PEACE AMONG THE PEOPLE

Interreligious Action for Peace and Inclusive Communities

Documentation of the International and Interfaith Conference on Peace and Inclusive Communities

Wuppertal, Germany, July 2017

Edited by Theodor Rathgeber and Jochen Motte

In July 2017, more than eighty people from Africa, Asia, and Germany, representing different religious communities from thirteen countries, attended a conference in Wuppertal, Germany. They came to discuss "Peace Among the People – Interreligious Action for Peace and Inclusive Communities".

This book is a compilation of various models of interreligious action for peace and inclusive communities in multireligious and intercultural contexts from Germany, Tanzania, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia. Theological, historical, and country-specific reflections are included.

The joint statement expressing the commitment of the participants to continue to work together in different contexts for peace and inclusive communities is documented in this book as well.

The international conference was organised by the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland, the Evangelical Church of Westphalia, the German Commission of Justice and Peace, and the United Evangelical Mission.

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Peace Among the People - Interreligious Action for Peace and Inclusive Communities

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EVANGELISCHE KIRCHE IM RHEINLAND

Evangelical Church of Westphalia

JUSTITIA ET PAX

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For Human Rights

Publication of the Department
for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation
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Volume 19

"Peace Among the People"

Interreligious Action for Peace and Inclusive Communities

Documentation of the International and Interfaith
Conference on Peace and Inclusive Communities

Wuppertal, Germany, 13-16 July 2017

Edited by Theodor Rathgeber and Jochen Motte

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DEUTSCHE KOMMISSION
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PREVIEW

The conference "Peace Among the People – Interreligious Action for Peace and Inclusive Communities" included more than eighty people from Africa, Asia, and Germany, representing different religious communities from thirteen countries. Held in Wuppertal, Germany in July 2017, "Peace Among the People" was organised by the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland, the Evangelical Church of Westphalia, the German Commission of Justice and Peace, and the United Evangelical Mission. Participants in the conference shared their knowledge about models of interreligious action for peace and inclusive communities in multireligious and intercultural contexts such as Germany, Tanzania, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia.

The participants also met with people in Unna-Massen, Duisburg, where Jews, Muslims, and Christians are practising interreligious cooperation successfully. At the end of the conference, the attendees walked through Wuppertal together in a pilgrimage for justice and peace, ending the gathering with a spiritual worship celebration in a city church. In a joint statement, participants in the conference expressed their commitment to continue to work together in different contexts for peace and inclusive communities. *"The spirit of God (Buddhist* dhamma*) has the power to renew and transform our own lives and our religious communities. It calls us and empowers us to overcome violence together and to live out the potential for peace in our respective religions, nurturing a society without exclusion."*

This documentation of the conference makes the contributions from the participants available to a broader audience, along with the Joint Statement and other materials. The organizers express their sincere thanks to Dr Theodor Rathgeber, who edited the publication; Marion Unger, who collaborated on the documentation in order to share stories and messages from the conference; and Brunhild von Local, who coordinated the editing process.

The positive and encouraging feedback from participants has ensured that the journey towards peace and inclusive communities shall be continued and that the organizers shall provide further platforms of interreligious sharing, learning, and action.

Annette Muhr Nelson, Evangelical Church of Westphalia
Daniel Legutke, German Commission of Justice and Peace
Rafael Nikodemus, Evangelical Church in the Rhineland
Jochen Motte, United Evangelical Mission

Wuppertal, August 2018

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INTRODUCTION

Jochen Motte

The international and interreligious Conference for Peace and Inclusive Communities was organized by the German Commission of Justice and Peace, the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland (EKiR), the Evangelical Church of Westphalia (EKvW), and the United Evangelical Mission (UEM). The four-day conference took place in Wuppertal on 13-16 July, 2017 and was attended by a large number of religious leaders and representatives, as well as human rights experts from Indonesia, Tanzania, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, and Germany.[1] The conference dealt with interreligious aspects of peace and inclusivity and with how religious actors in different societies might contribute to holding states accountable in promoting, protecting, and fulfilling human rights and human dignity.

As churches and church organizations working in Germany, together with ecumenical partners worldwide, we observe with great concern the growing xenophobia, racism, violent extremism, and terror attacks in many regions of the world and here in Germany. The churches and church-based organizations mentioned above have many years of commitment behind them in the form of interreligious dialogue, joint programmes and campaigns for peace, and efforts at overcoming violence to address common concerns in our societies, in cooperation with our partners worldwide.

Churches and church organizations in Germany have historically failed to prevent racist ideologies, extremism, and state terrorism from taking root. This is especially true of the era of National Socialism and fascism, when more than six million Jews were killed, as were members of other minorities and political parties opposing the Nazi regime; fifty-six million people died in the Second World War. With these historical experiences still fresh in our minds, we churches and church organizations feel obliged to resist any forms of racism, discrimination, violent extremism, xenophobia, or state terrorism which exclude people or endanger the peaceful and inclusive evolution of our society.

Deadly terror attacks like those in July 2016 in Nice (86 fatalities), December 2016 at a Christmas market in Berlin (12 dead), May 2017 in Manchester (19

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1 Some 25 participants from Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, DR Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania, Namibia, Kenya, Germany, and Belgium attended the conference as well and continued to deepen their knowledge during a two-week summer school training hosted by the UEM.

dead), and June 2017 in London (7) have attracted great attention in the Western media. Less known is that most of the victims of terrorism worldwide are in non-Western countries. According to the Global Terrorism Index 2016, five countries accounted for 72 per cent of all deaths from terrorism: Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Syria.

Many people today perceive religion as a cause of discrimination, violence, extremism, and conflict within societies. At the same time, followers of religions are falling victim to discrimination because of actions by civil society or even the state. In all parts of the world, religious groups have been affected by growing intolerance and violence. Between 2014 and 2016, 112 attacks were reported on worship buildings in just three provinces in central Germany (Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, and Thuringia). Two thirds of the attacks were committed against churches, one third against mosques and synagogues. Also worrying is the high number of attacks on refugee shelters in Germany, with almost a thousand such incidents registered in 2016. Extremism seems to fuel extremism or counterextremism, and vice versa.

Whereas the media tends to focus on violence based on religion, we often forget that in many parts of the world, interreligious networks were long ago established to foster close relationships between different religious groups at the local and regional levels, defend religious freedom, and promote peace within our societies. This is why the conference has focused on these aspects and invited some de facto "ambassadors" of interreligious action to contribute to the open discussions. Participants in the conference heard stories of hope from different countries with different cultural and religious backgrounds, some of which are reflected in the articles in this collection. With this volume, we hope that by this conference reader we may contribute more concrete experiences of strengthening local, regional, and international interreligious networking for peace and inclusive communities.

By this conference reader, we intend to share the information and the message from this conference with the communities represented at Wuppertal and beyond, and to distribute these practical findings for protecting peace and human rights. The diversity of experiences and insights into how peace can be established constitute a substantial contribution to maintaining peace amidst the adverse impacts of globalization on human rights. In this era, many people have been left behind and many are attracted to simple answers. The calls of false prophets are not mere history. The agents of hate and violence are very present.

I. CHALLENGES

THE GLOBAL CHALLENGE TO FAITH-BASED COMMUNITIES FROM RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM

Heiner Bielefeldt (Germany)

The time given may not allow me to exhaust the aspects which, according to my understanding, should be addressed on such a subject. I therefore will briefly highlight some of the main elements. I am pleased to have the opportunity to encourage this work together, in times when we face many horrible manifestations of violence in the name of religion. To mention only a few examples, we have DAESH, the so-called Islamic and the so-called state; the paramilitary organization RSS[2] in India, which mobilizes against Muslims and Christians in the name of a Hindu nation; Movement 969, a nationalist movement in Myanmar with reference to Buddhism; and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda. We can observe many other phenomena such as terrorist organizations, vigilante groups, groups receiving support from government agencies, and sometimes even direct involvement by the government to provide the perpetrators with impunity.

The usual suspect in mainstream discourse is Islam, of which it is argued that violence is linked with the essence of this religion. Against the background of the aforementioned examples, we can already make a first distinction: there are always human beings who will commit crimes while invoking religious purposes. A second distinction: we can note elements of distance between religion and violence. We face warfare with religious overtones, but religion is not the genuine aspect. In Yemen, the root causes of the armed conflict are political. The violence does not directly flow from the essence of the religion. We are often too quick to label conflicts as being religious while we underrate the question of social justice. Sometimes religion comes in at a later stage in conflicts, as an additional layer. This is not religious violence, in principal, but violence in the name of religion. Violence does not flow from the essence of religion.

We are called to de-link these concepts, to challenge such links which in their nature are artificial. We can further observe that such links are frequently made in a political environment, for instance one characterized by historical

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2 *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh*, English: National Volunteer Organization, based on the principles of the *hindutva*, a term which refers to orienting India's state and society in accordance with strict Hindu rules.

trauma, such as the partition of the South Asian subcontinent in 1947. Another factor in many serious human rights violations is corruption, especially when it is endemic and the trust in public institutions therefore erodes. When there is no reliable public state, no trust in the functioning of public institutions, then tribal, clan, mafia, and other networks, including religious networks, become the bodies on which one can rely. Social polarization, loss of law, mass unemployment, gaps in gender equality, prevalence of subcultures: when these aspects are perceived in terms of apocalyptic circumstances, nationalist ideologies spread. The perception of 'us' vs 'them' will then proliferate. Current examples include India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Hungary, and Russia.

Nevertheless, religious factors are evident, and it would be too easy to blame only the political factors. The conclusion that these phenomena have nothing to do with Islam, Christianity, or Buddhism, etc., would be wrong as well. Religion is involved, since conflicts in the name of religion find an echo in religious communities. Thus, religious communities must take them seriously. A dismissive mantra is as wrong as attributing an essentialist link to religion. Washing one's hands of this not enough. I repeat: there is a political abuse of religion, but it is an abuse from outside and from inside. Machiavellian policy does not work without an internal echo.

How we can do justice to these challenges? People of faith are responsible in terms of clearly rejecting violence. This is not happening enough. The overall perception prevails that Buddhist monks in Myanmar or Sri Lanka promote the idea of Buddhism in the name of collective selfishness. The Hindu nationalists have utterly perverted the cosmos of Hinduism into a narrow identity. With reference to the Quran, a merciful god is turned into a master of violence. The Christian understanding of loving one's neighbour is turned into an apocalyptic message against the enemy. People of faith have the responsibility to provide a clear message and say no to these kinds of disturbed interpretations.

There is a second responsibility. People of faith are challenged to seek credibility and, therefore, to tackle history in a self-critical manner. History is complicated, and religion has been involved in effacing national identity, effecting stigmatization, mobilizing resentments, and perpetuating homophobic stereotypes. For example, Christianity is embedded into a patriarchal culture.

A third component of responsibility relates to our support of each other, our seeking of interreligious communication and cooperation. Generally speaking, when talking about interreligious communication, we need a dialogue format which also includes non-religious people, which implies that we seek dialogue irrespective of the degree of a person's belief. Whatever the approach, people of faith are called to create trust and cross boundaries.

Heiner Bielefeldt

Regardless of the country's other aspects, Lebanon exhibits highly developed interreligious communication. The celebration of St Mary's Annunciation on March 25 is a public holiday, for instance. The Catholic Church rings its bells, while the first speaker in the main church is an imam. Though traditional holidays are full of symbolic meaning, it makes a difference when strong symbols are combined with personal commitment. Of similar significance is the personal commitment of prison chaplains who attend to both Christians and Muslims. Given that the prison is a breeding ground for extremism, such commitment is a strong and significant contribution to building trust.

In Sierra Leone, a country plagued by bad news such as the Ebola crisis, we also see some positive spirit of cooperation, for example the Inter-Religious Council composed of Muslims (majority) and Christians of different denominations. Such cooperation is a driving force for truth and reconciliation, for instance shaping the Commission on Warfare and Atrocities that has documented the details of the former civil war. In Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, there was a joint ceremony in which a member of the Ahmadiyya spoke the prayer and a Sunni Imam said the amen, and the Ahmadiyya run a number of schools with pupils taught by both Sunni and Shia teachers. In addition, the Inter-Religious Council pressed the defeated electoral party to accept the defeat, an extraordinary activity that went almost unreported in our Western media that emphasizes sensational events.

All of these examples reveal forms of successful cooperation under complicated circumstances. They are living proof that hatred is no natural law that Sunnis and Sufis are not hostile by nature, and that hatred has nothing to do with essentialism, is not a natural disaster but artificially and arbitrarily imposed.

People of faith are called to rebuild trust in society, to de-link religion and violence, and to overcome dismissive mantras and fatalistic attitudes. Let us make the difference.

Responses

Sheikh Adinani Masud Ntinabo (Tanzania)

Violent extremism indeed has nothing to do with religion. Violent extremism lacks two things: humanity and human compassion, as well as knowledge. I share the observation that preventing violence requires the commitment of each individual, as you can always find a person who is using abusive language. In our country, sometimes you are faced with the phenomenon that you may call the police to prevent such a person from continuing their abusive language, but that the person is often released again after a short arrest. A similar situation occurs in Nigeria: there are many crises in Nigeria, but the only news from the country refers to the crises based on religion. Boko Haram do expressly promote Islam with bloodshed, it is true, but what about land rights, poverty, unemployment?

In our country, children grow up with polluted minds. So you need to teach students not to engage in violence and extremism. The bishop did so in a very tough situation: every year on Easter, he hosts a conference with students from Christian and Islamic backgrounds. Vice versa, the Muslim community invites Christians when they celebrate the birthday of the Prophet. Despite such positive examples, extremism still exists, the abusive language continues, for instance from terrorist groups, and it is risky to speak out publicly against the legitimacy of violence.

We need to keep doing three things: First, because extremists do not consider humanity, we have to tackle tolerance and love. We may even love the extremists and call for respect in the name of Mohammed. Furthermore, we should empower those who are keen for more knowledge. For instance, thirty imams and twenty priests are meeting in Tanzania, doing just the same as here in Wuppertal, convinced that we are all children of Abraham.

It is true that there are people who understand their belief of serving Islam to involve committing violence. You can always misunderstand the Quran, even though Mohammed's walk to Medina teaches us not to resort to violent extremism. If you study Islam well, you cannot engage in extremism. Obviously, history shows us that there has always been an extremist and radicalized reading of the book. But today, we are in a position to sort this out through dialogue. There is no such thing as a supreme institution that will ultimately interpret the books and stories. Such interpretation has always been historically embedded. A conference like the one here in Wuppertal is an important element in stressing

that we adequately address these books and the acts of violence in them. Intra-religious diversity matters. And we have to start at the grass roots, with children, preschools, and parents.

