



General Assembly

Distr.: General
23 October 2025

Original: English

Eightieth session
Agenda item 14
Culture of peace

Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In the present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [78/129](#), the Secretary-General presents an overview of efforts by the United Nations system to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace undertaken between 1 May 2023 and 31 May 2025. The report also includes recommendations for the consideration of Member States and the United Nations system.^a

^a The present report was submitted to the conference services for processing after the deadline so as to include the most recent information.



I. Introduction and the global context

1. In its resolution 78/129 on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its eightieth session on the implementation of the resolution. The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations coordinated the preparation of the present report, drawing on contributions from 26 United Nations entities.¹

2. The activities covered in the present report were carried out against a backdrop of a record number of armed conflicts and persistently high levels of violence. In 2023, the world recorded the highest number of armed conflicts involving at least one State actor since 1946.² Civilian casualties in armed conflicts surged by 40 per cent in 2024.³ In 2023, 9 of the 10 countries with the lowest human development indicators were currently in a state of conflict. The evolving nature of conflicts reflects deepening mistrust and geopolitical divides that constrain collective problem-solving and erode compliance with the Charter of the United Nations. The work of the United Nations across peace and security, sustainable development and human rights, including the pledge contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to leave no one behind, is guided by the principles of the Charter, rooted in trust, solidarity and the sovereign equality of all States.⁴

3. Increasingly fragmented societies, limited economic opportunities, persistent inequalities and shrinking civic space have heightened tensions and instability. While there have been some notable successes in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, overall progress has remained fragile and unequal. Only 35 per cent of Sustainable Development Goal targets are currently on track or showing moderate progress.⁵ Despite modest gains, such as a 12 per cent drop in homicide rates between 2015 and 2023 and advances in strengthening institutions, progress towards Goal 16 has stalled, with nearly 50,000 conflict deaths, 123 million displaced people, one third of prisoners awaiting trial and an 11 per cent rise in killings of journalists in 2024 amid rising conflicts, violence and institutional failures.⁶ By the end of 2024, an estimated 123.2 million people worldwide had been forcibly displaced due to persecution,

¹ Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Department of Global Communications, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Organization for Migration, Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies, Office of Counter-Terrorism, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, Alliance of Civilizations, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Democracy Fund, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Human Settlements Programme, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations University and United Nations Volunteers.

² Siri Aas Rustad, *Conflict Trends: A Global Overview, 1946–2023*, Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) paper (Oslo, PRIO, 2024).

³ <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2025/Goal-16>.

⁴ United Nations, "Our Common Agenda policy brief 9: a new agenda for peace" (July 2023).

⁵ United Nations, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025*, available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2025>.

⁶ <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2025/Goal-16>.

conflict, violence, human rights violations, events disturbing the public order and extreme weather events.^{7,8}

4. This confluence of crises has fuelled an alarming rise in antisemitism, Islamophobia and the persecution of Christians and other faith groups. United Nations human rights mechanisms and senior officials have warned of sharp increases in hate incidents since 2023, and urged strong prevention and response.⁹

5. In the aftermath of the 7 October 2023 attacks by Hamas and other armed groups in Israel and the ensuing hostilities in Gaza, there has been an unprecedented increase in antisemitism,¹⁰ and acts of harassment, intimidation, violence and incitement based on religion or belief, including against Muslims, have risen to alarming levels.¹¹ The ongoing hostilities in Gaza have inflicted a devastating toll on civilians, with massive loss of life, destruction of infrastructure and catastrophic humanitarian conditions.¹² The aforementioned has deepened mistrust and grievances and heightened religious intolerance.¹³ Religious sites and places of worship continue to be targets for terrorist attacks and other violence in several contexts.

6. Increasingly, digital platforms and artificial intelligence are amplifying hate speech, xenophobia and intolerance. Online hate speech has become a leading vehicle for spreading divisive narratives, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to differentiate between misinformation and disinformation generated by artificial intelligence and that generated by humans.¹⁴ Evidence from United Nations entities and others document algorithmic and data biases in artificial information systems, which can exacerbate discrimination across racial, ethnic and religious groups.^{15,16}

7. Against this backdrop, Member States committed in the Pact for the Future to promote and support intercultural and interreligious dialogue to strengthen social cohesion; build peace, including by addressing the root causes of conflict, eradicating religious discrimination and countering racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia in all their manifestations; and counter religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence.

8. The present report highlights the efforts of the United Nations system to defuse tensions, support peacebuilding and advance inclusive, just and sustainable societies through interreligious and intercultural dialogue. It also illustrates the role of preventive diplomacy and dialogue in addressing polarization, restoring trust and strengthening solidarity. It further shows how religious leaders and faith communities are partners in protecting the rights of the vulnerable and contributing to dispute resolution.

⁷ www.unhcr.org/us/global-trends.

⁸ www.unescwa.org/publications/arab-risk-monitor-assessing-vulnerability-resilience-region.

⁹ www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2025/02/religious-leaders-must-work-together-promote-shared-principles.

¹⁰ www.unaoc.org/wp-content/uploads/Antisemitism-UN-Action-Plan.pdf.

¹¹ www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/03/un-experts-warn-islamophobia-rising-alarming-levels.

¹² www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/07/turk-calls-pressure-israeli-government-end-carnage-gaza.

¹³ A/80/287, para. 17.

