

# G20 REGIONAL INTERFAITH MEETING

Partnerships in Action: towards One Earth,  
One Family, One Future

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NAIROBI , KENYA – 21 SEPTEMBER 2023

## EVENT REPORT



## INTRODUCTION

The interconnected crises of violent conflicts, widening inequality, the ongoing climate crisis, and eroding trust in global and local public institutions require new partnerships and leadership that link an ethical and pragmatic vision, nuanced by global and regional insights, to deepen multisectoral engagement.

Interfaith dialogue and collaboration are potential tools for addressing global challenges and promoting a more tolerant and compassionate world. To ensure the active involvement of religious communities in finding solutions to the world's most pressing issues, the Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities and the G20 Interfaith Forum Association have jointly organized a series of Forums.

These Forums provide a platform where faith leaders, representatives of faith-inspired organizations, government officials, international organizations, academia, and civil society can come together to share their experiences and develop actionable recommendations. The recommendations will serve as the foundation for global advocacy initiatives aimed at shaping the agenda of the 2023 G20 Summit and beyond.

Regional meetings have been convened in various parts of the world to ensure regional perspectives and that challenges are comprehensively captured for future advocacy efforts.



**INTERFAITH  
ALLIANCE**  
FOR SAFER COMMUNITIES

## THE NAIROBI MEETING

The Regional G20 Interfaith Meeting convened by Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities (IAFSC) and hosted by Arigatou International GNRC was held on September 21st, 2023, in Nairobi, Kenya, under the theme 'One Earth, One Family, and One Future'.

This meeting brought together 60 participants, including senior Christian, Sikh, and Muslim faith leaders, representatives from faith-based organizations, government officials, media, civil society, and scholars from Comoros, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda.

The aim of this meeting was to discuss issues impacting vulnerable communities, develop actionable recommendations, and advance interfaith dialogue in the context of the G20 process.

The discussions were held on a range of topics, including climate change and food security, conflict resolution and peacebuilding, child dignity focusing on human trafficking and child labor, and misuse and abuse of religion.

“*To truly make a difference at the G20, we must shed the victim mentality and cease the politics of lament and blame. Instead, let's take responsibility, leveraging our faith and strength as Africans to participate effectively.*”

**Rev. Dr. Fidon Mwombeki**

*Secretary General, All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC)*

“*In a world grappling with a complex poly-crisis spanning from Climate, Conflict, COVID, and the grievous neglect of Children, the need for faith communities to step forward and address these challenges has never been more pressing. These contemporary challenges are characterized by their interwoven nature, where attempts to resolve one crisis often inadvertently give rise to another. African faith leaders, it is your responsibility to raise your voices and push back against regressive policies, recognizing that some of these policies are crafted within influential platforms, including the G7 and G20. The expectations placed upon our African faith leaders are nothing less than the very best in their efforts to navigate these critical issues.*”

**Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali**

*Secretary General Global Network of Religions for Children  
and Director Arigatou International, Nairobi*

## PLENARY SESSION

A panel of five experts initiated discussions on five thematic areas, providing the context for the breakout session discussions. These thematic areas encompassed conflict resolution and peacebuilding, climate change and its impact on food security, the preservation of child dignity, the challenges faced by displaced individuals and refugees, and the misuse and abuse of religion. The discussions were structured around the theme 'One Earth, One Family, One Future,' which emphasizes the interconnectedness of all life on Earth and highlights the shared responsibility for the well-being of our planet and future generations.

**“One Earth”** underscores the fact that Earth is the only planet we have, and it is our collective home. It emphasizes the idea that all living beings, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or any other differences, share this planet and its finite resources.

It reminds us that the health of the Earth is essential for the survival and prosperity of all life forms. Under this theme, attendees in the Nairobi Meeting held discussions on climate change, food security, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding.

**“One Family”** encourages a sense of global unity and solidarity among all human beings. It implies that we are part of a larger human family, and our actions impact not only our immediate communities but also people around the world. It promotes empathy, compassion, and the idea that we should care for and support one another as we do within our families.

Against the pandemic, global economic slowdown, and regional conflicts, vulnerable sections of our communities are at significant risk of child exploitation, human trafficking, and child labor. The participants discussed how they can work together to find ways to protect, support, and inspire vulnerable people across the globe.

**“One Future”** underscores the idea that our choices and actions today have consequences for future generations. It calls for responsible stewardship of the Earth's resources, sustainable practices, and the recognition that we have a shared responsibility to leave a habitable and prosperous planet for our children and their descendants.

It emphasizes the importance of long-term thinking and planning. During this session, attendees held discussions on the world we want to create for future generations and how interfaith dialogue can serve as a powerful tool in addressing global challenges and promoting a more tolerant and compassionate world.

