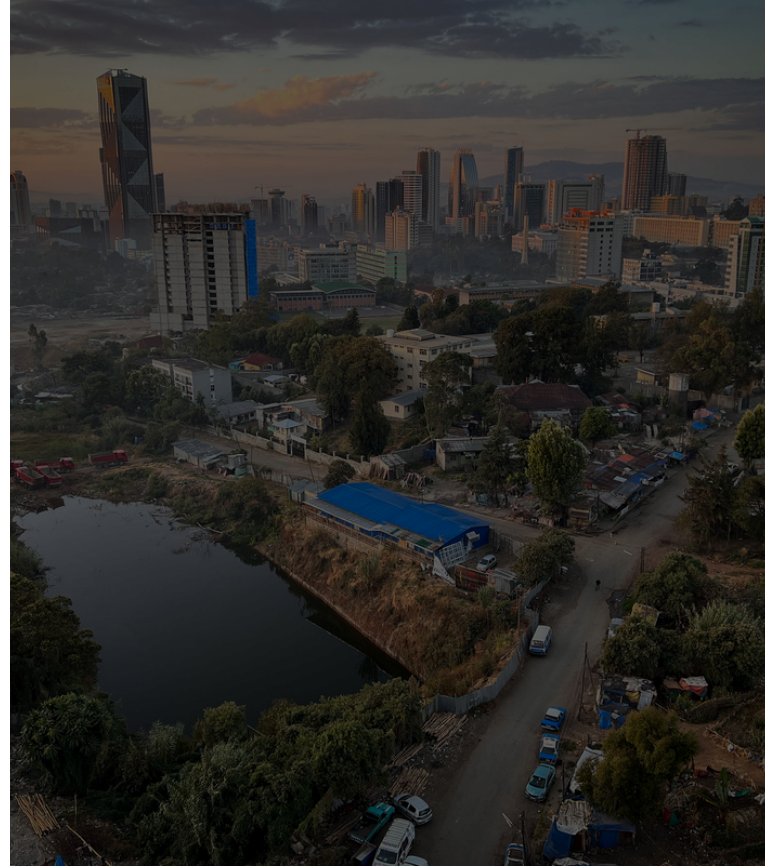
Halima Abdullahi is a distinguished peacebuilding leader and advocate for women and youth empowerment in Somalia. She serves as the Director General of the Somali Women Peace and Security Centre, where she oversees initiatives in community-based conflict resolution, faith-oriented mediation, and inclusive peace programs. Her leadership focuses on fostering dialogue, strengthening local capacities, and creating sustainable pathways for peace across diverse communities.

In addition to her current role, Halima has contributed significantly to the National Commission for Refugees and IDPs within the Protection and Gender office, implementing programs that safeguard vulnerable populations and promote gender equality. She has actively engaged in multiple national and regional peacebuilding platforms, applying her expertise to design and implement effective, inclusive, and faith-sensitive approaches to conflict transformation and resilience.



Somalia

Mona Duale



Mona Duale is a Somali woman peacebuilding and transitional justice practitioner and leading an organisation that aims to foster inclusive processes from the bottom up. She has a strong focus on inclusive mediation, particularly advancing the role of women and youth in peace and reconciliation processes within a highly patriarchal context. Her work bridges formal and informal systems by engaging women and youth peace activists, religious leaders, and traditional elders to foster dialogue, and support community-level inclusive peace and reconciliation processes.

Duale is an alumna of the Swiss government funded peace mediation course, which strengthened her practical and analytical skills in conflict resolution, negotiation, mediation and dialogue facilitation. She is also actively engaged in regional and continental platforms, including the African Union's African Women for Transitional Justice platform and the IGAD Women, Peace and Security network, where she contribute to advancing women's meaningful participation in peace and governance processes.

Duale's experience includes facilitating inclusive community dialogues, supporting mediation efforts, and working closely with grassroots women leaders to ensure their perspectives are integrated into traditionally male-dominated peace structures. She has a particular interest in faith-based and culturally grounded approaches to mediation, recognizing the critical influence of religious and traditional actors in shaping sustainable peace in the Horn of Africa. Through her work, she aims to strengthen locally led peace infrastructures and promote inclusive, context-sensitive mediation practices that can be scaled across Somalia.