¹⁴ See www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2025-06-18/secretary-generals-message-the-international-day-of-countering-hate-speech-scroll-down-for-french-version; <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/06/1164501>; and www.weforum.org/publications/global-risks-report-2025/in-full/global-risks-2025-a-world-of-growing-divisions-c943fe3ba0.

¹⁵ United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2025*, p. 72.

¹⁶ www.undp.org/publications/2nd-global-progress-report-sdg-16-indicators.

II. Advocacy and awareness-raising

9. The High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations issued a series of statements on the alarming rise in antisemitism, Islamophobia and other forms of religious intolerance, including joint statements with the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide and the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief. The Department of Global Communications continued to speak out against xenophobia, intolerance and incitement to violence. It produced new media assets for the #NoToHate campaign to promote interreligious dialogue and unity to counter xenophobia, racism, intolerance, violence, misogyny, antisemitism and Islamophobia around the world.

10. The Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme organized the annual observance of the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust (27 January) in New York. In his capacity as the United Nations focal point for monitoring antisemitism and enhancing a system-wide response, the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations engaged with Member States and their national envoys and coordinators, Jewish organizations, religious leaders and faith actors across the faith spectrum, and human rights experts on the issue of growing antisemitism and the means of addressing it. Following consultations, the United Nations Action Plan to Enhance Monitoring and Response to Antisemitism¹⁷ was launched in January 2025. The Plan builds on the efforts of the United Nations and includes recommendations on ways to further enhance and coordinate its work.

11. The 2024 and 2025 informal meetings of the General Assembly plenary to commemorate the International Day to Combat Islamophobia (15 March) were convened by the President of the General Assembly in New York, while the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Office of the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva organized commemorations in Geneva. Participants highlighted the latest trends in intolerance and incitement to violence against Muslims and called for combating xenophobia, intolerance and incitement to violence against persons based on their religion or belief. The Director of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations took part in the first coordination meeting on combating anti-Muslim hatred, convened by the Council of Europe and the European Commission in March 2024 in Strasbourg, France. Pursuant to resolution 78/264, the Secretary-General appointed Miguel Ángel Moratinos Cuyaubé of Spain as the United Nations Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia; he also continues to serve as the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations.

12. On 4 February 2024, celebrating the International Day of Human Fraternity, the Alliance of Civilizations and the Permanent Missions of Egypt and the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations co-organized a high-level event for Member States, religious leaders, faith actors and civil society representatives to amplify the importance of human fraternity in curbing rising hatred and conflict. A global campaign using the hashtag #HumanFraternityDay reached approximately 5.5 million users on social media.

13. On 7 June 2024, underscoring the need to raise awareness of the value of diversity of civilizations and to promote dialogue, mutual respect, tolerance and global solidarity, the General Assembly adopted by consensus resolution 78/286, in which it declared 10 June the International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations. To mark the occasion, the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations reaffirmed the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the

¹⁷ www.unaoc.org/wp-content/uploads/Antisemitism-UN-Action-Plan.pdf.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the obligations of States under international human rights law to uphold and protect all rights and fundamental freedoms of all persons.¹⁸

14. The Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations co-convened high-level events to mark the International Day for Countering Hate Speech (18 June) in 2023 and 2024. In January 2025 in Tirana, the Office of the Special Adviser, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief co-sponsored the inaugural conference against hate of the HR30 Forum, hosted by the Government of Albania and the University of Essex. In the resulting Tirana Framework for Confronting Intolerance, Governments, the private sector and civil society were urged to assess the role of education, counter-speech, emerging technologies and legal mechanisms. Throughout the reporting period, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide and the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Responsibility to Protect issued statements on hate speech and situations with ethno-religious violence.

15. The Alliance of Civilizations supported and took part in the first Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue, organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Parliament of Morocco, in cooperation with Religions for Peace, in June 2023 in Marrakech, Morocco. In the lead-up to the second Conference, OHCHR and IPU held a series of webinars for faith-based actors and parliamentarians to identify challenges and share good practices in countering hatred based on religion or belief. The annual meetings of the Faith for Rights “commUNity of practices”, spearheaded by OHCHR, facilitated ongoing dialogue among faith-based organizations, Governments, parliamentarians, academic communities and the United Nations system.

16. The Alliance of Civilizations, the World Tourism Organization (UN Tourism) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) were partners of the sixth World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, hosted in May 2024 in Baku by the Government of Azerbaijan. The Alliance of Civilizations convened 20 young people (9 male and 11 female) from Azerbaijan, France, Indonesia, Lebanon, Malawi, South Africa and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in intergenerational dialogue sessions, during which the young people proposed new approaches based on their best practices and lessons learned in addressing the rise of religious extremism, the role of the media in polarization, and how arts and sports supported peacebuilding. In a plenary on confidence-building through interfaith dialogue, the High Representative of the Alliance of Civilizations, together with Christian, Jewish and Muslim religious leaders, underscored the pivotal role of faith communities in global peace and prevention efforts.

17. The United Nations University Macau Artificial Intelligence Conference 2024, under the theme “Artificial intelligence for all: bridging divides, building a sustainable future”, brought together voices from the global North and South to explore inclusive and culturally sensitive approaches to the governance of artificial intelligence, underscoring the importance of intercultural dialogue in shaping equitable digital futures. In Geneva, the Alliance of Civilizations convened two sessions of the Global Dialogue on Artificial Intelligence for One Humanity, emphasizing the importance of international cooperation and multi-stakeholder engagement to ensure that the implications of artificial intelligence for humanity are prioritized.

18. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) promoted intercultural and interfaith inclusion through events and campaigns, including the

¹⁸ www.unaoc.org/2024/06/message-international-day-for-dialogue-among-civilizations.

first-ever Faith Pavilion at the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum, held in November 2024 in Cairo. Social media campaigns promoting inclusive urban heritage and religious coexistence in the historic cities of Homs, Aleppo, Mosul and others were also rolled out.

19. To commemorate the 2024 International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism as and when Conducive to Terrorism (12 February), the Office of Counter-Terrorism, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Alliance of Civilizations and UNESCO co-convened a special event that brought together representatives of the United Nations system, Member States, civil society and academia, as well as religious and young leaders. Participants renewed commitments to collaborate on prevention policies, address drivers of violent extremism and advance dialogue, mutual respect, diversity and pluralism.

20. In March 2025 in Saint Julian's, Malta, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and the Government of Malta co-organized the United Nations Conference on National and Regional Counter-Terrorism Strategies. Over 150 multi-stakeholder participants exchanged lessons learned and reaffirmed a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach towards the drafting, adoption, implementation and monitoring of counter-terrorism strategies. The discussions concluded with the issuance of the non-binding Valletta Principles on Comprehensive and Integrated Counter-Terrorism Strategies. Principles 4, 6 and 10 focus on promoting intercultural and interreligious dialogue, and encourage Member States to ensure that comprehensive and integrated counter-terrorism strategies engage a wide range of different stakeholders, including faith-based organizations and religious leaders.

Box 1

Amplifying the voices of young people through creative storytelling focused on peace narratives and bridging cultures

The PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival, a joint global initiative of the Alliance of Civilizations and the International Organization for Migration, continued to empower young filmmakers. In 2023 and 2024, PLURAL+ honoured 56 works by young filmmakers from 29 countries. PLURAL+ special recognitions were conferred on young people from Brazil, France, the Philippines and the United Republic of Tanzania, whose short films illustrated the global issues of xenophobia, discrimination, religious intolerance and displacement, and the role of sport in bridging cultural divides. The youth-driven narratives offered powerful messages of mutual respect based on ethnicity, religion or belief, coexistence between faiths and inclusive societies. The Festival achieved a total reach of 2.4 million people on social media.

At the regional level, United Nations Volunteers, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme, Youth Connekt Africa and regional stakeholders, spearheaded the 54 Faces of Africa campaign, aimed at empowering young people through storytelling on various topics, including diversity, intercultural dialogue, peacebuilding and innovation, highlighting young changemakers from each African country. The campaign reached over 10 million people, featuring over 1,000 stories that fostered intercultural and intergenerational conversations, bridged migrant and host communities, and shared peace narratives. Inspired by the continental initiative, United Nations Volunteer units in Botswana and Uganda developed localized versions of the campaign.

21. On 21 September 2023, the International Day of Peace was observed under the theme “Actions for peace: our ambition for the #GlobalGoals”. Nearly 800 young people participated in a series of events that featured performances by young leaders, activists and artists. The United Nations Messenger of Peace, Michael Douglas, launched a video featuring the poem “Peace begins with me”, and the #ActNow campaign promoted the Actions for a Peaceful World initiative, urging young participants to take collaborative and intercultural action in support of peace.

22. In November 2024 in Cascais, Portugal, the Alliance of Civilizations convened its tenth Global Forum, under the theme “United in peace: restoring trust, reshaping the future – reflecting on two decades of dialogue for humanity”. Hosted by the Government of Portugal, the event brought together more than 1,200 participants from 143 countries, including political leaders, representatives of multilateral organizations and civil society, religious leaders and representatives of faith-based organizations, young people and the media. Official delegations reaffirmed their commitment to fostering peace and inclusion in an increasingly interconnected and multicultural world and called for restoring trust and uniting in peace, as reflected in the resulting Cascais Declaration. Over 280 journalists and media entities covered the event, reaching approximately 13.9 million people on social media.

III. Mobilizing action and cultivating meaningful partnerships for peace, sustainable development and human rights for all

23. The United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development, co-chaired by the Alliance of Civilizations, the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), remained a unique platform through which to enhance engagement and joint activities among 27 Task Force members. The Task Force also fostered partnerships with the Multi-Faith Advisory Council, composed of 36 faith-based organizations from a broad spectrum of religious traditions and denominations. From 2023 to 2025, annual retreats of the Council convened faith leaders and United Nations representatives to review progress, share lessons learned and identify priority areas. Furthermore, joint events were organized on the role of religious leaders in upholding the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (November 2023) and on protection against incitement to hatred and imminent violence based on religion or belief, as an alternative to laws against blasphemy and apostasy, and their negative impact on human rights (March 2024).

Box 2

Fostering partnership and calling for actions to support peace at the municipal level

Under its City Dialogue series, the Alliance of Civilizations enhanced its partnership and scope of engagement with local cities and municipalities, which are often on the front lines in addressing challenges linked to intercultural and interreligious tensions. During the 2023–2025 period, the Alliance of Civilizations and the municipality of La Courneuve, France, collaborated on a joint project, “News generation against hate”, empowering young people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds in La Courneuve to become active promoters of peace, inclusion and mutual understanding within their communities through creative media outputs and dialogue-based advocacy. In September 2024, the Alliance of Civilizations convened city and municipality representatives from Africa, Europe and the Americas, along with

delegates of United Cities and Local Governments, to develop an action plan for sharing experiences among cities and implementing city-to-city projects for building social cohesion within their multicultural communities. In April 2025, in Gernika, Spain, the Alliance of Civilizations, in collaboration with Religions for Peace and the local municipality, launched “A call for peace, the end of wars, and respect for international law”, an initiative aimed at amplifying the condemnation of war while fostering a message of peace and upholding respect for international law.