Monk Ven Madampagama Assaji Thero (Sri Lanka)

In Sri Lanka, we have four major religious groups: Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, and Christians. The Theravada concept of Buddhism comprises approximately 70 per cent of the population of Sri Lanka, nearly all of them Sinhalese-speaking. The country has been a centre of Theravada scholarship and learning since the introduction of Buddhism in the third century BCE. Sri Lanka has been oriented towards Buddhist institutions throughout most of its history. Currently there are around six thousand Buddhist monasteries on Sri Lanka, with approximately fifteen thousand monks. According to Theravada Buddhism, there are four major sins with disastrous consequences: murdering one's own mother, murdering one's own father, shedding the blood of a religious leader, and creating disunity among religious leaders. As a result of the war in Sri Lanka, we have now have a rather increasing disunity within the religious communities.

We have three subdivisions within Buddhism in Sri Lanka: Anuradhapura Maha Viharaya, Abhayagiri Vihāra, and Jetavanaramaya. Anuradhapura Maha Viharaya was the first tradition to be established. Abhayagiri Vihāra and Jetavanaramaya emerged when monks broke with the Maha Viharaya tradition. It is said among Buddhist extremists that Buddhists are the liberators of the country. This standpoint rejects the real understanding of Buddhism, as Lord Buddha himself rejected the supremacy of country, nationalism, and tribalism. Buddhists respect all beings as a matter of principle.

It is interesting to note that one of the results of Buddhist extremism inside Sri Lanka is that Buddhism itself has suffered. The monks are now of very different opinions on the issue of unity, and people involved in politics, government, and political parties all have opinions as well. We have to acknowledge that currently we have a strong element among the Sinhalese people that supports the extremist view within Sri Lankan Buddhism. Religion is being misused for personal or alien interests. This is an obstacle to the coexistence desired. The visits by extremist monks from Myanmar, and vice versa, are not helpful at all for coexistence either.

For this reason, a broad discussion is underway in Sri Lanka on constitutional reform and necessary amendments. Many people say there should be an

explicit mention of Buddhism in the new constitution, while others say that the new constitution should acknowledge the contributions to Sri Lanka in an equal way. Such disparate opinions are not only reflected within politics and religion, but also within the business realm, which seems to be similarly divided and plagued by the same mistrust and suspicion among its leaders. In the face of the enormous tasks ahead with respect to poverty, mass unemployment, major investment, and others, the ideological construction of reality is not useful and needs to be clarified. Religious leaders can certainly play a vital role in this, in particular in countering extremism.

II. THE CHANGING ROLE OF RELIGION IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

DO RELIGIONS HAVE A COMMON RESPONSIBILITY WORLDWIDE TO PROMOTE PEACE AT THE LOCAL, NATIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL?

Thoughts on How Religions Share Responsibility for Peace

Annette Kurschus (Präses [President] of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia; EKvW)

I thank you for this opportunity to reflect with all of you on the question of whether religions share a local, regional, and worldwide responsibility for peace. Let me contribute with five aspects.

I. As the leading pastor of a large Protestant Church and the deputy chair of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), I would first like to underline that, for me, the question can only be: How do we take responsibility for peace in our own tradition? And how do we finally live up to the age-old obligation and potential of religious faith to pursue peace? I am fairly sure the leaders from other religions would ask this question of their own traditions as well.

Martin Luther once said:

"Where peace is, there is half of heaven. Whoever has two cows should give one away to keep the peace. It is better to have one cow in peace than two in war." And he added immediately: "You must not think that peace will run after you; on the contrary, anger and bitterness will follow you, so that you will be tempted to repay evil with evil. But turn from evil to good, pursue peace yourself, even undergoing suffering, and do what you can ... You ... must follow and run after peace."

II. These short statements have raised central points on which we religious leaders can perhaps largely agree. First, there is a connection between peace and justice, between conflict and material inequality. Then there is the dynamic inherent in violence and its potential for escalation, which does not simply disappear

by itself, but needs to be actively broken down – through suffering and action. Finally – if that is true – what is the source of the internal and external forces needed for this pursuit of peace?

And precisely here – in the strengthening of human yearning for peace and hope, for love and justice through the relationship with God, to a ground, a power, a goodness that is greater than ourselves, and to the forces emanating from it – I see the core of what religions can do, must do, and already do. "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body," says the New Testament (Colossians 3:15), where this "one body" comprises no less than the whole cosmos – "all things in heaven and earth" (Col 1:15-20).

III. However, we cannot talk nowadays of religion as a force for peacemaking without at the same time being confronted with its weakness in that respect and, indeed, with its forces of violence. Violence and terrorism occurring around the world now seem to be motivated by religion. Political groups understand how to instrumentalize violent religious fundamentalists for their own purposes.

It is often said that, while this violence takes a religious guise, in reality its roots are social, economic, educational, or cultural – and so it basically has nothing to do with religion or God. While this may often be true, as an explanation it falls short. It is too simple because – conversely – wherever religions contribute to justice and peace, and where faith sees God at work, we can name cultural, economic, social, and educational – i.e., human – reasons for that.

It is true to say that it is always people who exercise violence, bring death, and sow war. The perpetrators are not religions, holy books, or individual verses as such. But religions are always lived by people. Religions are systems of ethics and morality, founding narratives and holy rites of economics and social affairs, of education and culture. And a religion that allegedly has "nothing to do" with any of these areas must ask what it does have to do with.

When people can relate to higher things, even to the highest, it focuses and broadens their lives. It releases forces of thought and action; forces of 'me' and 'we', of opening and demarcation. Joy and fear grow side by side, humility and conceit, unrest and serenity, love of life, and courage in death. That is cheering, but not harmless. It can also be dangerous.

For this reason, many – presumably all – religious traditions (certainly those of the Hebrew Bible and the Christian Bible, as Holy Scriptures) are critical of religion – and at first self-critical. Because God is there for all things and all people, the Ten Commandments urge people not to mistake themselves for God, not to make an image of God, and not to "take the name of the Lord in vain".

Annette Kurschus

Even God's Son, the gospels say, was tempted to betray God and himself with great deeds, splendour, and the desire for power. It is probably no accident that the gospels describe those who are closest to Jesus – the disciples – as much slower to understand than "the sinners and tax-collectors".

Responsibility for peace on the part of religions involves being aware of the way we can ourselves put faith at risk, and discovering and cultivating our own self-critical traditions. It is my conviction that where faith does this, it will not lose God, and at the same time it will retain its own humanity.

IV. I associate the key word "humanity" with a broader dimension of religious responsibility for peace. At present we are witnessing a situation where politicians and the media in European secular societies are quick to define religions and faith as a problem for peace, and to call for more peace between religions. At the same time, however, NGOs and international organizations are increasingly discovering the potential to build peace that is inherent in faith: faith has the strength to reconcile, to deal with violence and trauma, and to foster development. Both are important, both are right – and both are valuable.

However, it seems to me that dialogue in the opposite direction is just as important. Representatives of religions must face up to people in politics, society, and business with their multiple connections, constraints, and fears, just as American Quakers did in the 1950s – they called this "speaking truth to power". Religious leaders have the job of reminding societal and economic actors of their own responsibility for peace, in the name of humanity. That includes courage and humility, reason and expertise, and a great trust in the power of God to move hearts and minds and hands. The church – to quote an important document of Protestant tradition in Europe written here in Wuppertal – "calls to mind the Kingdom of God and God's ... righteousness and the responsibility both of rulers and the ruled" (Barmen Theological Declaration, Thesis V).

V. Of course, such calling to mind happens all the more credibly and powerfully the more the religions themselves set an active example in making peace. Certainly, this still happens. Every prayer that expresses the yearning for peace – in churches and mosques, in synagogues and temples – is an effective, peacebuilding activity. Likewise, following from such prayer, so is every joint statement, every demonstration, every appeal, and every conference. The dialogue of religions, of talking to each other about our respective faith, wrestling with our differences together and together seeking peace, all this is in itself peacebuilding.

Yet, I am convinced that religions in the future will have to ask more intensive and more imaginative questions about how to engage in joint action. In connection with what has been called the migration crisis, in autumn 2015, there

have been impressive and touching examples of such spontaneous common action by people from different religions and communities.

Going beyond such individual action stemming from our own faith-based motivation to mount joint activities and campaigns for peace and justice, care for creation, and respect for human dignity – all of this should be fundamentally and structurally possible, and we should be constantly trying it out. In doing so, we will not be silent about our own experiences with God, let alone cease to have them. On the contrary: I suspect that we will get to know God in a new and profound way as we act with, and for, others.

How We See Changes in Religion

Syafiq A. Mughni (Indonesia)

As people of belief, we state that religion is given by God, while its exercise differs from time to time inside and outside. Sometimes we find a fruitful competition; sometimes it is mere concurrence, even a crusade. There are many examples in history. The Christians know their own history; in Islam, for instance, religion was misused as a justification for slavery.

This conference confronts us with the matter of changes today. We have to deal with global issues, including human rights. We are faced with the question of whether the Universal Declaration on Human Rights may sometimes compromise theology in terms of pluralism, multiculturalism, or nationalism. Obviously, we find sufficient substance for contemplation within the holy texts, but we have to find the compromise with modern times.

I will quote Hans Küng, if I may, and his approach to global ethics for all human beings irrespective of their beliefs. He acknowledged that we are living in a postmodern world with new challenges and values. Compared to the leading values of the age of modernity – reason, progress, and nation – which have been shaken by two world wars, we are now confronted with new ecological, anthropological, and social dimensions. With respect to the ecological dimension, partnership with nature is required instead of domination and exploitation. Regarding the anthropological dimension, we need to establish equality for women and partnership between men and women instead of dominant and discriminatory male privileges. As for the social dimension, we need to advocate for distributive justice for all peoples and individuals instead of the antagonisms between poor and rich classes, and between poor countries and rich countries as

well. We have to discuss some of these issues; otherwise, we will be thrown into extremism. No doubt, we remain people of belief, but let us teach the meaning of the text without bias. Putting our own selfish interest first is misuse.

We have to promote the progressive understanding and contextualization of our holy texts and the substance of our religion in order to address the real problems of today. We have to pay attention to global ethics, share the theology for our life, and promote dialogue from the international to the local level. We have to overcome situations in which sometimes every meeting with religious leaders generates a severe conflict with reference to a religion. We as religious leaders have to lead the cooperation among ourselves and establish a humanitarian caucus. We have to foster the feeling of common goals and togetherness, in particular in times of disaster. Where to start? Education is one powerful yet slowly moving force.

Tolerance in Zanzibar

Sheikh Fadhil Suleiman Soraga (Zanzibar/Tanzania)

You may know that Zanzibar is commonly identified as the place from which people of Islamic belief spread out to East and Central Africa. The Arab Muslims arrived at Zanzibar in the eighth century, followed by Muslim merchants from territories in the Indian Ocean. The sultans of Oman maintained control over Zanzibar for a long period, until the nineteenth century. The Muslim community was always cosmopolitan and developed its own distinctive Swahili culture. Today, we continue to have a large number of members belonging to Sufi traditions. There is also a notable quantity of Ahmadiyya living in Zanzibar. Islam is the most prominent religion in Zanzibar today. About 99 per cent of the population is Muslim. On issues of religion, sheikhs have been the institutional reference and religious authority.

As a nation, Zanzibar has maintained substantial autonomy but has formed part of the Union of Tanzania since 1964. In that year, a bloody revolution killed thousands of Arab and Indian people, and thousands more were expelled and expropriated. The then People's Republic of Zanzibar and Pemba merged with the mainland Tanganyika, later subsumed into Tanzania, of which Zanzibar remains a semi-autonomous region. One of the main impacts of the revolution was to break the power of the Arab and the Asian ruling sectors who had held it for around two hundred years. The government at the time used the revolu-

tion to implement reforms, including removing power from the Arab rulers. The Zanzibar civil service is now an organization almost entirely led by people of African descent. The revolutionary government instituted social reforms such as free healthcare and opened up the education system to African students.

Despite the merger with Tanzania, Zanzibar retained a Revolutionary Council and House of Representatives, the latter of which was established in 1980. Prior to this, the Revolutionary Council had held both the executive and legislative functions for sixteen years. When things changed in early 1980, we, the students of Islam, had the chance to go and learn outside. Each person returned home with his or her own ideas on Islam and the experience that in Islamic tradition, there are many schools, and no one school has an exclusive interpretation.

Unfortunately, this diverse setting did not impact the power environment in our society. Quite the contrary: after elections in October 2000, Zanzibar experienced a massacre in January 2001 when the army and police shot into crowds of protesters. In 2005 and afterwards, violence erupted again, and negotiations for a long-term resolution to the tensions among political rivals began, but there were repeated setbacks. I do not want to go into further details of our history, but you may now have an idea that Zanzibar has not only a legacy of cosmopolitan togetherness but also of struggles to alter the power structures by violence and to bring about a certain homogeneity of the island by force.

The aforementioned fact that Christians in Zanzibar tend to celebrate Easter with Muslims is one part of our legacy. The other part is formed by the masses of people who wish to make Zanzibar a homogeneous Muslim state. They have not hesitated to set fire to Christian churches. In 2012, an influential group committed many extremist actions, including acid attacks, of which I was also a victim.

I am fighting against extremism in my personal capacity as well. We invite various stakeholders to our schools and workshops, including people of different Muslim backgrounds, male and female. We encourage people to go to Abyssinia (Ethiopia) with the idea that we should come into contact with some of the Christian scriptures. Historically, Abyssinia welcomed Muslims, and the religious tolerance there included intermarriage between people of different beliefs. What we experienced during the exposure part of this conference should be transferred to the world: a Christian community that hosts Muslims. We Zanzibar Muslims also need to reorganize our idea of community, to invite each other to come together, and to educate each other in tolerance, respect, and forgiveness.

The Pluralistic Society of Indonesia

Henriette Hutabarat-Lebang (Indonesia)

Indonesia is a pluralistic society in terms of ethnicity, cultures, religion, and social status. For many centuries, Indonesian people have lived in a pluralistic society, and during this time they have learned to live together peacefully. This situation is enhanced by the strong spirit of community rooted in traditional beliefs or spirituality. The values of respecting difference and promoting the spirit of harmony are central to the life of the people. Indonesians are willing to share whatever resources they have with other members of their respective community. Many problems and disputes in a community are resolved through a communal meeting and the sharing of food.