Sudan

Nasr Eldeen Mofarih Ahmed



Nasr Eldeen Mofarih Ahmed was part of the Ummah Mosque in White Nile State and a member of the Reconciliation Committee, which is a committee specialized in resolving disputes and tribal reconciliations, and its work extends to intervening to resolve disputes between the government and citizens, students and the university administration, since 2007 until 2019. During his tenure in the Ministry, he worked to resolve the conflict between Nubia and Bani Amer in eastern Sudan, Masalit and Arabs in El Geneina, Hawair, and the Association in Omdurman and Hausa. Ahmed was part of the Ummah Mosque in White Nile State and a member of the Reconciliation Committee, which is a committee specialized in resolving disputes and tribal reconciliations, and its work extends to intervening to resolve disputes between the government and citizens, students and the university administration, since 2007 until 2019. Ahmed has managed a conflict between Nubia and Hawazma in South Kordofan as the prime minister's representative.



Sudan

Rabab Baldo

Sudanese peace, gender,
inclusivity practitioner and
a mediator



Rabab Baldo is a Sudanese peace, gender, inclusivity practitioner and a mediator, who began her work at a very early age, volunteering with several civil society organizations in the mid-1980s, including AMEL Society for Street Children and the Sudanese Popular Committee for Rehabilitation and Development. She later led the civil society component of the Engendering the Peace Process initiative in Sudan (later known as SuWEP), a coalition of more than 75 civil society organizations and networks. Through this platform, she and other pioneering Sudanese women worked to ensure that women's voices, priorities, and perspectives were integrated into Sudan's peace processes, resulting in the development of the first-ever Women's Common Agenda.

Ms. Baldo worked with UNIFEM/UN Women, where she played a key role in establishing the Sudan and South Sudan offices. Throughout her career, she has supported women's organizations and networks to participate meaningfully in both formal and informal peace processes — not only in Sudan, but also across Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. She is a member of the IGAD and AU Mediation Support Team and the African Union's. She has played a significant role in engendering the South Sudan peace process, as well as other peace processes in which she has been involved.

She is an active member of several regional and global platforms, including FemWise-Africa, the continental network of women mediators. She has also founded various initiatives dedicated to amplifying women's voices in ceasefire and peace negotiations. Amid Sudan's ongoing conflict, she continues to advocate for the protection of civilians and women, while supporting Sudanese refugees in neighboring countries. In recognition of her contributions, Baldo received the 2025 International Peace Award from the SomazziFoundation.



Sudan

Rayan Rahmtallah

Young Peacebuilder, Sustained
Dialogue Moderator, and Trauma-
Informed Dialogue Practitioner



Rayan Rahmtallah facilitates sustained dialogue processes, and deliver training in trauma-informed and healing-centred approaches for young civil society leaders. Her work focuses on creating safe and inclusive spaces where communities can address conflict while strengthening resilience and social cohesion.

She has contributed to the design of a trauma-informed dialogue manual that integrates the Sustained Dialogue methodology with traumahealing approaches, enabling Sudanese communities to engage in dialogue while addressing the psychological impacts of conflict. She has trained more than 30 young civil society leaders in dialogue facilitation and peaceful mediation and has coordinated and observed sustained dialogue and trauma healing sessions for over 120 Sudanese youth activists across different contexts.

She also played a key role in establishing and strengthening Sustained Dialogue (SD) communities across Sudan, Kenya, and Uganda, working in both urban settings and refugee camps. Earlier, she founded and led the Sustained Dialogue community in Khartoum and trained over 75 youth in resilience and conflict analysis toolkits. Prior to the outbreak of war in Sudan, Rahmtallah led community dialogue initiatives in West Omdurman, integrating creative approaches such as art and theatre to promote social cohesion and civic engagement.