24. In 2024, UNDP facilitated the inclusion of interreligious leaders in peacebuilding mechanisms in Iraq and Uganda. In Iraq, religious and tribal leaders participated in local peace committees and the National Committee to Combat Violent Extremism, influencing reintegration plans for returnees from the north-eastern Syrian Arab Republic. In Uganda, traditional and religious leaders co-led alternative dispute resolution efforts and interfaith dialogues aligned with the country’s national development plan. In Mauritania, UNDP facilitated a high-level dialogue between ulama and the Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and the Family, contributing to the drafting of a religious guide on the role of women and supporting consensus-building on gender equality in Islamic jurisprudence. In Côte d’Ivoire, UNDP supported national efforts to ensure the systematic inclusion of women, young people and religious groups in peacebuilding mechanisms.

25. Building on a two-year project (April 2022–December 2023) involving six interreligious and intercultural dialogues across Africa on the role of faith actors as agents of change, advancing gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights, UNFPA, in collaboration with the Berlin Institute for Population and Development, the Federal Foreign Office of Germany and Religions for Peace, published a report entitled *The Role of Religious Actors in Population Dynamics*.¹⁹ In El Salvador, through a participatory process with religious leaders, UNFPA developed a guide and booklets on the prevention of adolescent pregnancy. In Georgia, UNFPA collaborated with the Interreligious Council to prevent harmful practices and developed a training module on early marriage and violence against women. Similarly, UNFPA deepened its partnership with the International Islamic Center for Population Studies and Research to eliminate harmful practices, gender-based violence and child marriage. In Uzbekistan, UNFPA collaborated with the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan and Al-Azhar University to challenge harmful gender norms and promote the rights of women.

26. In 2024, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and Religions for Peace expanded the Faith and Positive Change for Children, Families and Communities initiative to establish faith-based stakeholder mechanisms in countries facing a potential reversal in child rights, with a particular focus on the elimination of harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and child marriage. The multi-country programme is being implemented with the African Council of Religious Leaders–Religions for Peace in Ethiopia, the Gambia, Mali, Somalia and Uganda.

27. Through the Multi-Religious Council of Leaders (formed in 2020) and in partnership with Religions for Peace, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees mobilized faith-based actors in support of its mandate and the broader goals of conflict prevention, reconciliation and inclusive development. The Council’s second term (2024–2027) builds on its foundational work

¹⁹ http://www.berlin-institut.org/fileadmin/Redaktion/Publikationen/AfricanDialoguesReport_English_Webversion.pdf.

to promote global solidarity and address the root causes of displacement through interreligious dialogue, advocacy and community-based action.

28. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children continued to mobilize and engage religious and traditional leaders within countries and across regions. In 2023 and 2024, the Special Representative was part of the organizing committee of the World Day of Prayer and Action for Children. She stressed the importance of documenting and disseminating examples of action by religious leaders and faith-based organizations, in particular as co-organizer of the sixth Forum of the Global Network of Religions for Children, held in November 2024 in Abu Dhabi. The Abu Dhabi Declaration on Building a Hopeful World for Children included a commitment to end harmful practices that are often justified in the name of religion, and a call for shared accountability.

29. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict engaged with religious and traditional leaders, seeking to amplify the mediation and peace roles they play within their communities. In the Sudan in April 2025, the Special Representative encouraged the Government to take steps to prevent and eradicate conflict-related sexual violence by reaffirming its commitment to act and renewing the Framework of Cooperation of the Sudan and the United Nations on the Prevention and Response to Sexual Violence in Conflict.²⁰ The Framework emphasizes the importance of engaging with tribal and religious leaders to prevent conflict-related sexual violence, address impunity for these crimes and facilitate the reintegration of survivors. In South Sudan, United Nations Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict, a coalition of 26 United Nations entities, funded a joint project²¹ for the period from December 2023 to December 2024 on increasing awareness of the socioeconomic consequences of conflict-related sexual violence and promoting community-level ownership and dialogues to champion advocacy regarding the needs and rights of survivors.

30. Between May 2023 and May 2025, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) continued to rally more than 7,000 religious leaders, individuals and members of faith-based communities to advance interreligious dialogue for environmental protection and societal peace, directly advancing the Sustainable Development Goals. To highlight the spiritual and ethical dimensions of climate action, at the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, UNEP and the Muslim Council of Elders co-hosted the Faith Pavilion. They did so again at the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties, held in Baku. During the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, the Faith for Earth Coalition hosted a faith dialogue to explore ethical pathways in multilateralism. Under the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative, UNEP worked across Brazil, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Indonesia and Peru, engaging Christian, Muslim and indigenous spiritual leaders in dialogue and advocacy to safeguard tropical rainforests.

²⁰ www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/frameworks-doc/auto-draft/FAMEW1-1.pdf.

²¹ www.stoprapenow.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/June-2025-UN-Actions-project-in-South-Sudan-.pdf.