The founders of Indonesia were very much aware of the plurality of Indonesia's communities. They united these pluralistic communities into a democratic nation under the motto of "unity in diversity". The founding principle was the concept of Pancasila. Despite the idea of Indonesia as an Islamic state – as laid down in the Jakarta Charter, for instance, which underlines the implementation of Sharia law – the principles of Pancasila prevailed: neither religion nor secular state. Pancasila corresponds to a common value of the Indonesian people: to help one another.

This does not prevent a belief in the One and Only God, but the state is run based on a just and civilized humanity. The unity of Indonesia is guided by democracy and the inner wisdom of unanimity arising out of deliberations among representatives, as well as by social justice for all people of Indonesia.

Nevertheless, we note with great concern the continuous erosion of community-centred life. There is a growing social disintegration characterized primarily by conflicts along ethnic and religious lines. The spirit of intolerance is growing rapidly, and people tend to go back to their primordial identities: ethnicity, religion, religious denomination. Why? I think we feel the impact of globalization and the ensuing crisis in our identity. People feel confused in the midst of the homogenization of culture in terms of food, hairstyle, and lifestyle, as varieties of local cultures have been pushed aside. Globalization implies a market economy paradigm, an orientation towards profit, individualism, materialism, consumerism, and greed. Poverty and injustice often trigger violence. This is why reviving primordial identity leads to extremism, with people believing that their own culture or their own religion is the best. This is combined with rampant corruption, a lack of consistency in implementation of the law, an inability

to fill the public space with common commitment – and vice versa, in which the public space is easily hijacked by fundamentalist concepts and politicized religion. These promote and spread the fear that the liberal or secular society is determined to destroy the people's way of life.

Against this background, we have a common responsibility. People of different faiths need to work together in order to transform the social and economic injustices into a consideration for the welfare or fullness of life of all people and God's creation. People should grow beyond having prejudice and stigma against others, respecting each other's differences and the spirit of tolerance. While this is easier said than implemented, we need to build understanding among ourselves and facilitate dialogue in life among different religions, especially at local levels. In addition, on religious grounds, we demand a spirituality of peace and justice for all based on Holy Scriptures and local wisdom. We should not forget the crucial role of the government to protect the rights of all citizens, including the rights of religious freedom, freedom of expression, and others. When public speech is destroyed, people's trust is broken as well. Dialogue means building trust, so the responses of the Indonesian churches should start with dialogue and a new holistic understanding of mission. While we seek the truth, let us acknowledge that we are not God.

Henriette Hutabarat-Lebang

RELIGION, THE STATE, AND CIVIL SOCIETY

The Importance of Peacebuilding
The Role of Women in Interreligious Action

Siti Musdah Mulia (Indonesia)

As we know, peacebuilding refers to a set of initiatives by diverse actors in government and civil society to address the root causes of violence and protect civilians before, during, and after violent conflict. The ultimate objective of peacebuilding is to reduce and eliminate the frequency and severity of violent conflict. Peacebuilding seeks to prevent, reduce, and transform violence, and to help people recover from violence in all its forms. Strategic peacebuilding recognizes the complexity of the tasks required to build peace.

Peacebuilding is strategic when resources, actors, and approaches are coordinated to accomplish multiple goals and address multiple issues for the long term. In my experience, peacebuilding is a very complex phenomenon interlinking democratization, infrastructure, security, education, human rights, religion, and many other topics. Peacebuilding is also something that is quite simply impossible in the short term; peacebuilding requires years of great and sustained efforts to ensure that all needs are met in both the short and the long term.

I believe that women play a vital role in peacebuilding, particularly in securing the three pillars of sustainable peace: economic recovery and reconciliation; social cohesion and development; and political legitimacy, security, and governance. In reality, however, women have traditionally played a limited role in peacebuilding processes even though they often bear the responsibility to provide for their families' basic needs in the aftermath of violent conflict. The patriarchal cultures in many societies prevent those societies from recognizing the role women can play in peacebuilding.

Barriers to peacebuilding in Indonesia
In my experience, the core tenets of peacebuilding are to safeguard human beings against harm, create a secure environment, enhance human development, radiate the soul, strengthen religious piety, increase faith and love, create tranquility in the home, foster healthy families, help children to live fruitful lives, increase wealth, bring prosperity to nations, promote individual responsibility, strengthen our inner resources, foster creative thinking, allow culture and the arts to flourish, heighten respect and appreciation for others, recognize all hu-

mans as equal, and affirm that all religions support peace. In reality, however, it is difficult to improve our peacebuilding efforts. There are at least four barriers to improving peacebuilding efforts in Indonesia.

I. Cultural barriers: A number of studies on peacebuilding in Indonesia have explained that the main obstacle in peacebuilding is the cultural barriers. Indonesian people still hold fast to the values of gender inequality, feudalism, and intolerance, which are not conducive to the implementation of democracy and human rights. Our society continues to uphold the values of patriarchal culture, which are not conducive to the principle of democracy. Indicators of such a culture include the fact that our society still adheres to beliefs that give preference according to sex. In all matters, men have the advantage over women, and boys have priority over girls. This culture is deeply interwoven in the society and introduced into all aspects of life, such as in religion, education, economics, and politics. The culture indoctrinates into the society that a husband is the leader of the family. The man is the master, the boss of the household. One consequence of this is that a woman is nothing but a maid, a domestic servant whose place of activity is never far from the kitchen. Men are also in charge of the decision-making at home. As a result, many women do not have the liberty of choosing their leader or making other important decisions with an impact on their lives.

II. Structural barriers: Structural obstacles exist in the form of discriminatory public policies and laws, particularly towards women, minority religion groups, and vulnerable people. The ICRP (Indonesian Conference on Religion and Peace) has reported approximately 147 discriminatory regulations in regards to the implementation of democracy and fulfilment of human rights. As long as those laws are permitted to prevail, there will always be the strong potential for violence and conflict in society.

Let me elaborate on some of these discriminatory regulations. First, Indonesian law on citizenship sets out only six religions that are acknowledged by the state. At present, the government only recognizes the fulfilment of civil and political rights for members of these six religions. Of course these regulations are absolutely in contradiction to the principle of democracy. As a result, followers of religions other than the six religions mentioned are not permitted to publicly declare their religion on their identity cards, marriage certificates, and other official documents. This means that the members of other religions like Baha'i, Sikhism, Tao, and Judaism, and all of the indigenous religions, must then choose one of the six state-recognized religions for their identity cards. In general, fol-

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lowers of the Baha'i faith declare themselves as Muslim on their identity cards, as also is the case with the Jewish community.

Another concern is the Indonesian public policy on indigenous religions. ICRP's report for 2016 divides the more than ten million followers of indigenous religions into more than two hundred groups. These religions existed long before the aforementioned six religions came to this archipelago. The third issue is the Joint Decree of 2008 on the Ahmadiyya, by the Minister of Religious Affairs, the Minister of Home Affairs, and the Attorney General. One of the articles therein prohibits the Ahmadiyya from spreading their religious teachings to the public. This is very discriminatory. What is the reasoning behind it? If mainstream groups in Islam are allowed to broadcast their faith, why not the Ahmadiyya? In my opinion, the Indonesian constitution and a number of human rights regulations create precedent to allow the spread of religion, providing that it does not employ violent means or manipulate poverty and ignorance among citizens.

Indonesia also has regulations that discriminate against women. The Report of the National Commission on Violence against Women for 2016 stated that there are at least 282 regional regulations considered to discriminate against women. Generally, those regional regulations discriminating against women can be divided into four categories: First, regulations relating to public morals, such as anti-pornography regulations. Second are the regulations relating to fashion, such as the obligation for women to wear *jilbab* (head covering) in public places. Third are the regulations that concern religion-related competence, such as the obligation to have a good command of reciting and writing the Quran. To a certain extent, the regulations on the obligation to attend school at Madrasah Diniyah Awwaliyah (Elementary Islamic School) can fall into the category of religion-related competence. Fourth are the regulations relating to *hudud* (passing punishment), with whipping as the prevailing punishment in the regional regulations in Aceh and other provinces.

III. Political barriers: In many cases, the government actors in Indonesia, especially the police, judges, and prosecutors, are too weak to ensure protection of the people's human rights, particularly in regards to religious freedom for minority groups. A number of cases attest to this, such as the ban on the Ahmadiyya, the burning of churches, the anarchic acts towards the Syi'ite group, and the prohibition on building houses of worship for those not included in the six acknowledged religions. The same applies to the failure to protect the civil rights of vulnerable groups, such as children and women, as well as the poor, disabled, or elderly.

IV. Theological barriers in the form of patriarchal misinterpretations of Islamic teachings: In general, the interpretations of Islam widely disseminated in our society are still exclusivist, unsympathetic towards non-Muslim congregations and discriminative against women, minority groups, and others. There is a belief in many mainstream Muslim societies that Islamic law is God's law and is therefore infallible and unchangeable, rendering any effort at reform to be regarded as un-Islamic. Many Muslims believe that men and women do not have equal rights in Islam generally, such that demands for the equal rights of men and women are portrayed as defying God's law. Many Muslims still believe that only the *ulama* (male Muslim religious scholars or jurists) have the authority to speak on Islam. Women's groups in Muslim societies face difficulties advocating for reform when they do not have the support of government or those perceived to have religious authority. Many Muslims are also afraid to speak out on Islamic issues in public, especially if their views are contrary to the majority. They fear controversy or being labelled as anti-Islam. This fear extends to progressive scholars who have the knowledge and credibility to speak out but choose to remain silent for fear of jeopardizing their jobs and livelihoods, invoking community hostility or attracting threats to their safety. These are the real barriers to peacebuilding in Indonesia.

Why is the role of women important?
Women have a different perspective and experience in peacebuilding. We focus our strategy at two levels: the discourse level (cultural reconstruction and reinterpretation of religious teachings) and the practice level (involving women as a subject of reformation and social change processes, empowering the community to recognize women's potency and capacity as agents of peace, and involving women effectively in the social reconstruction process of the society). In my experience, the most important effort in improving women's role in peacebuilding is to empower women and raise society's awareness of the importance of respecting human beings and humanistic values through education in the broadest sense, especially family education. I also advocate the widespread dissemination of a culture of equality, starting from the home, through a democratic child-rearing pattern in family life, and continuing in society through democratic learning methods in both formal and informal educational institutions. In sum, peacebuilding must begin in the home, with the family.

Bases and principles of peacebuilding in Indonesia
In my experience there are at least three important bases that can be used as the foundation of peacebuilding in this country. The first of these is Pancasila, the

state ideology, which contains values that are very conducive to the construction of peacebuilding activities. The second is the 1945 constitution, which very clearly guarantees peace, diversity, welfare, equality, and justice for all people. The third basis is the development of civil society groups, especially in religious circles, with a strong awareness of the importance of the fulfilment of human rights for all people without discrimination. There are also at least four fundamental principles that must exist in peacebuilding.

First, the principle of humanity: Frankly speaking, as a religious community we tend to presume the position of God by acting arrogant and being judgemental. In all honesty, we tend to judge and find fault in others instead of devoting ourselves to each other and caring for each other. We always claim to be in the right, and we see others as wrong, misguided, and infidels. As a result, religion-based wars and conflicts become the main stories in the media all over the world.

Second, the principle of one family: As a religious community, we must consider other people, of whatever faith, as our brothers and sisters, as part of one family. We must realize that we all come from the same origin, namely from God, although we call Him by different names. All of us come from the One, and because of this we are family. This affinity can become a force that has unprecedented meaning in building peace among different human beings. This kinship will give birth to love, compassion, and affection among us, and in turn, eliminate hatred, hostility, and conflict. A sense of affinity will generate sincere respect and appreciation for others. This feeling of affinity will eventually lead us to social solidarity. We don't want to see other people in trouble or in pain. Ultimately, we will realize that, as brothers and sisters, we have a common enemy. The enemy of all religions is none other than injustice, oppression, greed, ignorance, and poverty. Once we have this awareness, as people of faith we can work together to eradicate the common enemy. We can cooperate to rid the world of injustice; we can collaborate to eliminate all forms of violence, oppression, greed, ignorance, and poverty.

Third, the principle of democracy: As a religious community, we should actively promote the principle of democracy. Democracy stems from respect and appreciation for other people. The essence of democracy is respect for the nature and dignity of human beings as noble beings. In a society that upholds democracy, all citizens are treated the same in the eyes of the law. The terms majority and minority don't exist. All communities have the same basic right: to live as human beings. In a democratic nation, we must not be anarchic. Even if other people commit sins, we should not take the law into our own hands; leave it to the law enforcers to punish offenders accordingly. In this context, we should

urge the state and the government to enforce the law fairly and to take a neutral stance. There should be no public policies or legal decisions that discriminate against any groups, especially women and minority groups.

Fourth, the principle of religious pluralism: One of the major problems faced by religious communities in this era of globalization is religion-based conflict and violence, both internal and between congregations of different religions. Religion-based conflicts and violence frequently occur in Indonesia, and these conflicts and violence usually occur as a result of a growing politics of identity. Certainly, in every conflict, women are the ones most likely to become victims. In order to achieve peace and harmony in coexistence, all parties in society should adopt a tolerant and pluralistic attitude. Tolerance is the ability to constrain oneself and one's emotions in order to minimize and eliminate the potential for conflict. Meanwhile, pluralism is much more than tolerance. Pluralism is the willingness to recognize differences and accept diversity as a natural force in life that should be harnessed to build solidarity and cooperation for the sake of peace and harmony. Pluralism must be built upon a principle of love, caring, and equality, as well as the recognition of human dignity. Pluralism urges the fulfilment of human rights, including women's rights. A pluralist still recognizes the existence of religious differences, because such differences are natural, intrinsic, and given, and can't be avoided. But such religious differences can become the source for a healthy interreligious relationship, as a uniting force, instead of as a divider that threatens certain religious identities and cultures. Pluralism is built upon a foundation of interreligious dialogue.

Conclusion

I would like to share women's efforts in promoting peacebuilding in Indonesia. The first of these efforts is a cultural reconstruction effort through education in its broadest sense, from education in the family to formal education in school, followed by informal education in society. Reconstructing culture, particularly the culture of peace, is very important. Respect for different cultures and religions should be incorporated into educational curricula at various levels, whether in state or private educational institutions. These efforts are very much needed because a culture of peace, tolerance, and inclusivity cannot emerge naturally and spontaneously in society. Instead, it must be arranged in such a way as to emerge through the educational system, particularly family education. As I have already said, I do believe that peacebuilding must begin in the home, in family life.

The second effort is that of religious reinterpretation, especially Islamic reinterpretation. Some work has already been done to promote humanistic, in-

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clusive, and progressive Islamic interpretations that are more conducive to the fulfilment of democracy and the principles of human rights. Those are the real Islamic teachings; they are compatible with democratic values and will free human beings from all forms of violence, tyranny, hatred, and injustice.