Sudan

Soad Alfaki

Sudanese peacebuilding
practitioner



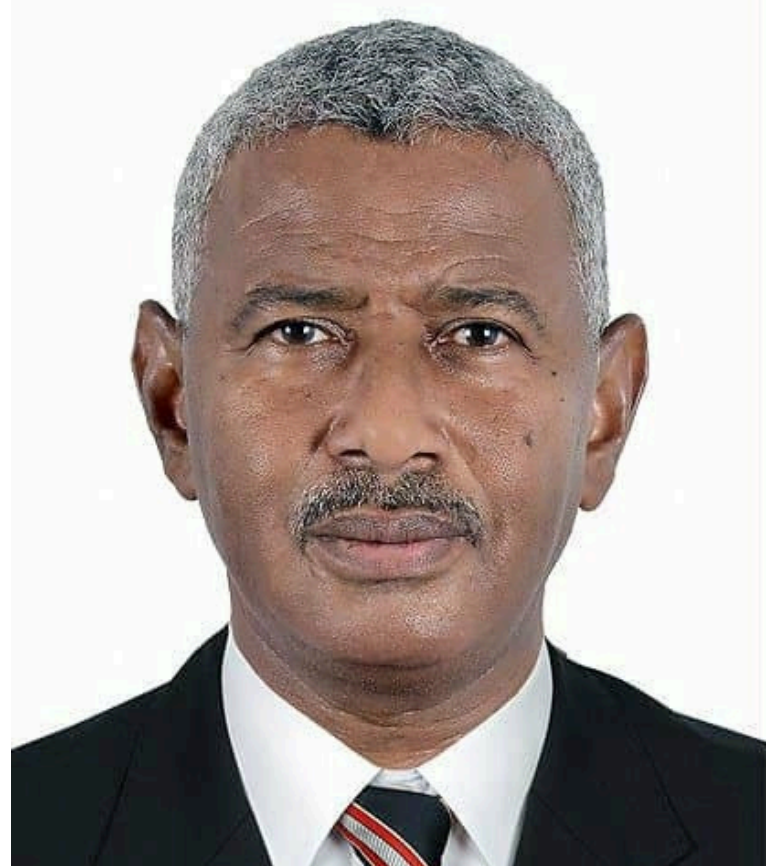
Soad Alfaki is a Sudanese peacebuilding practitioner with a strong focus on mediation, dialogue facilitation, and conflict resolution. She has practical experience mediating within Sudanese communities in Africa, particularly among youth networks affected by the ongoing conflict in Sudan. In her recent role as a mediator, Alfaki worked to address divisions among Sudanese youth that had emerged due to political disagreements linked to the situation in Sudan. She facilitated dialogue between individuals and groups, created safe spaces for open communication, and applied structured discussion methods and active listening to rebuild trust. Her efforts contributed to reducing tensions, strengthening relationships, and restoring collaboration within the network.

Alfaki holds a postgraduate degree in Development Planning from the University of Khartoum and is currently pursuing a Master of Arts in Peace Studies and International Relations. Her academic background complements her practical experience, equipping her with both theoretical knowledge and applied skills in conflict analysis, mediation, and peacebuilding. She is committed to promoting inclusive dialogue and supporting communities in navigating conflict toward sustainable peace.



Sudan

Yassin Gaafar Abdalla Eisa



Yassin Gaafar Abdalla Eisa is an expert in human rights, dialogue promotion, mediation, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding, with over 18 years of experience. He has worked in the fields of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), conflict management, and promoting social cohesion. Additionally, following the outbreak of a tribal armed conflict between the Beni Amer and Habab tribes on one side, and the Nuba Mountains tribes on the other, in the eastern Sudanese states of Kassala, Gedaref, and Port Sudan, he took the initiative to select and form a mediation team comprised of independent figures from among the religious and tribal leaders, to play a pivotal role in managing the mediation process and containing the conflict. The mediation team, under his leadership, succeeded in achieving a tangible breakthrough, culminating in the signing of a truce document between the parties to the conflict in May 2020, during an official ceremony that witnessed a high-level governmental presence at the national and regional levels, chaired by the government of Kassala State, and guaranteed by the mediation team.

Eisa has held senior leadership positions at the national and regional levels, most notably as Secretary-General of the National Human Rights Commission of Sudan and Director of the Eastern Sector of the DDR Commission. He contributed to the implementation of the East Sudan Peace Agreement (Asmara 2006). He has experience in preparing international reports, including the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), in addition to leading programs and building partnerships in fragile and conflict-affected environments.



South Sudan

Florence Luttay

Mediator



Florence Luttay is a dedicated mediator, commonly known as an "Insider mediator" within her community, State and National Levels. Luttay utilizes her social networks, credibility and position in the community to prevent conflict, de-escalate violence, and rebuild social cohesion. As a woman, one cannot wait for outside intervention but rather willingly and wholeheartedly commit oneself into peacebuilding processes whenever needs arose.

Luttay has taken part in mediation of various conflicts at local and community level, State levels, such as the land dispute among the Acholi-Madi Communities in Magwi County; the conflict sparked by the presence of Cattle herders in the Madi Corridor of Magwi County; the conflict sparked by the cattle herders in the farming communities of Kajo-Keji County, and disputes due to forced and arranged marriages at community levels.