IV. Bolstering interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace through knowledge tools and data

31. During the reporting period, OHCHR launched the second edition of the #Faith4Rights toolkit²² and, together with civil society and academic institutions, offered online and hybrid courses in the following cities: Abuja; Beirut; Cairo; Coimbra, Portugal; Geneva; Paris; Ottawa; Oxford, United Kingdom; San José; and Washington D.C. The Alliance of Civilizations collaborated in the development and implementation of the online training course on global education and intercultural/interfaith dialogue,²³ hosted by the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe. Through the course, civil society, faith-based organizations, media and education practitioners in Africa, Asia and Europe enhanced their competencies on global education, intercultural and interfaith dialogue, and human rights.

32. In November 2024, UNESCO produced knowledge resources to strengthen intercultural understanding as a foundation for peace and social cohesion, including *More than Welcome: Intercultural Integration of Migrants through Higher Education*,²⁴ supported by the Lumina Foundation, and a brief series on intercultural dialogue as a tool for conflict prevention, justice and reconciliation, co-developed with Interpeace, the Berghof Foundation and Search for Common Ground. A 2024 expert meeting with the UNESCO Chair of Intercultural Competences produced guidance on integrating intercultural values into digital skills to reduce identity-based tensions.

Box 3

Report on governing artificial intelligence for humanity

As part of the support provided to the High-Level Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence, the Office for Digital and Emerging Technologies facilitated over 50 events and 15 deep dives or consultations with stakeholders in 2023 and 2024, involving over 1,000 stakeholders from the private sector, academia, Governments and civil society, as well as two global surveys, which drew responses from over 450 experts on artificial intelligence, on the risks and opportunities related thereto. These efforts engaged diverse religious, cultural and gender communities to ensure that their perspectives informed the evolving agenda on global cooperation on the governance of artificial intelligence. In addition, it convened deep-dive sessions on artificial intelligence and faith and on artificial intelligence and gender equality for religious leaders, civil society actors, academics and artificial intelligence experts. These dialogues identified opportunities and risks related to artificial intelligence, emphasizing the need to keep human agency, morality and spiritual values at the centre of technological development. To ensure that intercultural perspectives were meaningfully reflected in the *Governing AI for Humanity* report,²⁵ the Office conducted consultations with experts from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Latin American and Caribbean Group and the African Group, who emphasized cultural and linguistic diversity and reinforced the need

²² www.ohchr.org/en/documents/tools-and-resources/faith4rights-toolkit.

²³ www.coe.int/en/web/north-south-centre/-/join-the-next-edition-of-the-online-course-on-global-citizenship-education-and-intercultural/interfaith-dialogue.

²⁴ <https://unitwinidui.org/unesco-report-more-than-welcome-intercultural-integration-of-migrants-through-higher-education>.

²⁵ www.un.org/en/ai-advisory-body.

for inclusive governance approaches that respect varied traditions, development priorities and digital realities. The report's launch garnered significant global attention and over 110 articles worldwide spotlighted its recommendations. The Office supported follow-up advocacy campaigns in multiple United Nations languages. In addition, it trained over 100 United Nations diplomats on foundational literacy in artificial intelligence, reinforcing intercultural and interreligious dialogue principles.

33. In cooperation with the United Nations System Staff College, the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect developed an online course on the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech²⁶ in January 2025. The Office launched a comprehensive training manual on the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Genocide Convention) and its implementation in November 2024, along with policy documents aimed at combating hate speech and religious-based discrimination, and promoting dialogue and mediation to prevent genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.²⁷ In March 2024, the Office supported Zambia in launching the National Committee on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, War Crimes, Crimes against Humanity and All Forms of Discrimination, and trained its members.

34. Operational guidelines on “Constructing UNESCO media and information literacy cities”,²⁸ published in 2024, were designed to provide guidance to cities to develop culturally responsive local policies to counter disinformation, hate speech and social exclusion. UNESCO has also addressed online hate speech and violent extremism in its Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms.²⁹ In 2025, UNESCO published guides for journalists on covering hate speech³⁰ and on understanding antisemitism and Holocaust denial and distortion.³¹ The United Nations Information Centre in Lima, in collaboration with UNESCO and the Calandria Social Communicators' Association, implemented a course on digital journalism and countering misinformation, disinformation and hate speech.

35. In an effort to enhance national capacity for prevention, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNDP and the National Security Council of Thailand developed a handbook on promoting a human security approach to the prevention of violent extremism in Thailand³² in 2024. That same year, UNODC also launched a handbook on Islam in places of detention³³ as guidance for custodial officers in the Philippines.

36. UNEP continued to promote religious literacy and support inclusive environmental action through its knowledge products, including a course on faith, environment and climate change³⁴ and the Faith Action on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals database.³⁵ A group of Islamic organizations and scholars were convened through the UNEP Faith for Earth Coalition and in 2024

²⁶ www.unssc.org/courses/introductory-course-un-strategy-and-plan-action-hate-speech.

²⁷ www.un.org/en/genocide-prevention/media-resources/publications.

²⁸ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000391748>.

²⁹ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000387339>.

³⁰ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000392378>.

³¹ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000392377>.

³² www.unodc.org/roseap/uploads/documents/Publications/2024/UN_-_Human_Security_EN_Final_2024.pdf.

³³ www.unodc.org/res/justice-and-prison-reform/cpcj-prison-reform_html/Handbook_on_Islam_in_Places_of_Detention.pdf.

³⁴ www.unep.org/resources/e-learning/faith-environment-and-climate-change-online-course.