Last but not least are the efforts at law reform. There have been many efforts to amend and revise the important laws and public policies that are not conducive to peacebuilding goals. We need to encourage awareness and sensitivity to variety and diversity. The regulations and public policies in Indonesia must take into account such diversity. With the continuation of these efforts, it is hoped that a model of diversity can emerge which is inclusive and open, one which guarantees freedom of religion and minimizes state intervention.

Religion and the Role of the State

Manfred Rekowski (Präses [President] of the Church Board, Evangelical Church in the Rhineland; EKiR)

I would like to introduce this subject by referring to the fifth thesis of the Barmen Declaration (BTE), which was formulated in 1934 by the Protestant opposition to Hitler. As a declaration of Christian reverence, the BTE maintained the faith in a difficult social situation by reviving the Holy Scripture. To this day, it serves as an indicator for determining the relationship between state and church and between religion and politics from the Christian perspective.

> "Scripture tells us that, in the as yet unredeemed world in which the Church also exists, the State has by divine appointment the task of providing for justice and peace."

The state in itself is not attributed much dignity. The state in itself does not exist "by the grace of God". Yet the state has an essential function "by divine appointment": it must "ensure justice and peace" – if necessary, "by means of the threat and exercise of force"; its monopoly on the use of force cannot be denied, but classified. This is how the state is to be measured. This is the duty entrusted to it in this "as yet unredeemed world". We all know, in this "unredeemed world", that the conditions are not always like paradise. This is why we have rule according to "the measure of human judgement and human ability", i.e., with compromises, with flaws and mistakes, without the desire to automatically discredit political or government action.

"The church acknowledges the benefit of this divine appointment in gratitude and reverence before him."

A state that "minimizes chaos" in this way, whose objectives are justice and peace, is met with "gratitude and reverence" by the church towards God, i.e., the church affirms the state in the performance of the aforementioned duties.

"It calls to mind the kingdom of God, God's commandment and righteousness, and thereby the responsibility both of rulers and of the ruled."

The church itself – including religion – has its limits laid out. Religion and the church do not take on the (secular) regiment. Striving for theocracy is unthinkable. All attempts made would inevitably lead to nothing other than a "living hell". In my opinion, this seems to be an experience across religions: the church does not dominate. Instead, it also contributes to the public discourse of an ideologically neutral state recalling a pluralistic society: the church reminds us of God's kingdom, of God's commandments and righteousness.

The kingdom of God is the polar opposite of the existing conditions. God's commandments are an offering to make life and coexistence achievable. The churches seek to promote their causes in a plural society and campaign for the consent of those who do not share our fundamental religious beliefs. Righteousness – just as inseparable as justice and peace – is the fabric upon which human society is made. The rulers carry responsibility. But the ruled are also not irresponsible or without responsibility, even after election day.

"It trusts and obeys the power of the Word by which God upholds all things." The church trusts the power of the Word. It trusts the power of the Word more than all other supposed safeties. This gives rise to the freedom to let go of such safeties. I think it is essential to clarify the role of religion and state, including the relationship between them. I have tried to elaborate on this on the basis of the Barmen Theological Declaration, which is of great importance to our church.

Allow me to make two final remarks. Christian churches will not accept 'intervention' by the state. What I mean by that is: we will not allow, for instance, the state or politicians to try to determine what the churches or other religious communities are allowed to do and what they are not.[3] And we strongly object to the state's interference with asylum proceedings in the form of its attempts to verify whether refugees have been christened out of conviction or not. This is not the

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3 "Far too often, churches do not operate as they should. They ought to concentrate more on their core issues – that is pastoral care, the communication of faith and/or charity. Instead, they are too concerned with daily politics and therefore degrading themselves to one of many interest representatives." As stated in 2017 by Jens Spahn, committee member of the CDU and Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry of Finance.

Manfred Rekowski

primary task of the state, but of the churches. As you can see, the role of state and religion poses exciting challenges for our country.

Religion between War and Peace

Marco Moerschbacher, Missio

Allow me to briefly introduce Missio. The International Catholic Mission Society, "Missio", constitutes part of the Pontifical Mission Societies. Missio aims to raise and strengthen the missionary awareness of the faithful as a community of learning, prayer, and solidarity and to provide both financial and non-material support for the mission of local churches in Africa, Asia, and Oceania. One main objective of the society is to cooperate and contribute with our individual skills and expertise to serve the goal of liberation, which is fraught with many challenges. Missio focuses on cooperation in the pastoral work of the church. In the spirit of the Gospel and within the scope of its project activities, Missio supports local church initiatives.

Missio has founded a network on religion and violence that seeks to bring together female and male theologians of African descent in order to encourage dialogue. Missio also fosters international cooperation and exchange between local churches and theologians on the African continent. A first meeting of this religion and violence network was held in September 2016 at the *Tangaza University College* in Nairobi. Participants gathered to discuss the challenges that religion and violence present for contemporary theology in Africa. The next gathering will be conducted in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire in 2018.

The focus on religion and violence particularly stresses the relationship between Christians and Muslims, although this subject obviously also affects other religions such as Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism as well. The research interest deals with questions such as: What is the relationship between violence and religion? What is the relationship of religions towards war and peace? What about peace among religions? In the longer term, we seek to sustain that religion generates peace.

We conducted research in a number of African countries, guided by our research interest in surveying people with experience in conflict situations and their perception of the relationship between religion and violence. The research teams in the countries interviewed Christians, Muslims, politicians, and people from other religions. Two studies have been published to date: the results for

Tanzania and Côte d'Ivoire. The surveys on Chad, Mali, and the Central African Republic (CAR) will be released soon.

As a kind of preliminary overall conclusion, we found that the term and concept of the secular state is perceived by Muslims as a topic related to Christians and a Christian state. At the individual country level, Tanzania was perceived by the politicians and others interviewed as a country of peace despite the periods of tension, violence, and attacks related to religion. Religion has often been misused for political or economic interests. The Republic of Côte d'Ivoire has been shaken in recent years by crises of civil war and immense violence. Though there has historically been a good relationship between Ivorians from Christian backgrounds and Burkinabé from Muslim backgrounds, it was possible to politically instrumentalize the conflict. Because of the tradition of good relationships between religions, however, the survey also found potential for a peaceful settlement to the conflict in the future. The conflict in CAR is understood as a fight between Christians and Muslims, when in reality many other interests are involved, including the geostrategic interests of other countries. In sum, the church cannot remain in the desert.

Religion Is Daily Life

Alex Malasusa (Bishop, Tanzania)

In the Global South, religion plays a central role in everyday life. While in the Global North secular modernism has succeeded in distancing religion from the socio-economic and political spheres, such separation has not left a lasting imprint on African societies. There, and in Tanzania too, religion continues to play an important role in socio-economic and political life. Large majorities of our population express belief in the core tenets of Christianity or Islam and belief in the existence of God. Religion permeates all parts of life, and Christians say they believe the Bible is the word of God and should be taken literally. Most Muslims adopt a similar view of the Quran. Religion as a matter of daily life is not only true for Muslims and Christians. Side by side with their high levels of commitment to Christianity and Islam, people in Africa and Tanzania retain beliefs and rituals that are characteristic of traditional religions. Every stone or tree can be worshiped in order for a person to be protected from harm.

In Tanzania as well as in other sub-Saharan countries, many Christians and Muslims each associate positive traits with the other religion. Muslims see Christians as tolerant, honest, and respectful of women. Christians say Muslims

Marco Moerschbacher/Alex Malasusa

are honest, devout, and respectful of women. Many people said they were more worried by extremists of their own religion than by those of the other. Muslims are more concerned about Muslim extremism than Christian extremism. A large majority of Christians and Muslims said that violence against civilians in defence of one's religion is rarely or never justified. And, surprisingly, Muslims have a significantly more positive view of Christians than Christians do of Muslims. Therefore, it is our utmost intention to make people more aware of the other religion.

In general, there is a strong belief in the protective power of religious practice and sacred objects. People of faith in both religions – Christianity and Islam – support democracy while resorting to religion, and some also make the Bible or Islamic Sharia law the law of the land. Conversely, because religion is a matter of daily life, religion can rather easily be manipulated by politicians and others. Religion is readily used as an instrument of competition. However, like Sheikh Soraga has already mentioned, we should not mix religion with politics.

Nevertheless, in daily life, the reality of religious attributes is complex. Religion constitutes an inextricable part of our society. As such, political and socio-economic activities are often flavoured with religious expressions and rituals. Thus, the question arises as to whether religion has a crucial role to play in liberating our societies from poverty, for instance, or if religion may even contribute to perpetuating poverty. According to my experience, the effective distribution of resources, social services, healthcare, hospitals, and other social support is widely dependent on both Christian and Muslim institutions. Religion remains a crucial component of coping with everyday challenges. Let me go further: if religion is so entrenched in socio-political and economic life, it also has a vital role to play in building up our societies. We should do our utmost to foster and support values such as honesty, integrity, openness, forthrightness, and tolerance. Based on those grounds, religious norms are the reference for what one should expect from the state in terms of sharing resources equally and seeking peaceful settlements to conflict. Our religion should create hope and optimism in spite of failed governance.

In addition to the development of moral values and social capital, religious institutions should contribute more deliberately to the development of accountability and enhancing democratic and civil society institutions. Such development can begin with a pertinent curriculum in educational institutions, from the primary level onwards. The creation of educational institutions has been one of the outstanding contributions of our churches. The state is challenged to promote such values as well, including interreligious studies in the basic curricula of schools, colleges, and universities.

I do not want to repeat the details of what you have already heard about Tanzania, but 99 per cent of our people are affiliated with a religion. Tanzania guarantees constitutional rights and is run as a secular state. In Tanzania, we have achieved a relatively high degree of national integration. Still, in recent times, in addition to religious affiliation there has been rather an increasing challenge in Tanzania as to the degree to which the country should become or remain secular. Obviously, we members of organized religions should seek a common understanding on that question too, while we may continue to expect the state, among others, to refrain from contributing to the religious splitting. Among a number of aspects, I suggest not including religion in the census. Given the existing tensions, the highlighting of religious affiliation would cause problems and create deviations and obstacles to the conflict settlement. The state's effective management of social demands would be a critical contribution to peaceful coexistence and cooperation in our multireligious nation. However – and this is why we are here – we, the religious leaders, need to do our job in cooperating peacefully and providing the reference for the appropriate value systems. All religious traditions uphold moral values such as virtue, justice, the sanctity of human life, equality, and human dignity.

Freedom for Religious Diversity

Ignatius Ayau Kaigama, (Archbishop, Nigeria)

Nigeria is a multireligious state that recognizes the coexistence of various religions. Our constitution affirms that no religion shall be allowed to take precedence over the other and declares the absence of a state religion. Our population count is over 182 million and is nearly equally divided between Christianity and Islam. I would guess that the ratio is about 40 to 40, with 20 per cent unaffiliated or other. The majority of Muslims are Sunni and concentrated in the north. Christians dominate in the south. Among the Christians, most are Protestants, who increased in number significantly in the decade from 1990 to 2000. About a quarter are Catholic.[4] In terms of ethnic background, the Hausa in the north are mostly Muslims, and the Yoruba in the west are divided among mainly Islam, Christianity, and traditional religions. The Igbos of the east and the Ijaw in the south are predominantly Christians (i.e., Catholics) and include practitioners of traditional religions. The middle belt of Nigeria is mostly populated by Chris-

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4 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_Nigeria - cite_note-pew2010-5

Ignatius Ayau Kaigama

tians and members of traditional religions. The majority of Muslims are Sunni; a significant number are members of Sufi brotherhoods. In the north, a Shia minority exists as well, and some northern states have incorporated Sharia law into their previously secular legal systems.

Although Nigeria is not a secular state, its constitution and laws guarantee religious freedom, which ultimately includes not adhering to any religious community at all. Nevertheless, religion is a very sensitive topic in Nigeria. Even in names, religion is a major factor. While this mode of identification may be of minor importance, religious leaders distort interfaith relations by contributing to the psychosis that Nigeria would fall either under the predominance of Islam or Christianity respectively. Dress code is a frequent subject of discussion, and the public discourse features a veritable obsession with religious affairs. Religious leaders endorse political candidates of their correspondent religious affiliation. To a certain extent, we have lost our ability to judge a person for what they truly are rather than their ethno-religious adherence. Too many people judge or even stereotype others based on outward signs of religion.

We need to have a conversation about the sort of society we wish to have: continuous conversations, in fact. Religious divisions will not rescue us from poverty, poor state services, corruption, and lawlessness. I see the terrorist group Boko Haram as an offshoot of ineffective governance and clientelism. Each president of the country has tended to award the high posts in government and administration as favours to followers in terms of religion. The government has spent so much money on nonsense, has supported religious pilgrimages instead of providing clean water or guaranteeing social and public security. The latter was instead established by interreligious cooperation, when people of both faiths heard about a planned attack and therefore blocked roads, rang alarm bells in the night, and shouted warnings from the mosque.

The state is not fulfilling its task as guardian of the people, nor can state institutions guarantee the freedom to articulate one's religious diversity without fear of being harassed afterwards, either by state officials or social hostility. I am left with the impression that the state in Nigeria does not yet play a balanced role, for instance with respect to building churches, universities, and schools, or in the formation of chaplains. Of course, we religious leaders are challenged as well to prevent the religious rights of one from violating the religious rights of the other. Without a doubt, religious leaders are involved in the political powers having made religion a partisan institution. Let us now instead be involved in society, part of the call for rationality about what is wrong, what is right, and what constitutes justice. We should belong to those who claim that no one should be excluded from the common good and from safe public order.

III. INTERRELIGIOUS ACTION FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

EXAMPLES FROM COUNTRIES

Sri Lanka

*Anura Perera, Laffir Madani Mohamed Sally, Ven Madampagama
Assaji Thero, Jehan Perera*

The current situation in Sri Lanka emerged from a brutal civil war that lasted for about thirty years. The war started as a guerrilla movement, led by Tamil people who felt that they were being dominated by the larger Sinhalese ethnic group. Even under democratic rule, Tamils felt that while they could vote, they were nevertheless powerless and ruled by the tyranny of a permanent majority of others. Sinhalese people, of whom 70 per cent are Buddhists and 5 per cent are Christians, make up the majority of the population, at 75 per cent. Tamil people comprise a total of 11 per cent of the population and are the majority in the north. Tamils claim the north and east of the country as Tamil homeland.

