

“Crafting pathways to more peaceful, inclusive and just societies”

Background:

In the [Pact for the Future](#), Heads of State and Government decided on 22 September 2024 to “counter religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence” (para. 61). They also stressed that “our efforts must involve Governments as well as parliaments, the United Nations system and other international institutions, local authorities, Indigenous Peoples, civil society, business and the private sector, faith-based organizations, the scientific and academic communities, and all people to ensure an effective response to our common challenges. We decide to: [...] (b) Leverage existing channels and strengthen communication between United Nations intergovernmental bodies and civil society, allowing for ongoing dialogue and exchange of information; [...] (d) Deepen United Nations engagement with national parliaments in United Nations intergovernmental bodies and processes, in accordance with national legislation, including through building on the efforts of the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union to engage parliamentarians to maintain support for the implementation of relevant United Nations agreements and resolutions” (para. 83).

Programme on Thursday, 7 November 2024:

<p>14:00-15:20 CET</p> <p>MS Teams link Meeting ID: 354373983008 Code: R7KuAC</p>	<p>Roundtable brainstorming on countering instrumentalization of religions, beliefs or their followers to incite hatred and violence, in line with commitment X on “Faith for Rights” and Human Rights Council resolutions 16/18, 53/1 and 55/16 (discussion under Chatham House Rule with diplomats, UN Treaty Body members, Special Rapporteurs, religious leaders, faith-based actors, parliamentarians, social media companies and civil society members)</p>
<p>15:30-16:30 CET</p> <p>To receive the Zoom link please register here</p>	<p>“From theory to action: Parliamentarians against hatred based on religion or belief – Crafting pathways to more peaceful, inclusive and just societies” (part of webinar series by IPU and OHCHR)</p> <p>Understanding and upholding freedom of religion or belief:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An introduction to freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) • Responding to common questions and misunderstandings • HRC resolution 16/18, Istanbul Process and Rabat Plan of Action • How parliamentarians can promote FoRB (Rule of law/minority rights) • Good parliamentary practices in upholding FoRB <p><i>Moderation:</i> Michael Wiener, Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights</p> <p><i>Speakers:</i> Ms. Nazila Ghanea, UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief Ms. Fernanda San Martin Carrasco, Director of the International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief, former MP for Bolivia Mr. Rogier Huizenga, Human Rights Programme, Inter-Parliamentary Union TBC, Member of Parliament from the IPPFoRB Network</p>

Location: In person at Geneva Academy, 20 Rue Rothschild (opposite Palais Wilson) and online

Contact persons:

- Michael Wiener, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (michael.wiener@un.org)
- Sarah Markiewicz, Inter-Parliamentary Union (interfaith@ipu.org)

Related soft law standards:

Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence ([A/HRC/22/17/Add.4](#), appendix):

“36. **Political and religious leaders** should refrain from using messages of intolerance or expressions which may incite violence, hostility or discrimination; but they also have a crucial role to play in speaking out firmly and promptly against intolerance, discriminatory stereotyping and instances of hate speech. It should be made clear that violence can never be tolerated as a response to incitement to hatred. [...]

41. Steps taken by the **Human Rights Council**, in particular the adoption without a vote of resolution 16/18 on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence, and violence against persons based on religion or belief, which constitutes a promising platform for effective, integrated and inclusive action by the international community. This resolution requires implementation and constant follow-up at the national level by States, including through the Rabat Plan of Action which contributes to its fulfilment. [...]

52. Relevant **human rights treaty bodies and special procedures mandate holders** should enhance their synergies and cooperation, including through joint action, as appropriate, to denounce instances of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence.”

Beirut Declaration and its 18 Commitments on “Faith for Rights” ([A/HRC/40/58](#), annex II):

“X. We pledge **not to give credence to exclusionary interpretations claiming religious grounds** in a manner that would instrumentalize religions, beliefs or their followers to incite hatred and violence, for example for electoral purposes or political gains.”

#Faith4Rights toolkit, notably its module 5 on gender equality, module 6 on minority rights and module 10 on instrumentalization
<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Press/faith4rights-toolkit.pdf>



Report of the United Nations Secretary-General on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief ([A/79/284](#), paras. 64-65):

“64. The General Assembly has also repeatedly recognized that the open public debate of ideas, as well as interreligious, interfaith and intercultural dialogue, at the local, national and international levels, can be among the best protections against religious intolerance and can play a positive role in strengthening democracy and combating religious hatred. In this context, religious leaders and faith-based actors around the world have been making joint efforts to promote interreligious dialogue and multi-faith action.

65. To build societies in which expressions of religious hatred have become socially unacceptable requires inclusive faith literacy. The ‘Faith for Rights’ framework has been engaging with Governments, religious leaders and a wide range of civil society actors in peer-exchanges about concrete efforts on the ground. For example, several religious leaders who are part of the Faith for Rights ‘commUNITY of practices’ have advocated for people of all faiths to have unimpeded access to their places of worship, and they have also condemned incitement to violence, discrimination or hostility in the name of religion. Exchanges of lessons learned and promising practices of interfaith harmony and mutual respect should continue to be promoted, including through the ‘Faith for Rights’ framework.”

Pact for the Future (adopted on 22 September 2024), faith-related excerpts:

“1. We, the Heads of State and Government, representing the peoples of the world, have gathered at United Nations Headquarters to protect the needs and interests of present and future generations through the actions in this Pact for the Future. [...]

30. [...] We decide to [...] (c) Promote and support intercultural and interreligious dialogue to strengthen social cohesion and contribute to sustainable development. [...]

34. (b) Provide equal access to justice, protect civic space and uphold human rights for all, including through promoting the culture of peace, inclusion, tolerance and peaceful coexistence, eradicating religious discrimination, countering racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia in all their manifestations and by addressing the challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity of all people; [...]

39. (c) Combat racism and eliminate racial discrimination, xenophobia and religious intolerance and all other forms of intolerance and discrimination from our societies and promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue; [...]

44. [...] We reaffirm that terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, civilization or ethnic group. [...]

61. We decide to: (a) Step up our fight against all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and all forms of intolerance that impact young people and hinder their ability to fulfil their potential, and counter religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence; [...]

83. We recognize the importance of the United Nations engagement with national parliaments and relevant stakeholders, while preserving the intergovernmental character of the Organization. The challenges we face require cooperation not only across borders but also across the whole of society. Our efforts must involve Governments as well as parliaments, the United Nations system and other international institutions, local authorities, Indigenous Peoples, civil society, business and the private sector, faith-based organizations, the scientific and academic communities, and all people to ensure an effective response to our common challenges. We decide to: [...]

(b) Leverage existing channels and strengthen communication between United Nations intergovernmental bodies and civil society, allowing for ongoing dialogue and exchange of information;

(c) Encourage the contribution of the private sector to addressing global challenges and strengthen its accountability towards the implementation of United Nations frameworks;

(d) Deepen United Nations engagement with national parliaments in United Nations intergovernmental bodies and processes, in accordance with national legislation, including through building on the efforts of the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union to engage parliamentarians to maintain support for the implementation of relevant United Nations agreements and resolutions; [...]