³⁵ <https://fore.yale.edu/FaithActionSDG/Projects>.

launched *Al-Mizan: A Covenant for the Earth*,³⁶ an Islamic ecological declaration that demonstrates how Islam can be a driving force for sustainable development and environmental care. Under the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative, UNEP produced theological briefs, country-specific curricula and training tools that challenge misinformation and promote the sacredness of nature across faith traditions.

37. In 2024, UNICEF, Religions for Peace and the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities developed the *Faith Guidance Document on Immunisation: Training Faith Leaders on Promoting Childhood Immunisation*³⁷ and the *Mind-Heart Dialogue Facilitators' Guide for Faith Engagement*.³⁸ To date, hundreds of faith leaders and community activists in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean have been trained and developed new skills, reaching thousands of people across their networks.

38. To support Member States in tackling structural inequalities affecting historically disadvantaged groups and fostering intercultural and interreligious dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) led initiatives to improve the statistical inclusion and visibility of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent. In 2024, ECLAC provided technical assistance to 12 countries, mainstreaming the adequate collection of information on ethnicity and race. ECLAC also issued the second regional report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development,³⁹ highlighting good practices and the challenges faced by Indigenous Peoples, people of African descent and international migrants. In 2025, a joint publication of ECLAC and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations on people of African descent in Latin America and the Caribbean highlighted socioeconomic disadvantages faced by persons of African descent.⁴⁰ ECLAC also maintains and updates a database on Indigenous and Afrodescendant Peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean.⁴¹

Box 4

Addressing religious, ethnic and gender divides through urban safety and inclusive planning

UN-Habitat developed self-learning tools⁴² on urban inclusion and social cohesion, targeting city leaders and urban planners and highlighting case studies of successful integration of the principles of interreligious and intercultural dialogue. In Nairobi, Medellín, Colombia, and Baghdad, UN-Habitat provided technical assistance on urban safety and inclusive planning, addressing religious, ethnic and gender divides. In Iraq, more than 6,000 displaced families from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds have returned to safe and dignified housing, owing to inclusive recovery plans co-developed with local faith actors and communities. UN-Habitat secured tenure rights for 106,416 individuals (51,814 females and 54,602 males), representing the Yazidi and other minority groups, by mapping and registering land occupancy claims to formally recognize informal land rights. In addition, 2,603 individuals (1,937 females and 666 males) from religious and ethnic minority groups

³⁶ <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/44949>.

³⁷ www.faith4positivechange.org/_files/ugd/702bd0_fd5f8ad5d5a34df0b10656d5b0b2e99d.pdf.

³⁸ www.faith4positivechange.org/_files/ugd/702bd0_241899250fdc4b298a2161c10a1b2d6a.pdf.

³⁹ <https://repositorio.cepal.org/items/3e5a7163-5a48-4039-90d4-ccee15940fcc>.

⁴⁰ www.cepal.org/en/publications/81447-people-african-descent-latin-america-and-caribbean-exploration-social-and.

⁴¹ <https://statistics.cepal.org/portal/cepalstat/dashboard.html?theme=4&lang=en>.

⁴² www.urbanagendaplatform.org/learning.

have been supported in accessing compensation schemes for damaged or destroyed properties, with the aim of contributing to healing and rebuilding intercommunal peace and harmony. In Sri Lanka, UN-Habitat facilitated neighbourhood-level infrastructure development that united Tamil, Muslim and Sinhalese communities. In the Philippines, it supported the Government in the post-conflict rebuilding of the Islamic City of Marawi by providing 1,000 units of permanent housing to displaced families.

V. Strengthening capacities to promote peaceful societies

39. Pursuant to resolution [75/258](#), the Alliance of Civilizations convened the United Nations Global Conference on Safeguarding Religious Sites in November 2024 in Cascais, Portugal, with the aim of advancing the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites. The Alliance of Civilizations mobilized Member States, religious leaders, international organizations and civil society to address the critical role that various stakeholders must play in safeguarding religious sites, highlight good practices and propose actionable recommendations to bolster preventive measures and enhance the resilience of faith-based communities and facilities against terrorist threats and attacks.

40. The United Nations Democracy Fund promoted interreligious and intercultural dialogue through a variety of community-level projects during the reporting period. In Rwanda, it promoted youth engagement with policymakers to shape peacebuilding and democracy-promotion strategies. Hundreds of students and educators were trained in using the arts to promote a culture of peace. Similarly, in Nigeria, the Fund utilized artistic activism (“ArtVocacy”) to activate and cultivate a culture of active citizenship among 103 young people (55 male and 48 female, including 10 young people with disabilities), who engaged with policymakers and community leaders to encourage their support for the increased political involvement of young people. In Cameroon, the Fund engaged young people online and offline in preventing hate speech and political violence. A guide for political parties on political education, diversity and peace promotion was developed and has been used to foster harmonious cohabitation on social media platforms and within communities, including in the context of the anglophone-francophone crisis.

41. Under the Global Programme on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism, the Office of Counter-Terrorism empowered young people from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand to develop strategic communications campaigns responsive to cultural contexts to prevent and counter violent extremism and to deliver strategic communications training within their communities. The Office also provided capacity-building assistance to three Member States (Kenya, Nigeria and Somalia) by training and empowering 60 young leaders (32 female and 28 male) under its Youth Engagement and Empowerment Programme, which has reached nearly 850 young people across multiple faiths and religions. Similarly, UNODC convened the first regional meeting of its initiative on youth-led action to prevent and respond to violent extremism and terrorism in South-East Asia in November 2024 in Putrajaya, Malaysia, during which young people from the region and beyond shared experiences, good practices and challenges in preventing violent extremism. In 2024, UNODC also established a youth-focused regional network for the prevention of violent extremism in the Sahel, currently comprised of 39 civil society organizations and 15 ministries from Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger.