Muslims are about 10 per cent of the Sri Lankan population as a whole, while in the east of the country they form about 40 per cent of the regional population. Muslims are recognized for their economic dynamism and are mostly part of the prosperous sectors in urban areas. But because Buddhist monks historically fought against the British conquerors, many Buddhists still feel it is their role to guard the country as a monolith against "foreign" intervention. The civil war and the current division have an explicit religious component overall. Peacebuilding, reconciliation, and political reforms need to appeal to people for whom religious affiliation matters.

The reasons why the war started still remain, and power-sharing has not really been established. The majority of Sinhalese people are afraid that the country would be destroyed if the predominance of Buddhism and Sinhalese culture were to be balanced in accordance with the Tamil and Muslim needs for empowerment. There is no culture of power-sharing. Historically, the proximity to India and its state of Tamil Nadu caused the Sinhalese people to feel like a minority of 15 million against the 80 million Tamils in the south of India, together with the 3 million Tamils in the north of Sri Lanka. During the Cold War years, the Indian government supported the Tamil militants and sought to bring Sri Lanka into the Indian orbit. Such fear among the Sinhalese is therefore a real phenomenon and needs to be considered when a plural and multireligious society is rebuilt.

The challenge today is to build confidence in the organs of state, the rule of law, and the benefits of a plural and multireligious society. Civil society organizations are saying that if we really want to tackle constitutional reform, transitional justice, and the transition from war to peace, we have to go back to the past; we need to compensate and hold perpetrators of war crimes and human rights violations accountable. One reason the Sinhalese majority do not want to look back is that most of the Tamil guerrilla leaders have been killed, and the focus of accountability would then turn to the survivors, the so-called heroes of the Sri Lankan army.

Even during wartime, religious clergy were engaged with the message of reconciliation and power-sharing. In many cases of attacks and atrocities committed against Tamil or Muslims during this time, the police frequently remained inactive, while monks, Hindu priests, and imams would lend a hand at the local level for practical conflict settlement. In previous years, religious leaders would meet as an emergency task force whenever a dispute threatened to spread. They organized a phone chain and would be present at the location of the incident.

In a similar way, today's so-called peace councils made up of civil society are platforms where local people who are working together to solve local problems can meet and share experiences. The platforms work with people of different religious backgrounds and get involved in order to settle conflicts in a peaceful manner. Buddhists also have a number of institutions that work for peace, though little light has been shed on these. After the armed conflict ended, many such institutions closed down because they felt that there was not much left to do. In addition, the government of the then President Rajapaksa did not allow the institutions to work as they wanted, and hindered their work with administrative rules. These institutions are slowly emerging again.

In strategic terms, it is necessary to establish capable and active groups and civic leaders in order to support constitutional reform and transitional justice. The interreligious committees at the district level (DIRC) are one such example, led by religious clergy who are trusted message-bearers. These DIRCs are supposed to engage in local-level conflict mitigation. In addition, this concept of interrelatedness should be expanded into specific social environments such as universities and other communities of students, youth, women, and journalists. We need to nurture a mentality that accepts transition processes. And we need to have more stories from different places, though sometimes it is wise not to publicize such initiatives too widely.

Indonesia

Gomar Gultom, Henriette Hutabarat-Lebang, Siti Musdah Mulia,
Syafiq A. Mughni

Current estimates put the total population of Indonesia at 260.6 million. According to the 2010 census, approximately 87 per cent of the population is Muslim, 7 per cent Protestant, 3 per cent Roman Catholic, and 1.5 per cent Hindu. Other religions, including Buddhism, traditional indigenous religions, Confucianism, other Christian denominations, Sikhism, Judaism, and the Baha'i Faith, comprise about 1.3 per cent. Indonesia is estimated to be the country with the world's largest Muslim population (205 million), home to about 13 per cent of the world's Muslims. The Muslim population is mostly Sunni; one to three million are Shia. The Ahmadiyya are estimated to comprise between two hundred and four hundred thousand. Traditional belief systems are primarily practised in Java, Kalimantan, and Papua (*aliran kepercayaan*). The province of Bali is predominantly Hindu, and the provinces of Papua, West Papua, East Nusa Tenggara, and North Sulawesi are predominantly Christian.

Indonesia's constitution guarantees freedom of religion and the right to worship according to one's own belief – as long as the belief refers to the officially recognized religions. There are six religions listed in the country's blasphemy law: Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Islam, which predominantly means Sunni Islam. Indonesia understands itself as a pluralistic society, and maintains diversity in unity, tolerance, and harmony. In accordance with the concept of Pancasila, Indonesia is organized on the principle of a just and civilized humanity for the whole of the people.

Nevertheless, restrictions have been established by law based on considerations of morality, religious values, security, and public order. In May 2017, a panel of judges for the North Jakarta District Court found the governor of Jakarta, a Christian, guilty of blasphemy against Islam and sentenced him to two years in jail. Other courts in different parts of Indonesia also convicted people of blasphemy and sentenced them to jail. In Aceh, run by Sharia law (though non-Muslim residents of Aceh may choose to be punished under Sharia law or civil court procedures), the authorities carried out public canings for Sharia violations and in May 2017 punished people for homosexuality for the first time ever. Local governments imposed laws and regulations restricting religious freedom, such as local regulations banning Shia or Ahmadi Islamic practice. Populous Indonesia, with its high restrictions on religion, ranks alongside China, Egypt,

Pakistan, Russia, and Turkey, according to the Pew Research Center in Washington, which reports that the Indonesian government and society at large are imposing numerous limits on religious beliefs and practices.[5]

Different to this general picture, and unlike in Pakistan, Afghanistan, or the Middle East, Muslims in Indonesia historically adopted the local wisdom and the richness of local culture, merging this into a new Muslim identity. Because of its roots in Javanese culture, the traditional Muslim culture in Indonesia is very tolerant. You still can find different faiths in a single family. In legal terms, a person can change their religion and convert to another, though for Muslims there are some administrative and particularly social barriers. Indonesian President Joko Widodo has also expressed support on several occasions for religious tolerance. The government took steps in 2017 to address specific long-standing religious disputes, such as the construction of the Santa Clara Catholic Church in Bekasi, West Java, which was opposed by local residents. Prominent civil society representatives, including from organizations of all faiths, worked to counter religious intolerance and promote pluralism and tolerance of minority religious groups.

More spectacular, however, have been those groups which promote a fundamentalist understanding of Islam. Although one of the previous presidents of Indonesia, K.H. Abdurraham Wahid (1999-2001), once stated that Muslims historically did not come to Indonesia to change the culture, alienating us from our ancestors and shifting us to an Arabic culture, in the last fifteen years Indonesians have experienced a shift from the tolerant tradition to one that is more radical and fundamentalist. Fundamentalist groups continue to disrupt religious gatherings, illegally close down houses of worship, and widely disseminate materials promoting intolerance. Muslim minorities and Christians have reported threats of violence and intimidation for gathering in public. On 11 February 2017, an estimated two hundred thousand people attended a mass prayer in Jakarta's national mosque to urge Muslims to vote for the Muslim candidate in the Jakarta gubernatorial election. The fundamentalist groups involved were the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), Islamic Community Forum (FUI), Islamic Jihad Front (FJI), and Indonesian Mujahedeen Council (MMI).

As Christians, we are a minority in Indonesia, and thus our means to articulate our concerns loudly are somewhat restricted if we are not to run the risk of being attacked as a Christian institution and body. This is why we prefer to make use of the many local initiatives where the tolerant spirit still prevails, such as

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5 Pew Research Centre (2017): Global restrictions on religion rise modestly in 2015. Washington.

Indonesia

in Ambon, 2 October 2015, when Muslims welcomed a Christian festival. The National Human Rights Commission (Komnas HAM), an independent government-affiliated body, has stated that the government at both the national and local levels has failed at times to prevent or appropriately address intimidation and discrimination against individuals based on their beliefs. However, according to this statement, both the central and local governments included elected and appointed officials from minority religious groups among their ranks, and elected politicians from religious minorities were serving in majority Muslim districts. We are therefore happy to have the opportunity in Wuppertal to share positive examples of tolerant togetherness in other countries, particularly at the local level.

Tanzania

Alex Malasusa, Fadhil Suleiman Soraga, Abednego Nkamuhabwa Keshomshahara, Adinani Masud Ntinabo

You have already heard quite a number of insights into our country and the relationship between religious communities there. We will therefore now provide some basic facts with regard to freedom of religion in Tanzania and Zanzibar. The constitutions of the Union and the semi-autonomous island of Zanzibar both prohibit discrimination on the basis of religion and provide for freedom of religious choice, including the freedom to change one's faith. These rights can be limited by law on Union territory for purposes such as the rights of others, national interest, defence, safety, peace, morality, and health. The Zanzibar constitution allows these rights to be limited if such a limitation is deemed to be necessary in the democratic system or would otherwise bring harm to society. You can see that the terminology leaves space for interpretation. In certain circumstances, some people may arbitrarily impose some restrictions under the aforementioned terms.

The total population of Tanzania and Zanzibar is estimated at 54 million. We would guess that approximately 61 per cent of the population is Christian, 35 per cent Muslim, and 4 per cent other religious groups. As in other neighbouring countries, a part of the population may practise elements of African traditional religions in their daily lives. Why are we only presenting estimates? There are no domestic surveys covering religious affiliation. On the mainland (Union), Muslim communities concentrate in coastal areas, and some are located inland

in cities. Christian groups include Roman Catholics, Protestants (such as Pentecostal groups), Seventh-day Adventists. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), and Jehovah's Witnesses. Minor groups comprise Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, Baha'i, and animists. Zanzibar's 1.3 million residents are 99 per cent Muslim, of whom two thirds are Sunni. The remainder consists of Shia groups, mostly of Asian descent.

You may know that Zanzibar, while subject to the Union constitution, has its own president, court system, and legislature. Muslims in Zanzibar have the option of bringing cases related to divorce, child custody, or inheritance to a civil or an Islamic court. Cases dealt with by a civil court in Zanzibar can be appealed to the Union Court of Appeals on the mainland. Decisions by an Islamic court can be appealed to a special court consisting of the Zanzibar chief justice and five other sheikhs. The president of Zanzibar appoints the chief justice for the Islamic court, who oversees these courts and is also recognized as the senior Islamic scholar for interpreting the Quran. There are no Islamic courts on the mainland. On the mainland, secular laws govern Christians and Muslims. In family-related cases involving inheritance, marriage, divorce, and the adoption of minors, the law there recognizes customary practices too.

In legal terms, it is prohibited to take action or make statements with the intent of insulting the beliefs of another person. Nevertheless, in Zanzibar we are currently engaged in a substantial struggle over the construction of a church in Zanzibar City (Chukwani). The Pentecostal Assemblies of God have been trying to finish construction of a worship building here since 2009. In addition to the administrative barriers already present, fundamentalist Muslims have been fighting the construction and have twice demolished the partially built foundation. Christians believe that the local reluctance is based on religious bias. While a local court allowed the construction to go forward, there was no interreligious outreach to mitigate the social hostility. Though the law prohibits religious groups from registering as political parties, religion is misused to promote politics.

Another problem with practising the Christian religion, in particular for new communities, is the process of registration. To register, religious groups must provide the names of at least ten members, a written constitution, resumes of their leaders, and a letter of recommendation from the district commissioner, and they must present their request to the Office of the Registrar General in Zanzibar. Muslim groups registering on the mainland must provide a letter of approval from the National Muslim Council of Tanzania (BAKWATA). Muslim groups registering in Zanzibar must provide a letter of approval from the mufti, the government's official liaison to the Muslim community.

Public schools may teach religion, but it is not a part of the official national curriculum. The school administration or parent and teacher associations must approve such classes, which are taught on an occasional basis by parents or volunteers. Students may choose to opt out of religious studies. In public schools, students are allowed to wear the hijab but not the niqab.

However, we are not here to focus only on limits and restrictions, although these circumstances increasingly predominate in our public life. We are a living example that religious leaders also are a major force in civil society and a key provider of relief and hope. All of us, from both Islam and Christianity, are concerned about religious extremism. In our interreligious communications and gatherings we not only address conflicts based on religion but also unemployment, crime, corruption, and hindered access to administration and justice. Even though we are a minority, we spend a lot of energy to push back against the discourse that violence against civilians in defence of one's religion may sometimes be justified. Together with civil society groups, we continue to promote peaceful interactions and religious tolerance. From time to time, Muslim and Christian religious groups in Zanzibar hold an interfaith forum to discuss ways to preserve and enhance peaceful and tolerant relations between the two communities in the islands. To strive for tolerance is not gratuitous: Sheikh Khalifa Khamis, chair of the Imam Bukhary Institute, is facing threats for his commitment to publicly call for Muslims to stand up for each other as a community. Sheikh Soraga is living evidence of the risks of promoting tolerance and respect for one another. In our discussion about the question of how to advance freedom of religion, we will build on what we have already heard.

Nigeria

Ignatius Ayau Kaigama

Some basic data on Nigeria has already been provided. I will summarize what we have heard so far to give us a common platform for our discussion. In Nigeria, we have a total population of about 190.6 million, of which approximately 49.3 per cent are Christian and 48.8 per cent Muslim. Many individuals combine indigenous beliefs and practices with Islam or Christianity. Of the Muslim population, 38 per cent are Sunni, with a number of Sufi groups. About 12 per cent identify themselves as Shia, a large part just as "Muslim". Christian groups include evangelicals, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Pentecostals, Baptists, Method-

ists, Presbyterians, and others. Muslims are prevalent in the northern states, with significant numbers of Christians among the Hausa-Fulani and Kanuri. Christians and Muslims reside in approximately equal numbers in the central part of the country and the southwestern states. In the southeastern states, Christians constitute the majority. In the Niger Delta, Christians form a substantial majority. Evangelical Christian denominations are growing rapidly in the central and southern regions. Nigeria is host to more than three hundred ethnic groups and over five hundred dialects. The ethnic and religious diversity could be a treasure, but unfortunately provides the basis for tensions and fundamentalist groups.

The Nigerian constitution bars the federal and state governments from adopting a state religion, prohibits religious discrimination, and provides for individuals' freedom to choose, practise, propagate, or change their religion. Nevertheless, the federal government often fails to prevent or respond to violence affecting religious groups. A pending bill in Kaduna State would require all preachers to obtain preaching licences or risk fines. The draft generated widespread opposition among Muslim and Christian groups, who feared that such a step would lead to broader government restrictions on religious organizations.