South Sudan

Archbishop Moses Deng Bol



Archbishop Moses Deng Bol started training Church leaders on Peace building and Conflict Transformation in Yambio, Malakal, Kuajok and Tonj East while working as Christian Commitment Coordinator for World Vision South Sudan from 2007 to 2009. While serving as Bishop of Wau Diocese in 2010, he was invited by the former Governor of Warrap State H.E Tor Deng Mawien to participate in Greater Tonj Peace conference in Tonj town. The conference brought together community leaders including Chiefs, women and youth as well as Local Government Administrators. He start working as Insider Mediator in the inter communal conflict between Luo, Pertit and Dinka communities in Western Bahr el Ghazal State, Wau in 2012. He was part of Inter Religious Committee for Peace led by Former Catholic Bishop of Wau Diocese Rudolf Deng Majak deputized by an Imam and himself as Secretary. That dialogue managed to reduce the tension among the three communities. Archbishop Moses have since continued facilitating dialogue among the three communities through annual peace conferences with community leaders and Monthly meetings with Peace Ambassadors selected from the three communities with support from Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Commission of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan from 2012-2016 and with support from USAID through Church Leaders Initiative for Peace (CLIP) from 2017 -2024. He served as Chairperson of the Committee for National Healing Peace and Reconciliation for Warrap State from 2013 to 2016. He served as deputy Chair in the South Sudanese dialogue led by Church leaders during peace talks in Adisababa in 2018.

Additionally, he was invited to Facilitate dialogue between Apuk and Guok communities of Gogrial West County in 2016. He facilitated dialogue among the communities of Tonj South County namely Muok, Juwiir, Thony, Bongo and Yar in 2020 and 2021 which led to relative peace among them. He was invited by Peace Canal to facilitate dialogue between Luach Aguer and Agaar Pakam communities in 2024 which led to peace and reconciliation between the two communities. Bol participated in the Tumaini Peace Initiative in Nairobi in 2024 and early 2025. He was appointed by His Excellency the President as a a member of Greater Bahr el Ghazal Peace and Reconciliation Committee in 2024. He was invited by Peace Canal to Facilitate peace conference among the Twich Mayardit community intellectuals in Kuajok in 2025 for them to endorse the resolutions of the Twich and Abyei youth conference held in Wau. Bol was also invited by Peace Canal to Facilitate dialogue between Twich and Abyei women in Wau in 2025 in enable them to endorse the resolutions of the youth conference.



South Sudan

Father Martin Ochaya Lino Agwella

Roman Catholic Priest



Martin Ochaya Lino Agwella is a Roman Catholic priest. He completed his PhD in Peace and Conflict Studies from the University of Bradford in 2018. His research focused on local approaches to modern conflicts in South Sudan. Prior to his Doctoral studies, Agwella earned a MA in African Peace and Conflict Studies and a Diploma in Research Methods from the University of Bradford. His research interests include; civil wars, peace processes, local mediation, transitional justice and reconciliation, and war trauma.

He previously worked in different capacities, including parish pastoral work, youth ministry, teaching, and as Secretary General of the Archdiocese of Juba. He is a founding member of the South Sudan Scholar Association (SSSA) and a member of the Board of Directors for Justice Africa, an advocacy organisation and research institute campaigning for human rights and social justice across Africa. He served as an independent consultant for London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) Conflict Research Programme (CRP). Agwella is currently working on conflict and local mediation in Abyei along the Sudan-South Sudan Border. He mediated a number community conflict in Magwi County, and Tombura peace initiative under the umbrella of the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC). Additionally, he contributed to the publication of two articles on local peace mediation.



South Sudan

Nyakuma Peter Gatkuoth

Founder and Director,
Together South Sudan



Nyakuma P. Gatkuoth is the Founder and Director of Together South Sudan (ToSS), an organization dedicated to peacebuilding, traumahealing, and reconciliation in displaced communities across South Sudan and the wider East African region. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Public Health from Uganda Christian University, one of the region's leading institutions.

In 2018, Nyakuma participated in the International School of Reconciliation in Kigali, Rwanda, where she further strengthened her skills in conflict transformation and healing. Having lived as a refugee in Uganda, her personal experiences have deeply shaped her commitment to peace. She later returned to South Sudan, driven by a strong desire to contribute to national healing and unity. For over nine years, she has actively engaged in reconciliation efforts. Nyakuma is a vocal peace and civil rights activist, recognized among young African women advocating for freedom, equality, and social justice. Her vision is to see Africa rise with homegrown solutions to its challenges. Since 2015, she has trained women and youth in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps on trauma healing, peacebuilding, and reconciliation. She is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Peace and Development Studies at the University of Juba.