42. In 2024, under the Young Peacebuilders Programme, the Alliance of Civilizations trained young people from Latin America and the Caribbean on conflict transformation and resolution, mediation, the promotion of non-violent communication and intercultural and interreligious dialogue to build more peaceful and sustainable communities. Subsequently, small-scale community initiatives were implemented across the region, engaging nearly 2,400 young people. UNODC harnessed creative platforms to amplify youth voices and promote intergenerational dialogue through the Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism (STRIVE) Juvenile project.⁴³ In 2024, the Network of Youth Peace Champions, supported by UNODC, was formally launched by State-level commissioners from Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States in Nigeria. In Borno State alone, 16 young people launched the #SeeTheChild campaign, reaching over 9 million people with messages of hope and resilience.

43. Under the Silk Roads Programme, UNESCO fostered shared historical narratives, cultural exchanges and plural identities to promote dialogue and peace. The Silk Roads youth research grant encouraged 2,700 young scholars (1,600 female and 1,100 male) from 90 countries to explore that heritage, while over 32,000 young people (20,000 male and 12,000 female) captured it visually through the “Youth eyes on the Silk Roads” photo contest.

44. During 2023 and 2024, through the Youth Solidarity Fund, the Alliance of Civilizations supported youth-led organizations from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Malawi, Sierra Leone and Uganda. It provided funding, capacity-building and mentorship support, enabling organizations to implement their projects using innovative and effective approaches to intercultural and interreligious dialogue. Nearly 9,300 people benefited directly from the projects and more than 130,000 individuals were reached through advocacy and public community events. Similarly, International Organization for Migration (IOM) Nigeria supported intercommunal networks comprising over 660 community members to mediate disputes and facilitate inclusive dialogues. Through participatory theatre and youth-led films, over 300,000 individuals were reached with messages promoting peaceful coexistence. The initiative strengthened State peace structures and increased trust between Christian and Muslim farming and herding communities by 40 per cent in targeted areas, as reported by IOM. In the Niger, United Nations Volunteers deployed volunteers to raise awareness for peace, social cohesion and volunteering, emphasizing the significance of intercultural dialogue in promoting social cohesion.

45. The Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect supported 11 United Nations country teams in the development of plans of action to counter hate speech and delivered training sessions to members of civil society. As of 2024, the Office provided two dedicated sessions per semester for the master’s degree programme in applied genocide prevention at Keene State College (New Hampshire, United States). The Office also supported the launch of the School of Religious Diplomacy for Leadership Development and Global Cooperation in Washington, D.C., in May 2025.

46. In a similar vein, through the Social Media 4 Peace project, UNESCO promoted peacebuilding and intercultural dialogue to counter harmful online content. Spanning seven countries, the project has trained more than 1,300 civil society leaders and 1,700 individuals in peacebuilding and media and information literacy. To date, the project has reached over 25 million people through campaigns and multimedia content. UNESCO also empowered 690 youth-led organizations under its Journey through the MILtiverse initiative, promoting trust, freedom and intercultural dialogue

⁴³ www.unodc.org/unodc/en/justice-and-prison-reform/global-programme-to-end-violence-against-children/strive-juvenile.html.

among tens of thousands of young people worldwide. Through the International Programme for Holocaust and Genocide Education, it promoted dialogue and knowledge-sharing, bringing together policymakers and practitioners.

47. Under the Global Resource for Anti-Corruption Education and Youth Empowerment (GRACE) initiative,⁴⁴ launched in 2021, UNODC continued to highlight the importance of intercultural dialogue in fostering transparency and accountability. It also launched the Connecting Classrooms project, linking students and teachers from schools in Ethiopia and Malta to foster empathy and cultural understanding across societies and educate young people on key values, such as integrity, ethics and tolerance. In cooperation with government agencies and non-State partners, UNODC trained over 600 criminal justice officials from Latin America, Europe and Africa, who increased their awareness of and responses to terrorism committed on the basis of xenophobia, racism or intolerance, or in the name of religion or belief.

48. The Peacebuilding Fund supported the project on religious scholars as insider mediators, launched in February 2025 in Somalia to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue by empowering a diverse network of over 200 Islamic scholars (20 per cent of them women) from different Islamic schools of thought to lead community-based dialogues rooted in shared Islamic values of peace, tolerance and coexistence. The project is aimed at amplifying women's leadership in religious and peace spaces, with female madrassa teachers promoting non-violence through education and mediation. During the reporting period, as part of its Women's Alliance for Peace initiative, the Alliance of Civilizations engaged with female mediators from conflict-affected regions, in particular in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali. It delivered capacity-building workshops for over 70 women, strengthening their skills in peace mediation, with a focus on preventing violence through dialogue and local engagement. Also in the Central African Republic, the project on support for inclusive social and community dialogue for peace, supported by the Fund and implemented by UNDP and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) during the 2021–2024 period, directly contributed to easing tensions and repairing relations between Muslim and Christian communities. Over 400 community and religious leaders received training in conflict resolution and peace education, while more than 1,600 individuals (more than half of them women) participated in community dialogue forums.