Not all incidents and acts of violence in the name of religion are exclusively or predominantly motivated by religion. There are a number of contributing factors such as corruption, criminality, conflict over grazing and land rights, and territorial dominance. In Kaduna State, there are frequently clashes between Christian farmers and the mainly Muslim Fulani herders. The introduction of politically motivated Sharia law in the 1990s also created a number of tensions. The terrorist group Boko Haram and its splinter organization, the Islamic State-West Africa (ISIS-WA), accelerated these conflicts and sought to purify Islam through violence and by means of attacks, mass killings, and the targeting of civilians, as well as education centres like primary and secondary schools. The attacks have been directed against mosques, churches, government institutions, banks, and private companies. The terrorist groups have generated the stereotype that Muslims are automatically associated with violence, whereas in reality many Muslims have had to flee their communities.

It may not surprise you that some Christians are reluctant to even talk about dialogue. My church was attacked with a bomb; my Christian brothers and sisters wanted me to declare war. The relationships among religions are very tense; people do not want to sit with others and instead will maintain a lot of suspicion and distrust. Easter ceremonies were suspended for a long time. But we have not stopped engaging; rather than generalizing, we are looking for ways to come together, to talk and fight the evil groups. I belong to the optimist faction and personally foster dialogues at the level of the dioceses or sometimes at the Afri-

can level. This is not mere talk of religious issues, but also of development, which is stagnant in our country despite the rich resources. We talk about the need to bring back progress to the country, to overcome not only religious prejudices but also poverty, and to organize relief for war-torn areas and displaced people. I know there is a debate around the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), but for us it has been a candle to brighten the socio-economic development of the continent. Beyond the political and economic aspects, it is a reference for leaving behind the reactive mode in favour of the proactive.

We started with an interfaith youth congregational centre, among other activities including carpentry, housing construction, cultural dialogue, and competence-building for ambassadors of peace. Christian and Muslim teachers and inter-class activity are present as well. At the national level, we have the Nigeria Inter-religious Council. Sometimes politics interfere, but it is an umbrella organization for Christians and Muslims and a symbol for the ongoing attempt to strive for dialogue, though this remains a challenge. Recently, we sent Muslims to Rome so that they might understand what Christians are. We hope that they will return as comparative experts on Christology, with a different mindset than they had before. Conversely, Christians are also being sent out to understand Islam and Muslims. The task is difficult, certainly, but possible. We are all one humanity.

Germany

The Interreligious Initiative Marl

The interreligious initiative *Christlich-Islamische Arbeitsgemeinschaft Marl* (Christian-Islamic Working Group Marl) was founded in 1984 and initiated the first Path of Peace (*Friedensweg*). The initiative received a number of awards. It encouraged young people to learn about the cultural backgrounds of their parents. It is necessary to know that Marl is part of the Ruhr area of approximately fifty million inhabitants, a coal mining area where many workers have Turkish origins. In the 1950s, contracts with Turkey gave its citizens the opportunity to work in Germany. Now, some families have lived in Germany for four generations, and awareness is rising that a dialogue between the religious communities is required and needs to be deliberately organized. While in previous eras the coal miners worked together and trusted each other, this kind of inherent integration through coal mining is not longer functioning, as coal mining is vanishing.

What we do: First, we provide information about our religion, the traditions of Christians and Muslims. We support common prayers at school. Second, we started the Abraham Festival seventeen years ago. All three religions jointly celebrate the year, between September and December. We built an Abraham House, in which the three religions are taught at the same time: their main elements and the nature of their prayers. All six mosques and the synagogue take part; the three religions have a lot of things in common. We provide special events for young people that include pizza and films. In 2015, the initiative began running a number of language courses in order to serve the needs of refugees. People from the parish visit the mosque and experience face-to-face encounters. We organize meetings with musicians and artists from the local communities. Common meals are hosted, prepared by Muslims and Jews. These meals are prepared to the respective halal and kosher specifications.

We meet monthly with approximately fifteen people to prepare activities and, most importantly, to build trust. Sometimes we organize larger meetings at the town hall, with more than three hundred people. The initiative has seen increasing attendance by colleges and local institutions, as well as refugees. The government funds migration organizations, and donations are made by churches, the town government, and individuals.

The initiative has prayers from many religions, including Sri Lankan Buddhism and the Baha'i Faith, in order to be able to provide multireligious services. One of the member organizations was founded and is managed exclusively by Muslim women. They and others have been breaking their fast in a church. Problems with prejudice have decreased significantly. Hearing the Quran at a multireligious service of this kind helps the children of Abraham to live in peace while the challenge continues. People in the surrounding towns are still reluctant to meet others, and vice versa; in Marl we have a large Arab community whose prejudices do not allow them to celebrate an Islamic festival in a church. Interestingly, because there are different traditions among the Muslims and the mosques, the church is somewhat of a common platform for the Muslims too.

Citizens' Platform Cologne

The Bürgerplattform (Citizens' Platform) in Cologne is a civil society initiative that mainly operates in the northern part of the city of Cologne. The Bürgerplattform centres around community organizing and the emergence of needed infrastructure, and is based upon thirty groups with members from different

countries such as Tajikistan, Chad, and Germany. The idea of a community-organizing platform exists in Germany in the cities of Berlin (three initiatives) and Cologne, and will soon be present in Duisburg as well. All of the platforms coalesce around topics like history and socio-cultural milieus, such as the industrial background of the Ruhr area and the origins of the participants from the various countries.

The platform in Cologne started out addressing three main issues stemming from the local environment: housing conditions (in Cologne Mönchsfeld), playgrounds for children, and education in general, as well as an emphasis on supporting German language instruction for Muslim pupils in particular in schools. The topic selection was based on a process of brainstorming and decision-making, and topics are expected to change in the future.

A 2011 state law for North-Rhine Westphalia created a guaranteed subsidy to hire twelve teachers for Islamic education. Class meetings are conducted in churches, secular halls, or mosques.

The groups supported by the platform include the unemployed. We understand community building as a basic contribution to a fair and non-discriminatory society. Though the Bürgerplattform is not an interreligious organization, and we concentrate not on religion but on social issues, some of us understand our interreligious and social commitment as enlarging our personal and religiously motivated commitment. Churches also contribute to this commitment by paying fees, but their financial contribution does not influence any decision-making.

Our platform seeks to attract young people beginning with the churches and mosques. We also seek to increase participation by women and girls. We will be building an African House soon, and we hope that through this action we can stimulate women and young people to get involved in larger numbers.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

STRENGTHENING PEACE POTENTIALS IN FAITH-BASED GROUPS AND WITHIN SOCIETY

Personal Experiences

Siti Musdah Mulia (Indonesia)

My engagement as a Muslim person consists in giving a voice to the rights of women in public policies. Strengthening peace means starting with education, training programmes, healthcare, nutrition programmes, and the availability of clean water and environmental sanitation, and continuing with advocacy for democracy, human rights, and religious freedom. We need to organize women, including those in Islamic and interfaith organizations. The essence of Islam is revealed in the humanistic values it embodies. Islamic teaching is compatible with the principles of human rights, democracy, and equal rights for all. We will have no peace if we do not address discrimination against women or minorities within our own context. In my view, the true understanding of Islam seeks the liberation of all human beings from all forms of tyranny, dictatorship, and despotic systems.

Within our world, we should recognize that we all are human beings and should not take on the position of God by acting arrogantly and being judgemental. We tend to find fault in others instead of devoting ourselves to each other. We should perceive other people of whatever faith as our brothers and sisters and develop a feeling of affinity and ultimately of social solidarity. In the same way, we need to engage in building up democracy and (religious) pluralism because it means respecting and appreciating other people. Women are not second-class human beings: there are many cases of domestic violence that stem from religious misinterpretations. If there is a valid reason for talking in terms of an "enemy", then that enemy is discrimination, violence, oppression, ignorance, and poverty. The issue is delicate, but ultimately our holy texts including the Quran are open for contextualization. It is a true challenge to today's Muslims to continuously undertake the endeavour of understanding the word of God. An absolute understanding of the holy text is reserved for God.

Islamic law in Indonesia still ties the perception of women into the domestic confines of the home, returning to women's domestication and subordination.

The Annual Report of the National Commission on Violence against Women indicates at least 354 regional regulations that have the potential to discriminate against women and religious minority groups. The increasing clout of fundamentalist Islamic groups in Indonesia in recent years has reinforced patriarchal attitudes and discriminatory legislation that strongly oppose all kinds of rights for women.

In particular, the current family law is far from being guided by the principles of equality and justice. Family law is a litmus test for gender equality as it has the most powerful impact on Muslim women's lives. Interfaith organizations can choose to actively promote interfaith dialogue, religious freedom for all, and respect for human rights, in particular the rights of minorities and underprivileged people. What I am calling for should already be a reality in Indonesia as, officially, we are guided by the pluralistic spirit of the Pancasila. Obviously, not everyone accepts this spirit.

How can we overcome this? The answers have been given often throughout this conference, so I can be brief: the reconstruction of a fair society through education in the broadest sense; the reestablishment of a culture of peace, tolerance, and inclusivity (which needs to be arranged through education); reform of the law, to the extent that existing laws are not conducive to establishing respect for one another, i.e., democracy. Finally, it is also very important to urge religious leaders to promote humanistic values based on an inclusive religious interpretation. Leaders should return to their prophetic task, which is to push for the transformation of society in order to attain a more civilized society. They should speak out loudly against intolerance. A silent majority against discrimination is not enough. I know that this is easier said than done. Many Muslims are reluctant to speak out on these issues in public, afraid their views might be contrary to an orthodox understanding or that they could be labelled as anti-Islam, jeopardizing their jobs and livelihoods. These risks do exist, but religious people should be an agent for liberation and freedom, for reconciliation, justice, and peace.

Local Wisdom and Local Customs

Gomar Gultom (Indonesia)

Some people say that violence has nothing to do with religion. Most of us agree that religion always seeks to advocate for peace, humanity, equality, and justice.

Many of us also tend to say that violence happens because people misuse religion. Politicians, business owners, and others tend to use religion as a tool to achieve their goals. However, we cannot just ignore that some acts of violence are rooted in religion itself. We need to acknowledge that there are some texts in Holy Scripture which have inspired people to do violence, especially when such texts are interpreted literally.

One question that is not easily answered by religious people in a pluralistic society is which has higher authority: the holy text or the constitutional mandate. In reality, it is not easy to solve this problem. For the rationalist, nationalist-minded person, it may be clear that within a society, we use a country's constitution as the common ground. But fundamentalist groups still struggle to impose their interpretation of holy texts on the public sphere. For them, there is no space between "the city of God" and "the city of world". They tend to impose a single interpretation of the scriptural text while denying all other forms of interpretation. This becomes a root of many problems in our society and stems from within religion itself.

The messages of scriptural texts may unite people from one religion but not another. The mandate of a country's constitution should unite all citizens, however, regardless of their religious and ethnic backgrounds. In such situations, in order to develop a healthy pluralistic society, the state should play a critical role in educating its citizens to comply with the constitution as a basis for building a common life.

Along these same lines, religions should play a crucial role in the public space, especially in providing ethical, moral, and spiritual foundations for the life of the society. When religions demonstrate the intrinsic universal values from religion within the public sphere, the public space will reflect a harmonious society. Unfortunately, what has happened lately in many parts of the world is that the public space has been seized by the presentation of religious symbols and formalism. We are concerned by the growing tendency of religious leaders to engage in practical politics rather than moral politics. All of this has given rise to the nationalistic noise in many countries.

In my view, the most important way to strengthen the potential of faith-based groups and society to advance peace is to teach and encourage congregation members to practise religion substantially, and not simply to present religious symbols for the sake of formalism. At the same time, religious leaders may develop a theological discourse to reconstruct the presence of religion in society for the sake of peace and justice. As the Indonesian perspective can show us, appreciating and adopting the local wisdom or the indigenous wealth of knowledge can greatly assist in strengthening the potential for peace in a society.

Importance of Commitment

Syafiq A. Mughni (Indonesia)

Much has been said here already, and I will concentrate on what is substantial for me. This conference confronts us with global issues including human rights, the environment, and climate change. It seems that when confronting such global problems and their repercussions in terms of survival, the values of modernity such as reason, progress, and nation are not sufficient for resolving such problems. Partnership in its true sense, with nature and our brothers and sisters – whatever their beliefs might be – is required, instead of domination and exploitation. Partnership and cooperation: otherwise we will be threatened by extremism. As religious leaders, we have to dialogue at different levels and to establish a humanitarian caucus based on togetherness.

Local Substance is Key

Abednego Nkamuhakwa Keshomshahara (Tanzania)

We gathered here to discuss the challenges for peace and interreligious cooperation. I think we have conducted a good practice and have reflected from different angles on what we as religious institutions and leaders could do to strengthen peace. By my observation, we have had a lively discussion about the scope of our potentials but have also self-critically addressed what we could do better. In particular, those present at this conference have revealed a lot of shared commitment and interreligious engagement, which we have to admit that the larger part of the world is not following yet. This includes all the examples shown in the course of the conference.

I am impressed by the cooperation between church, mosque, and synagogue exercised by the initiatives we have visited in Germany. For instance, the fact that Muslims in the city of Duisburg have been engaged in sustaining a church[6] is pretty outstanding. The diocese wanted to close the Catholic parish for lack of money. We were astonished when we heard that a Muslim delegation went to the bishop to protest the decision of closing the parish, which they referred to as "our church". For them, this was not a Catholic issue, but rather a communal issue affecting all peoples. To be sure, this church provides important social

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6 The Petershof Catholic centre in Duisburg-Marxloh.

services for the entire city district, but in other countries we would have seen the other religious communities competing for the area. I am also impressed by my brother from Sri Lanka, the Buddhist monk, who acts beyond the common understanding of Buddhist authorities and even risks being marginalized within his brotherhood.

We speakers from Tanzania have talked about the multiple experiences at the local level where interreligious cooperation is part of daily life, at least the encounters of Christians and Muslims at the level of families. Though there is a real threat to this cooperation, still we seek to jointly celebrate our holidays, our family anniversaries, and other decent activities even more. We have shown and heard that for all the good practice, there is no universal solution. What works on the mainland of Tanzania may generate conflicts in Zanzibar. We have deplored the incursions of Wahhabism and Saudi Arabia against a tolerant Islam. The conference will hopefully encourage us to strive for an open-minded and tolerant Islam, starting with an opening of our own minds. We have listened to a number of examples of how this can be implemented. Truly, we have little other choice if we do not want to leave the world to succumb to extremism.

