



Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and Religions for Peace sign a partnership MoU, raising attention to the role of religious leaders in prevention

(5 November 2024, New York) Religious leaders, faith-based and interfaith organizations have a responsibility to contribute to the building of peaceful, inclusive and cohesive societies that are resilient to conflict, violent extremism as well as genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. This was underlined by the United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Alice Wairimu Nderitu, and the *Religions for Peace* Secretary General, Dr. Francis Kuria, upon the signing of a dedicated Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between *Religions for Peace* and the Office of the Special Adviser at the sidelines of the high-level week of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, on 27 September 2024.

The recognition of the invaluable role of religious leaders, faith-based and interfaith organizations as strong partners in prevention, is at the heart of the [Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes](#), also known as the Fez Plan of Action, launched by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2017, implementation of which is at the focus of the signed Memorandum.

“As one of the world’s oldest, largest, and most representative multi-religious organisations, Religions for Peace was directly involved in the development of the Fez Plan of Action in 2017. Today, with deep concern over the rise of identity-based hate speech, and extremist and violent ideologies that claim to identify themselves as part of specific faith traditions, beliefs or tendencies, or claim to speak on behalf of them, the need for full implementation of the Fez Plan of Action cannot be more urgent. With today’s signing of this MoU, we not only recommit to strengthen our work towards full implementation of the Fez Plan of Action, but importantly raise attention to the role of religious and faith-based actors for the achievement of much-needed sustainable peace across the world”, said Special Adviser Nderitu.

Dr. Kuria, Secretary General of *Religions for Peace* expressed that “hate speech is increasingly weaponized and it is alarmingly on the rise globally. It is feeding in the tragic context of ongoing conflicts and persecutions of various ethnic and religious communities, leading to displacement of millions and creating new waves of refugees. Urgency to protect vulnerable populations has never been more critical. We shall raise our voices against hate speeches as a step to protecting our shared humanity and upholding dignity for all.”

Religions for Peace works through its Interreligious Councils in nearly 100 countries in six regions, along with women of faith and youth networks, at the local, national, regional, and international levels, and profoundly believes that every individual, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or background, deserves the fundamental human rights of peace and security.

The signed MoU between *Religions for Peace* and the Office of the United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide outlines collaboration at the local, national, sub-regional, regional and international levels to maximize the implementation of the Fez Plan of Action, mindful of the increasing number of reports of hate speech and incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence worldwide, including in regions where religion is being or has been instrumentalized to promote division leading violence..

Respect, peace and the sanctity of human life are essential ingredients of all religious teachings, and faith-based actors and organisations have a demonstrated historical impact in calling for an end to tensions, hostility and violence that could lead to genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity and in promoting peaceful coexistence based on equality, mutual respect and non-discrimination. This cannot be understated, and the implementation of this MOU will contribute to advancing these efforts, stressed Special Adviser Nderitu and Secretary General Kuria.

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