She has served as a Gender and Protection Officer with Nonviolent Peaceforce and Oxfam GB, gaining extensive experience in humanitarian work and advocacy for the rights of women and girls. Her leadership in peacebuilding earned her a nomination to the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) in Washington, D.C., where she received an Impact Award and implemented a Truth and Reconciliation project in South Sudan. Nyakuma has also represented refugees globally, including participation in the Global Refugee Forum in Geneva and membership in the World Liberty Congress, promoting democracy and freedom worldwide.



South Sudan

Dr. Zechariah Manyok Biar

Deputy Chairman, *Episcopal
Mediation Advisory Team*

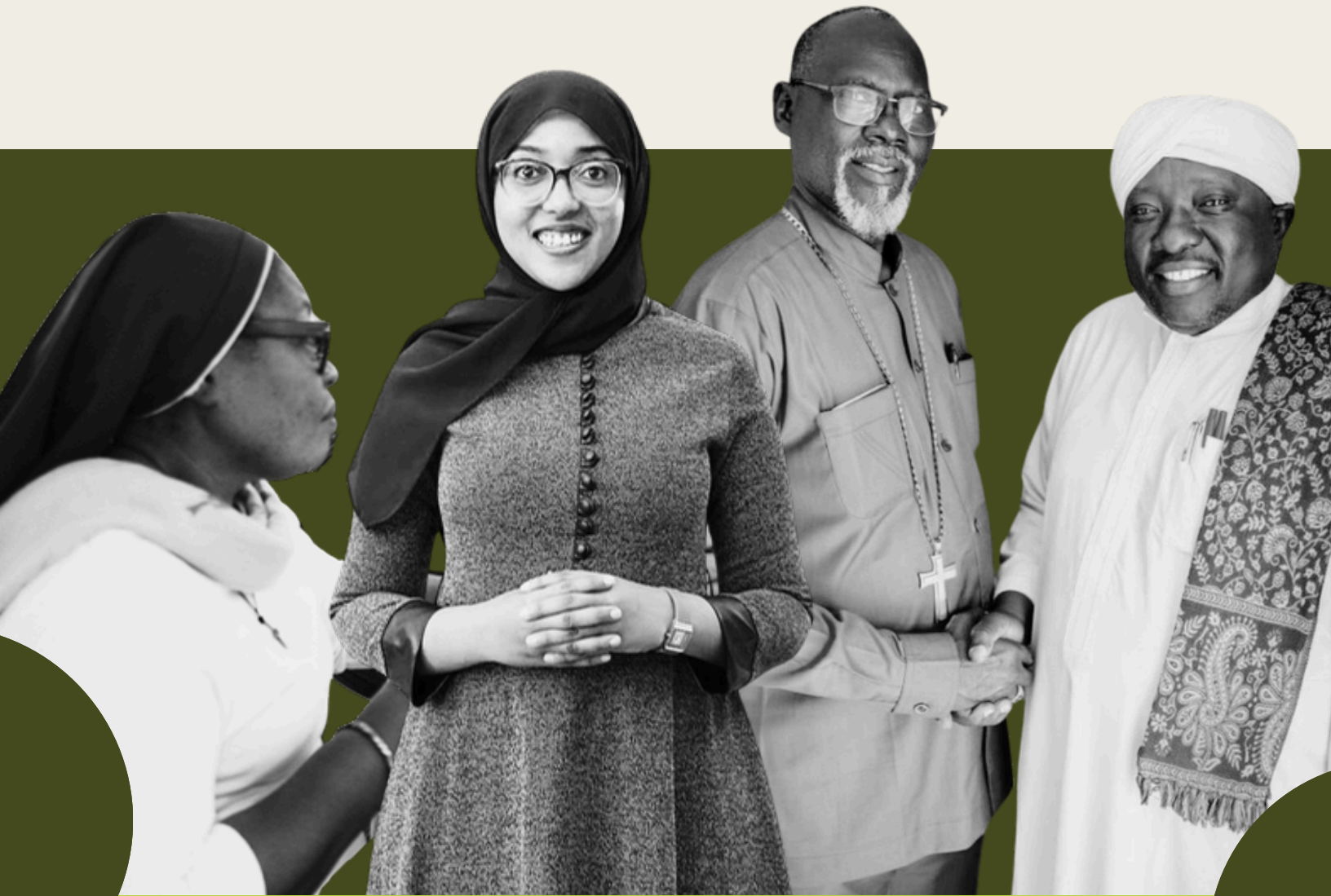


Dr. Zechariah Manyok Biar is the Deputy Chairman of the Episcopal Mediation Advisory Team (EMAT). He is also the Chairman of the Stakeholders' Strategy Committee at the South Sudan Council of Churches, where he has facilitated several community peace talks within South Sudan. These include the four states of the Upper Nile region peace conference during 32 states in 2017. The peace conference for Dinka and Nuer youths in 2017. The peace between the Twic East members of Parliament and the Community Association from 2024-2025. The Security Committee negotiations among the South Sudanese warring parties in 2018 during the South-South Dialogue in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. These are a selected few among many.

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Meet the Facilitators



Kenya

Gina Dias

Programme Manager, Sub-Saharan
Africa, Peacemakers Network



Gina Dias is a senior development, humanitarian, and peacebuilding professional with over 15 years of international experience working in diverse and complex contexts across Asia, Africa, and Europe. In her current role as Regional Programme Manager for Africa at the Peacemakers Network (Secretariat hosted by Finn Church Aid), Gina oversees the development and implementation of peacebuilding and conflict transformation initiatives together with Network members across the continent. She is responsible for securing funding, designing, and implementing multi-year and multi-country projects aimed at preventing conflict and violent extremism, advancing interfaith dialogue, fostering positive reconciliation, and enhancing social cohesion and inclusivity. She currently manages a regional portfolio that includes programmes and projects in East Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia), West Africa and the Sahel, Central Africa (CAR), and Southern Africa (Mozambique). Gina has extensive experience designing and facilitating high-level peace mediation efforts through events, conferences, workshops, trainings, and meetings with government stakeholders, religious and traditional actors, and the international community. Prior to her tenure with the Peacemakers Network and Finn Church Aid, Gina worked with the joint office of CAFOD, SCIAF, and Trocaire (CST) in Ethiopia, as well as Plan International and Oxfam in India. Gina holds a Bachelor's in Politics from the University of Pune, India, and a Master's in Comparative Politics from the London School of Economics and Political Science, U.K.