Family in a Broad Sense

Ignatius Ayau Kaigama (Nigeria)

More than once at this conference, we have heard symbolic reference to the family as the cell for social life, in our case for a different social life compared to an embarrassing environment. Some have compared this conference to a community of members who encourage each other and constitute a platform for freedom and fraternity. We have also learned the importance of each individual participant and of his or her contribution to peace and inclusive development. Indeed, we have been and are that kind of community which promotes morality, true faith, freedom, respect, and brotherhood against prejudices and paranoia, for instance those based on religious stereotypes. We should sustain our experience in Wuppertal and seek to continue it. I know that every conference has its own mood and enthusiasm, which frequently decline once the participants return to their more difficult daily circumstances. However, the main conclusion I have taken away is that like the family, we ourselves are the rich soil for maintaining and strengthening a civilization based on respect, fairness, human rights, and not least the rule of law. Let us keep going.

Religion Is Part of the Solution

Sujithar Sivanayagam (Sri Lanka)

Our gathering has been a living testimony of a community that is using its diversity of religious traditions to nurture peaceful coexistence. A variety of religious representatives from Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, Buddhism, and Judaism have met and shared their experiences of what is possible if people of belief agree to cherish the values of respectful coexistence and mutual respect, on top of a shared commitment for development and human rights. Peace is assured, strangers are welcomed, education is promoted, and appreciation of diversity as a value is cultivated. In such an approach of mutual respect, religion is part of the solution, not the problem. Competing comparison paves the way for trouble. But if there is no action, no proactive attitude, everything is in vain.

LESSONS LEARNT

Theodor Rathgeber

Peacebuilding has been a challenge since humanity began. This conference has brought together mostly local experiences, with some references to regional platforms and networks. Historically, at the local level, people tend to find a way of accommodating their conflicts in a non-violent way, sometimes by institutionalizing a routine. We have heard recommendations to adopt the local wisdom in strengthening the potential for peace in a society, although there is no universal solution.

Those local endeavours are not spectacular, and thus frequently escape more public attention. There may even be merit in keeping a low profile, as the temptation for outsiders to instrumentalize or corrupt the process may be less. The conference was rich in such examples, and the contributions documented above are the testimonies for further sharing.

Religious organizations and institutions have a special background in ethics and an embeddedness in society that entitles them to give a voice to those suffering from injustice, discrimination, or lawlessness. Beyond advocacy for democracy, human rights, equal rights for all, and religious freedom, giving a voice means providing infrastructure for emerging identity and sovereignty. Strengthening peace means education, training, healthcare, access to clean water, and sanitation too. Giving a voice is speaking out loudly against intolerance. It has been said that a silent majority against discrimination is not enough. Finally, giving a voice means to actively make arrangements for reconstructing a fair society, bringing back tolerance, respect, and inclusiveness. The dawning of a civil society does not happen automatically overnight, but needs to be actively arranged. Religious people should dare to be agents for liberation, freedom, reconciliation, justice, and peace, while developing a feeling of affinity and solidarity.

There is no peace when discrimination in general and against women or minorities in particular prevails, by law or by practice. Many laws inspired by Sharia tie women to the domestic confines of the home and maintain their subordination. The increasing clout of fundamentalist Islamic groups is apparently linked with patriarchal attitudes. Within Muslim society, family law is a litmus test not only for gender equality but for an overall mindset of whether stereotypes and prejudices are tolerated. Intolerance and violence in the name of religion are somewhat rooted in religious texts and the legacy of religions, especially

if such texts are read literally and only one single interpretation is imposed. It is therefore of the utmost importance that religious leaders speak out against discrimination and in favour of mutual respect.

Modernity, rationality, progress, and democracy are associated with a complicated secular society and need to be explained as well as trained. The testimonies given at the conference lead us to the conclusion that confronting domination and exploitation also requires an understanding and attitude of partnership in the broadest sense. A common understanding of the problem and its solutions needs to be developed, and conferences like this are the appropriate means for achieving such goals. The conference format of encounter among brothers and sisters was also conducive to crossing borders and leaving behind prejudices. This has been even more true for the experiences presented.

A sense of advocacy is necessary in order to respond to the social, political, and economic factors that play an important role in fuelling conflict, poverty and exploitation. In the end, interreligious initiatives remind us to cross another border for the sake of peace and justice: a world of rule of law, human rights, and an unbiased, secular environment.

Theodor Rathgeber

V. APPENDIX

Peace conference participants.

Annette Kurschus and Dr Jochen Motte (picture above).
Alex Malalusa, Manfred Rekowski and Annette Muhr-Nelson (from left).

Jérôme Bizimana Nkumbuyinka.

Pastor Sören Asmus, department for interreligious and intercultural dialogue of the Duisburg Evangelical District, and Hülya Ceylan, member of the mosque board.

Marion Unger, Sheik Fadhil Suleiman Soraga, and Ven Madampagama Assaji Thero (picture above, from left); peace conference participants.

Dr Jonathan Kavusa Kivatsi, Sheik Soraga, Ignatius Kaigama (picture above, from left)
peace conference participants.

Participants of the peace conference meet Mohamed Abodahab, chair of the Islam and Peace in Wuppertal association.

In front of "CityKirche", Wuppertal-Elberfeld (picture above)

Rabbi Natalia Verzlibovska in the synagogue at Unna, togther with peace conference participants (picture above). In conversation: Pastor Lusungu Mbilinyi, Sheik Fadhil Suleiman Soraga, and Pastor Dr Ipyana Mwamugobole.

APPENDIX I

Joint Message of Hope and Peace

Peace Among the People – Interreligious Action for Peace and Inclusive Communities
An international conference in Wuppertal, Germany, 13–16 July, 2017

We, the more than eighty participants of the conference, leaders of different religions – Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims – as well as delegates of religious communities from thirteen countries,[7] came together at the Protestant Conference Centre in Wuppertal to discuss "Peace Among the People – Interreligious Action for Peace and Inclusive Communities".

As people of different faiths, together we have experienced:
The Spirit of God (Buddhist *dhamma*) unites us, and enables our common witness. With gratitude, we confess: God's Spirit of love (Buddhist *dhamma*) for all people and the entirety of creation surpasses all that may separate us from each other.
The Spirit of God (Buddhist *dhamma*) has the power to renew and transform our own lives and religious communities. It calls us and empowers us to overcome violence together and to live out the potential for peace in our respective religions, nurturing a society without exclusion.

We have shared positive examples of interreligious encounter and co-operation. They underline our hope and confidence: suffering, injustice, and violence are neither the fate of the people nor the will of God (Buddhist *dhamma*). This affirms our determination not to give up, even when confronted with the suffering of so many people all over the world, due to

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7 Democratic Republic of Congo, Germany, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda.

- increasing extremism, racism, violence, and war
- growing poverty and exploitation
- corruption and misuse of political and economic power
- the abuse of religion for political purposes, legitimizing violence and exclusion

We have learned from sharing with one another that in certain countries and contexts
- blasphemy laws are still applied and victimize many people
- there is a need for a just system of power-sharing between all communities
- we face movements that stand ready to spread xenophobia and attack the homes of refugees as well as mosques, churches, synagogues, and other places of worship
- our common aim is for government, religious leaders, and citizens to together reject any form of violence in the name of religion
- there is a need to address various religious agitations, generated by the inequitable distribution of resources and by perceived political marginalization

Trusting in the reconciling, transformative, and encouraging power of God (Buddhist *dhamma*), we return to our respective faith communities, countries, and contexts, committing ourselves to the following:
- We will treat the religious convictions of others with respect and speak about each other in a positive and peacebuilding way. We will resist those who discriminate, condemn, or persecute people because of their faith, convictions, gender, or sexual orientation.
- We will encourage people of different religions and cultures to cross borders through encounter, dialogue, and bridge-building.
- We will commit ourselves to promoting education and knowledge about the different faiths and to gaining competence in order to empower the members of different faith communities, especially young people, to work together for peace.
- We will commit ourselves to continuing our dialogue and our practical cooperation for peace and justice within and beyond our respective contexts.

- Based on our spiritual resources, we will contribute to transforming our societies into inclusive communities, embracing diversity, gender justice, and stewardship of the integrity of creation.
- We will spare no effort in overcoming poverty and exploitation. We will promote fair trade and sustainable development. We will struggle against the causes of forced migration.
- We will remind all religious leaders and politicians of their duty to create peace and justice.
- We will remind the media of their responsibility not to fuel prejudice and hate.

The Spirit of God (Buddhist *dhamma*) calls upon our religions to walk hand in hand and to work together as beacons of hope and peace.

Grateful for the common call we have heard and for the communion we have experienced, we will establish networking structures to continue our common interreligious journey for Peace and Inclusive Communities.

Wuppertal, 16 July 2017

APPENDIX II

List of Experts

Prof. Dr Dr h.c. Heiner Bielefeldt (Germany)
Professor of Human Rights and Human Rights Policy at the Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg (FAU), UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief 2010-2016, Director of the German Institute for Human Rights 2003-2009, member of the Working Group on Human Rights and Cultural Traditions at the German Commission of Justice and Peace.

Gomar Gultom (Indonesia)
General Secretary of the PGI (Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia; Community of Churches in Indonesia).

Henriette Hutabarat-Lebang (Indonesia)
President of the PGI, General Secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia, Pastor of Toraja Church in Indonesia.

Most Rev. Ignatius Ayau Kaigama (Nigeria)
Archbishop of Jos, President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria, President of the Regional Episcopal Conference of West African Catholic Bishops, and former Chair of the Plateau State-convened Interreligious Committee for Peace. To promote peaceful coexistence and interreligious harmony, he founded the Dialogue, Reconciliation and Peace Centre in Jos, and the Interfaith Youth Vocational Training Centre in Bokkos, all in the Plateau State.

Bishop Dr Abednego Nkamuhabwa Keshomshahara (Tanzania)
Bishop of the ELCT-NWD since 2015 (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania - North-Western Diocese). He holds a PhD in Theology and a Postgraduate Diploma in Education and has published books and articles regarding church and poverty reduction, interfaith dialogue, and gender issues. Lecturer at the Bukoba Lutheran Teachers College, Provost at the Josiah Kibira University College of Tumaini University.

Annette Kurschus (Germany)
Präses (President) of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia since 2012, Vice-Chair of the Evangelical Church in Germany since 2015, member of the liturgy committee of the Union of Evangelical Churches, Theologian of the Reformed Church.

Bishop Alex Malasusa (Tanzania)
Bishop of the ELCT-ECD (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania - Eastern and Costal Diocese), President Bishop of the ELCT 2007-2016, Master of Theology studies by extension at the Catholic Theology College in Nairobi, Kenya.

Dr Daniel Legutke (Germany)
Head of Human Rights Division at the office of the German Commission of Justice and Peace, Bonn, Germany.

Dr Marco Moerschbacher (Germany)
Received his PhD in Pastoral Theology from the University of Frankfurt with a study on the reception of the Second Vatican Council in the diocese of Kinshasa. He works as an expert on the Catholic Church in Africa at Missio Aachen (the Catholic Church's official charity for overseas mission in Aachen) and at the Institute of Missiology. He is also a member of the Working Group on Human Rights and Cultural Traditions at the German Commission of Justice and Peace.

Dr Ulrich Möller (Germany)
PhD in Theology (ethical implications of nuclear weapons), Oberkirchenrat (High Consistory Member) of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia, responsible for the Department of World Mission, Ecumenism, and Development Service of the Church.

Dr Jochen Motte (Germany)
Head of the Department of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation at the United Evangelical Mission in Wuppertal, Member of the UEM Management Team.

Prof. Dr Syafiq A. Mughni (Indonesia)
Chair of the Central Committee of Muhammadyah, Professor of Islamic Civilization at National Islamic University (Surabaya), former Rector of Muhammadiyah University at Sidoarjo.

Rev. Annette Muhr-Nelson (Germany)
Pastor of the Evangelical Church of the Westphalia, Head of MÖWe-Institute in Dortmund (The Institute for Mission, Ecumenical Affairs and Global Responsibility). Her focus is directed on the principles of Mission and Ecumenism.

Prof. Dr Siti Musdah Mulia (Indonesia)
Professor of Islamic Political Thought at the Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University in Jakarta, member of the Indonesian Academy of Sciences (since 2008), Chair of the Indonesian Conference on Religions for Peace (NGO promoting peace through interfaith dialogue and religious freedom), defender of women's rights awarded the International Women of Courage Award.

Bertha Simeon Munyaga (Tanzania)
Church Elder in the parish of Bukoba Cathedral, member of the Standing Committee as well as the Executive Council and General Assembly representing women at the diocese level. Teaches Sunday school and religion in primary schools.

Rafael Nikodemus (Germany)
Pastor and Senior staff of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland (EKiR), responsible for the thematic field of Christians and Muslims in the EKiR Department for Ecumenism, Mission and Religions. In previous years, he spent special attention to the issue of integration.

Sheikh Adinani Masud Ntinabo (Tanzania)
Imam of Forodhan Masjid Mosque (Bukoba Municipal, Kagera Region), teacher of Arabic and Islamic knowledge, engaged in connecting Muslims and non-Muslims in order to overcome religious segregation.

Rev. Anura Perera (Sri Lanka)
Superintendent Minister at the Methodist Church of Sri Lanka (MCSL), Chair of the Southern District Synod, Director of the Department of Social Responsibility at the MCSL. Bachelor of Theology (University of Serampore, India), MPhil. in International Peace Studies (University of Dublin).

Jehan Perera (Sri Lanka)
Bachelor of Arts degree from Harvard College and Juris Doctor from Harvard Law School in 1987, founder and Executive Director of the National Peace Council of Sri Lanka (NPC) established in 1995. NPC works in all parts of the country, building interreligious and inter-ethnic community groups. Writes on

peacebuilding and reconciliation for the *Sri Lankan* and the international media, visiting lecturer in the master's degree programme in Conflict and Peace Studies, University of Colombo.

Dr Theodor Rathgeber (Germany)
Freelance consultant and Senior Lecturer on Political Science at the Universities of Kassel and Düsseldorf, Germany, Researcher and Observer of the Forum Human Rights NGO network (Germany) to the UN Human Rights Council (Geneva, Switzerland).

Manfred Rekowski (Germany)
Präses (President) of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland, Chair of the EKD Advisory Commission on Migration and Integration. Working areas include the ecumenical cooperation of churches, and campaigning against the instrumental use of Christianity by populist parties and movements.

Sheikh Laffir Madani Mohamed Sally (Sri Lanka)
Sheikh, Muslim cleric, intellectual leader of Shia faction.

Sujithar Sivanayagam (Sri Lanka)
Pastor of the Methodist Church in Sri Lanka, graduate of the international master's programme in Diaconic Management at the Church College of Wuppertal/Bethel and the United Evangelical Mission.

Sheikh Fadhil Suleiman Soraga (Tanzania)
Zanzibar Mufti Secretary, victim of an acid attack in 2013 because of his stance on tolerance in Islam.