## PLENARY SESSION

“ Religious leaders play a pivotal role in guiding texts to prevent violent extremism. Countering this menace requires a joint effort involving religious leaders, government, and stakeholders. Our common enemy is the misinterpretation of religion, as no single faith advocates violence. Prayer alone is insufficient; we must take meaningful actions. ”

**Sh. Ibrahim Lethome**

*Secretary General Center for Sustainable Conflict Resolution (CSCR)*

“ To achieve food sovereignty, as the African continent, we should prioritize cultivating our traditional indigenous foods, known for their high nutrition, drought resistance, and availability. As faith communities, the solutions lie within us as we engage with our sacred texts, theologies, and practices, promoting eco-theologies and eco-diakonia. However, we can't play the 'innocent victims' role, particularly as faith communities. We have an important role in managing these resources as our Creator entrusted us with the care of His Creation. ”

**Madam Karimi Kinoti**

*Strategic Programs Lead Christian Aid*

“ Though protected by international laws, refugees often face vulnerability, including the risk of abuse, limited access to quality education, and decent income. Therefore, it is essential to prioritize establishing positive peace within communities, as it facilitates the successful reintegration of refugees and IDPs. ”

**Ms. Winnie Mutevu**

*Advocacy, Partnerships and Development Manager from Awareness Against Human Trafficking (HAART)*

“ Children, the bedrock of our society and the embodiment of our humanity, are a divine trust bestowed upon us by God. Regrettably, across Africa, they endure the harrowing risks and aftermath of conflicts, abuse, and trafficking, perpetuating a cycle of vulnerability and prolonged suffering. These perils emotionally stunt their development and rob them of their cherished childhood. Faith leaders have a role in safeguarding children and upholding their rights, understanding that prevention is far superior to cure. ”

**Ms Rattan Channa**

*Trustee, Sikh Women Society of Kenya*

“ People who misuse religion for personal gain, even if protected by the constitution, must face legal consequences. As religious leaders, it is our duty to raise awareness about the dangers of extremism, safeguard the vulnerable, particularly women and children who are often victimized, and foster interfaith and intergenerational dialogues by actively listening to the concerns of our youth. ”

**Rev Jane Jilani**

*Executive Director Council of Women Clergy (CoWC)*

# BREAKOUT SESSION: CLIMATE CHANGE AND FOOD SECURITY

## Context

The global climate change and food security crisis have shown an alarming increase since 2015. This trend has been exacerbated by factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, conflict, climate change, and inequalities in resource sharing. In the face of this persistent and growing challenge, faith leaders and faith-based organizations have played a crucial role in mobilizing resources, raising awareness, and advocating for change. The issues arising from climate change and food insecurity have brought a need to shift the mentality from 'innocent victims' and over-reliance on faith to alter situations towards taking action among faith communities. Interfaith collaboration has proven instrumental in fostering a sense of shared responsibility and solidarity in addressing food security.

To effectively confront the multifaceted challenges contributing to this crisis, faith leaders and interfaith communities must continue to play a central role in advocating for policies prioritizing food security, mobilizing resources, and inspiring individuals and communities to act. Only through such a comprehensive and collective approach can we hope to mitigate the devastating impacts of climate change, hunger, and food insecurity and work towards a more equitable and sustainable future for all.

## Main Takeaways and Key Recommendations



**1.** Develop toolkits and resources that religious leaders can use at the grassroots level to educate their congregations about climate change, sustainable agriculture, and related issues.



**2.** Establish partnerships between faith-based organizations, government agencies, NGOs, and the private sector to work together on sustainable agriculture initiatives by collaboratively reviewing and developing policies related to food security, waste reduction, and environmental protection.



**3.** Faith leaders should actively integrate environmental and sustainability themes into religious practices, sermons, and teachings. This can help raise awareness about the importance of sustainable agriculture and ecological stewardship among congregants.



**4.** Faith leaders should utilize social media platforms and technology to reach and engage with younger generations.



**5.** Ensure proper dissemination of data by governments and civil society organizations where people of all walks of life have access and control over it on all matters related to climate change and food security.

# BREAKOUT SESSION: PROTECTING CHILD DIGNITY

## Context

Children face immense risks from trafficking, conflict, and abuse, perpetuating a tragic cycle of vulnerability and suffering. Child trafficking, a harrowing form of modern slavery, preys on their innocence, exploiting them for forced labor, sexual exploitation, or even organ trafficking. Conflict zones amplify these risks, subjecting children to recruitment as child soldiers, forced laborers, or victims of sexual violence. The trauma inflicted during armed conflicts scars them emotionally, impeding their development and robbing them of a normal childhood. Addressing these risks requires a comprehensive approach encompassing prevention, education, legal protection, and support services.