United States

Jessica Roland

Senior Specialist on Inclusive
Peace, Peacemakers Network



Jessica Roland is the Senior Specialist for Inclusive Peace for the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers. She is responsible for managing the Network's strategic priorities in advancing the leadership of women, youth, and marginalized groups. In this role and focus, she manages the Network's joint advocacy, research, programming, and inclusivity-based community of practice. She also leads the Network's training initiatives and mediation-focused work.

Prior to joining the Network, she worked for Women Deliver as a Senior Associate for Policy and Advocacy. In this role, her portfolio included a focus on women, peace, and security, advancing women's leadership, engaging men and boys, and gender-based violence. Jessica has also worked for the National Democratic Institute on advancing women's political participation, and on a U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Violence Against Women Grant focused on services for domestic violence victims with disabilities.

Jessica earned her Master of Arts in International Law and Diplomacy from the Fletcher School at Tufts University and her Bachelor of Arts in International Relations from Richmond, the American International University of London.



Finland

Jutta Martens

Programme Coordinator, Sub-Saharan Africa, Peacemakers Network



Jutta Martens is the Programme Coordinator for Sub-Saharan Africa at the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers. She has several years of working experience in programme coordination, facilitation, monitoring and evaluations, reporting and stakeholder engagements in the Sub-Saharan context. Prior to this position, she worked with national reconciliation and local governance project in Somali context.

Before joining Finn Church Aid, Jutta worked as a Senior Consultant at KPMG with a special focus on development cooperation projects and programs financed by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and other international donors. She gained extensive skills in different types of audits, assessments, evaluations, providing business development support and other strategic services, in the field of development cooperation. Jutta has also extensive work experience on working with communications and marketing.

Jutta holds two Masters degrees; in Theology (Religion, Conflict and Dialogue) from University of Helsinki and in Economics from Aalto University School of Economics (International Business Communications). She is currently pursuing her PhD candidate in Tampere University, Tampere Peace Research Institute TAPRI.

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