49. During the reporting period, in collaboration with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs provided dialogue and facilitation coaching to interfaith platforms of religious leaders in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with women comprising 30 per cent of the participants. Trained on peacebuilding and communication skills, faith leaders developed provincial strategies to actively contribute to conflict resolution and prevention, and initiated community dialogues to resolve local disputes. In Sri Lanka, UNESCO implemented a project supported by the Peacebuilding Fund to support dialogue processes, exploring the common priorities of different ethnic and religious groups in relation to national economic reforms.

50. In 2024, UNDP integrated interreligious and intercultural dialogue into its programming across 29 countries. Notable examples included equipping women religious leaders to act as mediators, justice advocates and interfaith conveners in Algeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Iraq, Kenya, Mauritania and Somalia. In Iraq, UNDP

⁴⁴ <https://grace.unodc.org>.

convened the first national gathering of 25 women religious peacebuilders from eight faith traditions to shape inclusive dialogue actions. In addition, 11 women's peace groups and 11 youth peace groups supported survivors of Da'esh-related violence through dialogue and community healing. Over 10,000 young people in Bangladesh, Cabo Verde, Georgia, Libya and North Macedonia led artistic, civic and digital initiatives to challenge hate speech and polarization. In the Sudan, 180 youth peace ambassadors and 640 leaders, including faith actors, were trained in conflict resolution and psychosocial support. In Kenya, Pakistan, the Philippines, Somalia, the Sudan and Tajikistan, UNDP supported insider mediators, clerics and interfaith networks to counter hate speech, misinformation and radicalization.

51. In 2024, IOM Iraq partnered with the Halabja Disabled Organization to empower 25 women religious leaders, who subsequently engaged 250 young people in interfaith dialogue, addressing the root causes of extremism. It also worked with Al Erada Organization for Relief and Development in 2025 to foster unified religious dialogue among 50 Muslim, Christian and Yazidi leaders to build trust, strengthen interfaith networks and enhance community resilience against extremism and hate speech. Most recently, it started to provide protection support to ethnic minorities in coordination with civil society and Christian and Yazidi communities in northern Iraq. To build mutual understanding across cultural and ethnic divides, IOM Benin has partnered with the office of the mayor of Malanville since 2024 and organized intercommunity dialogues during Ramadan for nearly 1,200 participants from diverse ethnic groups, including 420 women and 700 young people. Finally, in the Sudan, IOM collaborated with the Darfur Development and Reconstruction Agency in 2025 to promote inclusive intergenerational dialogue among community and youth leaders, including representatives of displaced and host communities, building trust and interfaith connections and enhancing community resilience against hate speech and radicalization. Together with Sawa Sudan for Development and Humanitarian Aid, it trained 650 women and young people from conflict-affected communities in Blue Nile State on mediation, conflict resolution and social cohesion in 2025.

52. During 2023 and 2024, under the Intercultural Innovation Hub, a joint initiative of the Alliance of Civilizations and the BMW Group, with the support of Accenture, the Alliance of Civilizations provided financial assistance and capacity-building support to civil society in Australia, Brazil, Colombia, Germany, Guatemala, Indonesia, Israel, Jordan, Mexico and South Africa to scale up innovative projects that promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue. The selected organizations strengthened their institutional capacities, enhanced project implementation and maximized long-term sustainability and the impact of their interventions. Their projects had an impact on more than 400,000 beneficiaries, as reported by the Alliance.

VI. Recommendations

53. Ensuring the meaningful participation of religious leaders, faith-based organizations and civil society, as well as promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue, remained important in the advocacy, policy and capacity-building initiatives of the United Nations and its agencies, funds and programmes.

54. Building on the present report, the following recommendations are submitted for the consideration of Member States:

(a) Welcome and encourage greater collaboration of the United Nations entities with the multi-faith civil society groups under the umbrella of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development, fostering more substantial synergies and joint advocacy;

(b) Support and implement projects and initiatives and long-term strategies that leverage intercultural and interreligious dialogue for peacebuilding, sustainable development and human rights for all, in collaboration with existing United Nations prevention mechanisms. Empowering local communities, including young people and women, strengthens community resilience and social cohesion, fosters mutual understanding and ensures that no one is left behind based on religion, belief, ethnicity, gender, age or disability or any other status;

(c) Support new initiatives that strive to address religious bigotry and create communities grounded in respect for diversity and human rights for all, in line with the collective responsibility to stand up and speak out against all forms of hatred based on religion, belief or ethnicity;

(d) Strengthen responses to religious intolerance and discrimination through educational initiatives, in cooperation with civil society, academic institutions and public agencies, leveraging knowledge tools, courses and toolkits;

(e) Provide more support and agency in exploring the role of religious leaders in conflict prevention. At a time of rising and entrenched conflicts, strategic engagement of religious leaders, actors and communities in dialogue, mediation and prevention efforts can bridge the gaps and support these critical endeavours;

(f) Strengthen the engagement and leadership of faith-based organizations and faith leaders in the humanitarian response and in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals to enhance protection and opportunities for the most vulnerable;

(g) Amid terrorist threats and attacks on places of worship and religious sites, bolster preventive measures and enhance the resilience of faith-based communities and facilities in line with the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites;

(h) Call for investing more efforts in embedding intercultural perspectives in emerging technology governance, especially artificial intelligence. As religion plays a unique role in guiding human values amid the rise of artificial intelligence, greater interfaith collaboration is imperative to ensure that artificial intelligence systems respect diverse perspectives across all faith spectrums.