Faith leaders are vital in addressing and mitigating these risks in this challenging landscape. Their influence extends far beyond the places of worship, encompassing the moral, ethical, and spiritual guidance that can shape communities and societies. Faith leaders, through their teachings and community engagement, can promote values of compassion, empathy, and justice. They can emphasize the sacredness and dignity of every child's life, fostering an environment where abuse and exploitation are condemned and prevented. Their moral authority can influence parents, caregivers, and community members to prioritize the protection and well-being of children.

## Main Takeaways and Key Recommendations



**1.** Develop integrated approaches that address multiple factors simultaneously. For example, programs and policies that look into how poverty, inequality, and breakdown of family structures can collectively contribute to child labor.



**2.** Encourage collaboration among various stakeholders, including governments, non-governmental organizations, community groups, faith leaders, and international bodies. Combating child trafficking and child labor requires a collective effort to pool resources, expertise, and influence.



**3.** Prioritize education and awareness campaigns targeting communities and potential victims. Educating families and communities about the risks and consequences of child trafficking and child labor can help prevent these abuses and promote alternative opportunities for children.



**4.** Establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of interventions. Regular assessments can help identify what works and what needs improvement, ensuring that resources are directed towards the most impactful solutions.

# BREAKOUT SESSION: PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

## Context

Violent extremism is a threat to peace and tolerance. It is not enough to counter it. We must prevent it because no one is born a violent extremist, but they are made and fueled into it. Disarming the radicalization process must begin with dialogue and respect for human rights and the rule of law. Education is a powerful tool to build learners' resilience to violent extremism and mitigate the drivers of this phenomenon. Addressing hateful and violent narratives helps strengthen their commitment to non-violence and peace.

Religious leaders are crucial in addressing the threat of violent extremism and promoting peace and tolerance. They serve as influential figures in many communities and can leverage their moral authority to prevent radicalization and resolve conflict.

Religious leaders can support educational initiatives that foster resilience to violent extremism, emphasizing the importance of coexistence and interfaith understanding. Their involvement can help create a more inclusive and tolerant environment, essential for countering radicalization.

## Main Takeaways and Key Recommendations



1. Ensure the inclusion of women in P/CVE initiatives, as they are affected differently by violent extremism and can play a crucial role in prevention.



2. Encourage Muslims and religious leaders to take the lead in countering violent extremism by correcting misconceptions about Islam and promoting a more accurate understanding of the religion.



3. Invest in capacity-building programs for religious leaders at the grassroots level to equip them with the knowledge and skills to address P/CVE thematic areas effectively.



4. Integrate peace training courses into the school curriculum to educate students on conflict resolution, tolerance, and non-violence.



5. Provide training and capacity-building programs for teachers to counter hate speech and engage in P/CVE efforts effectively.



# BREAKOUT SESSION: FREEDOM OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF

## Context

If left unaddressed, the violation of Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) can lead to severe conflicts that pose security risks and disrupt societies. These issues can manifest as the mistreatment of religious minorities or tensions arising from perceived threats to cultural majorities. Protecting FoRB is crucial, as it is a fundamental human right that allows individuals to practice, change, or hold their beliefs without being forced, discriminated against, or persecuted.

Religious leaders play a significant role in addressing violations of this right because of their unique position as spiritual guides and influential figures in their communities. Their moral authority, ability to shape public opinion, and capacity to promote understanding and dialogue make them essential actors in addressing these complex global challenges.

## Main Takeaways and Key Recommendations



**1.** Encourage educational initiatives that promote tolerance, respect, and understanding of different religions and beliefs from an early age. This can help combat ignorance and stereotypes that often lead to discrimination and hatred



**2.** Facilitate interfaith dialogue and cooperation among religious leaders and communities to foster understanding and build bridges between different faiths. Promote mutual respect and shared values



**3.** Collaborate with religious leaders and scholars to build their capacity to promote a more tolerant and peaceful interpretation of religion and involve them in efforts to protect religion from misuse by negative actors

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## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the G20 Regional Interfaith Meeting held on September 21st, 2023, in Nairobi, Kenya, under the theme 'One Earth, One Family, One Future' brought together a diverse group of faith leaders, representatives of faith-inspired organizations, government officials, and civil society scholars from across the African continent. The discussions during this meeting underscored the critical role that faith communities and religious leaders play in addressing pressing global challenges, including climate change, food security, conflict resolution, child dignity, and the misuse of religion.

The key recommendations and insights generated during these discussions highlight the potential for interfaith collaboration to drive positive change and shape the global agenda. The meeting emphasized the interconnectedness of all life on Earth and the shared responsibility for the well-being of our planet and future generations. Faith leaders are spiritual guides and powerful advocates for a more compassionate, sustainable world, and their active involvement in shaping solutions is indispensable in our quest for a better world.