Dr Ven Madampagama Assaji Thero (Sri Lanka)
Buddhist Monk and Chief Incumbent of the Buddhist Temple at Sri Isipathanaramaya (Colombo), spokesperson for the Sri Lanka Environmental Congress, prominent figure in peace activity, reconciliation, and coexistence, as well as in mine clearance.

APPENDIX III

At a Glance
Rule of Law, Human Rights, Freedom of Religion or Belief

Situations in Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Tanzania, Nigeria, and Germany (data from December 2017)
(the data snapshot may allow a basic understanding of the situations in each country, despite the different methodologies and methodological issues of each of the following indices)

SRI LANKA

Freedom House 2017	score 56 (out of 100)
World Justice Project / Rule of Law 2016	score 0.51 (out of 1.0)
Human Development Index 2015	rank 73 / score 0.766 (out of 1.0)
Gender Inequality Index 2015	rank 87 / score 0.386 (above 0.0)
Pew Research Centre / Freedom of	Government Restrictions Index 4.2
Religion or Belief 2015	Social Hostility Index 6.8

Score 10 is the worst on both indices

Details on Freedom of Religion or Belief

Population and Membership
The total population of Sri Lanka was estimated at 22.1 million in 2015. Approximately 70 per cent is Buddhist, 13 per cent Hindu, 10 per cent Muslim, and 7 per cent Christian. According to 2012 census data, the Theravada Buddhist Sinhalese community is a majority in the Central, North-Central, Northwestern, Sabaragamuwa, Southern, Uva, and Western provinces. The Tamil community known as the Sri Lankan Tamils constitute a majority in Northern Province and are strongly represented in Eastern Province. Another segment of the Tamil community known as the Indian Tamils has a large presence in the Sabaragamuwa and Uva provinces. Most Tamils are Hindu, but some also converted to Christianity in earlier eras. The largest concentration of Muslims is in Ampara District and the urban areas of Eastern Province, with sizable portions of this commu-

nity also residing in the Central, North-Central, Northwestern, Sabaragamuwa, Uva, and Western provinces. Christians have a sizable presence in the Eastern, Northern, Northwestern, and Western provinces, and a smaller presence in the Sabaragamuwa and Uva provinces among Indian Tamil converts to Christianity.

The census indicates most Muslims are Sunni; there is a small Shia minority, primarily members of the Bohra community. Almost 82 per cent of Christians are Roman Catholic; other Christian denominations include Anglicans, Seventh-day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Methodists, Assembly of God, Baptists, Pentecostals, the Dutch Reformed Church, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons). Evangelical Christian groups have grown in recent years, although membership remains relatively low. There is a very small Jewish population.

Legal and societal environment
The constitution of Sri Lanka states every person is "entitled to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, including the freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice." It gives citizens the right to manifest their religion or belief in worship, observance, practice, or teaching both in public and in private. The constitution and other laws give Buddhism "foremost place" and commit the government to protecting it.

Religious groups are not required to register with the government other than obtaining approval to construct a new place of worship. In order to engage in financial transactions, open a bank account, or hold property, however, a religious group must register as a trust, society, non-governmental organization (NGO), or company. Religious organizations may also seek incorporation by an act of Parliament, which is passed by a simple majority and affords religious groups the highest level of state recognition and the permission to operate schools freely.

There are separate government ministries tasked with addressing the specific concerns of each major religious community: the Ministry of Justice and Buddha Sasana; Ministry of Resettlement, Rehabilitation, and Hindu Affairs; Ministry of Postal Service and Muslim Affairs; and the Ministry of Tourism Development and Christian Religious Affairs.

Matters related to family law, including divorce, child custody, and property inheritance, are adjudicated according to either the customary law of the applicable ethnic or religious group or Sri Lankan civil law, although religious community members report the practice varies by region, and exceptions exist. For example, Muslim community members state that marriages are governed by customary law derived from Sharia and cultural practice, while civil law applies to property rights. Tamil Hindus residing in Northern Province state that mar-

riages are governed by civil law, while Tamil Hindu custom governs the division of property according to traditions codified in religious texts. They state that Hindu Tamils from Eastern Province, however, follow civil law, which also applies to citizens who claim no religious affiliation. In order to record marriages legally, parties must register their marriage at the Divisional Secretariat office in their home district.

Civil society organizations such as the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA), Center for Human Rights and Research, and others said the new government, which took office in January, pursued an agenda including a renewed commitment to the rule of law and willingness to investigate and prosecute state officials implicated in or responsible for inciting past religiously based violence. There were instances, however, in which local police and local government officials appeared to act in concert with Buddhist nationalist organizations, although not to the extent as previously. For example, police continued to cite outdated government circulars restricting the construction of religious facilities in attempts to force churches to cease operations. In multiple instances, police reportedly failed to respond or were reluctant to arrest or pursue criminal cases against individuals instigating attacks on minority religious sites. The government had not yet prosecuted hard-line Buddhist monks involved in attacks in 2014 against Muslims and Christians.

Sources stated Buddhist monks continued to operate with government protection, and some monks, particularly outside Colombo, regularly tried to close down Christian and Muslim places of worship on the grounds they lacked the Ministry of Justice and Buddha Sasana's approval. The National Christian Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka (NCEASL) documented a total of 87 cases of attacks on churches in 2015, intimidation and violence against pastors and their congregations, and obstruction of worship services. NCEASL had reported a total of 96 such incidents in 2014. The Secretariat for Muslims (SFM) recorded 82 incidents of hate speech, acts of discrimination, attempts to desecrate or destroy Muslim religious edifices, and verbal insults upon or use of physical force to impede Muslim cultural practices and rituals, a 62 per cent reduction from the previous year.

While a less prominent public voice than previously, the Bodu Bala Sena (BBS), or Buddhist Power Force, continued to promote the supremacy of the country's Sinhalese Buddhist population and propagated views hostile toward members of religious and ethnic minorities. For example, BBS General Secretary Ven. Galagodaththe Gnanasara Thero regularly made inflammatory statements about "Islamic invasion and aggression" and "forced conversions" by Christian groups as posing an existential threat to the country's Buddhism.

INDONESIA

Details on Freedom of Religion or Belief

The total population of Indonesia was estimated at 255.9 million in 2015. According to the 2010 census, approximately 87 per cent of the population is Muslim, 7 per cent Protestant, 3 per cent Roman Catholic, and 1.5 per cent Hindu. Those identifying with other religious groups, including Buddhism, traditional indigenous religions, Confucianism, and other Christian denominations, and those who did not respond to the census question comprise approximately 1.3 per cent of the population.

The Muslim population is overwhelmingly Sunni. An estimated one to three million Muslims are Shia. Many smaller Muslim groups exist; estimates put the total number of Ahmadi Muslims at 200,000 to 400,000.

An estimated 20 million people, primarily in Java, Kalimantan, and Papua, practice various traditional belief systems, often referred to collectively as *aliran kepercayaan*. There are approximately 400 different *aliran kepercayaan* communities throughout the archipelago.

The country has a small Sikh population, estimated at between 10,000 and 15,000, residing primarily in Medan and Jakarta. There are very small Jewish communities in Jakarta, Manado, Surabaya, and elsewhere. The Baha'i community reports thousands of members. The group Indonesian Atheists states it has more than 500 members.

The province of Bali is predominantly Hindu, and the provinces of Papua, West Papua, East Nusa Tenggara, and North Sulawesi are predominantly Christian.

Legal and societal environment
The Indonesian constitution guarantees freedom of religion and the right to worship according to one's own beliefs, but states that citizens must accept re-

strictions established by law to protect the rights of others and to satisfy "just demands based upon considerations of morality, religious values, security and public order in a democratic society." The law restricts citizens from exercising these rights in a way that impinges on the rights of others, or jeopardizes security or public order.

The law prohibits deliberate public statements or activities that insult or defame a religion adhered to in the country, or have the intent of preventing an individual from adhering to a recognized religion. The law also forbids the dissemination of information designed to spread hatred or dissension among individuals and/or certain community groups on the basis of ethnicity, religion, or race. Individuals can be prosecuted for blasphemous, atheistic, or heretical statements under either of these provisions or under the laws against defamation, and can face a maximum jail sentence of five years. The internet law forbids the electronic dissemination of the same types of information, with violations carrying a maximum six-year sentence.

There were arrests and convictions for blasphemy and insulting religion. The government did not resolve long-standing religious disputes. There were instances where local governments and police gave in to the demands of groups labelled locally as "intolerant groups" to close houses of worship for permit violations, or otherwise restrict the rights of minority religious groups. The government at both the national and local levels at times reportedly failed to prevent or appropriately address intimidation and discrimination against individuals based on their religious belief. Both the central government and local governments featured elected and appointed officials from minority religious groups, and elected politicians from religious minorities served in majority Muslim districts. Certain local governments imposed local laws and regulations that restricted the religious freedom of minority and majority religious groups.

Religious organizations are not required to obtain a legal charter if they are established under a notary act and obtain approval from the Ministry of Law and Human Rights. Other religious organizations must obtain a legal charter as a civil society organization from the Ministry of Home Affairs. Both ministries consult with the MRA before granting legal status to religious organizations. Under the law, civil society organizations are required to uphold the national ideology of *Pancasila*, which encompasses the principles of belief in one God, justice, unity, democracy, and social justice, and they are prohibited from committing blasphemous acts or spreading religious hatred.

A joint ministerial decree bans both proselytizing by the Ahmadiyya community and vigilantism against the group. Violation of the proselytizing ban carries a maximum five-year prison sentence on charges of blasphemy. No Ahmadis have

ever been charged with blasphemy, but provincial and local regulations based on this decree place tighter restrictions on Ahmadis. The proselytizing ban does not prohibit Ahmadi Muslims from worshipping or continuing to practice within their community. Some local regulations require Ahmadis to sign a form renouncing their faith in order to get married or to go on the pilgrimage to Mecca.

According to a joint ministerial decree, religious groups wanting to build a house of worship are required to obtain the signatures of at least 90 members of the group and 60 persons of other religious groups in the community stating they support the construction. Local governments are in charge of implementing the decree, and local regulations, implementation, and enforcement vary widely. The decree also requires approval from the local interfaith council, the Forum for Religious Harmony (FKUB). Government-established FKUBs exist at the city or district level and comprise religious leaders from the six recognized religious groups. They are responsible for mediating interreligious conflicts.

Much of civil society, including religious organizations from all faiths, worked to counter intolerant messages and ideologies and promote tolerance of minority religious groups and pluralism. Intolerant religious groups, however, illegally closed houses of worship and widely disseminated materials promoting intolerance. These groups have found increasing resonance among a previously silent part of the population.

The two largest Islamic organizations in the country – NU and Muhammadiyah, with some 40 and 30 million members, respectively – officially endorsed tolerance and reinforced this concept at their respective five-year leadership conferences in August 2015. Haedar Nashir, the newly elected head of Muhammadiyah, told the press, "The reality is that we all live in a pluralist nation; the majority should protect minorities." The semi-governmental Indonesia Ulamas Council (MUI) held its leadership conference in September 2015 and explicitly rejected Islamic radicalism. Shortly after his election as head of MUI, Ma'ruf Amin – who was also elected to a senior position in NU and was criticized in the past for his anti-Shia and anti-Ahmadiyya sentiments – said the MUI would not tolerate the persecution of minorities and would try to prohibit and prevent persecution. People affiliated with the MUI at the local level continued to voice sectarian and intolerant rhetoric and to associate with intolerant groups.

Islamic groups cooperated on interfaith conferences and events with organizations representing diverse faiths, advocating for respect and tolerance and speaking out against violence. For instance, after an Islamic prayer building was burned in Tolikara, Papua, leaders from NU, Muhammadiyah, and MUI called for calm alongside leaders from Christian groups, who expressed regret on behalf of the Christian community.

TANZANIA

Freedom House 2017	score 58 (out of 100)
World Justice Project / Rule of Law 2016	score 0.47 (out of 1.0)
Human Development Index 2015	rank 151 / score 0.531 (out of 1.0)
Gender Inequality Index 2015	rank 129 / score 0.544 (above 0.0)
Pew Research Centre / Freedom of	Government Restrictions Index 3.4
Religion or Belief 2015	Social Hostility Index 3.2

Score 10 is the worst for both indices

Details on Freedom of Religion or Belief

The total population of Tanzania is estimated at 55.5 million. A 2010 Pew Forum survey (Pew Research Center, Washington) estimates that approximately 60 per cent of the mainland population is Christian, 36 per cent Muslim, and 4 per cent other religious groups. There are no domestic polls covering religious affiliation. Local commenters, however, consistently say there are roughly equal numbers of Christians and Muslims in the country.

On the mainland, large Muslim communities are concentrated in coastal areas, with some large Muslim minorities also located inland in urban areas. Christian groups include Roman Catholics, Protestants (including Pentecostals), Seventh-day Adventists, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), and Jehovah's Witnesses. Other groups include Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, Bahai' Faith, animists, and those who did not express a religious preference. Zanzibar's 1.5 million residents are estimated to 99 per cent Muslim, of which two thirds are Sunni, according to a 2012 Pew Forum report. The remainder consists of several Shia groups, mostly of Asian descent.

Legal and societal environment

The constitutions of the union government of Tanzania and of the semi-autonomous government in Zanzibar both prohibit religious discrimination and provide for freedom of religious choice. The union government constitution allows these rights to be limited by law for the purpose of protecting the rights of others; promoting the national interest and defense, safety, peace, morality, and health; and for other listed reasons. The Zanzibar constitution allows the rights to be limited by law if such a limitation is "necessary and agreeable in the democratic system" and does not limit the "foundation" of the right or bring "more harm" to society.

The law prohibits religious groups from registering as political parties. In order to register as a political party, an entity cannot use religion as a basis to approve membership, nor can the promotion of religion be a policy of that entity. On the mainland, secular laws govern Christians and Muslims in both criminal and civil cases. In family-related cases involving inheritance, marriage, divorce, and the adoption of minors, some Muslims choose to consult religious leaders in lieu of bringing a court case.

Zanzibar, while also subject to the union constitution, has its own president, court system, and legislature. Muslims in Zanzibar have the option of bringing cases to a civil or *qadi* (Islamic court or judge) court for matters of divorce, child custody, inheritance, and other issues covered by Islamic law. All cases tried in Zanzibar courts, except those involving Zanzibari constitutional matters and Sharia, can be appealed to the Union Court of Appeals on the mainland. Decisions of Zanzibar's *qadi* courts can be appealed to a special court consisting of the Zanzibar chief justice and five other sheikhs. The President of Zanzibar appoints the chief *qadi*, who oversees the *qadi* courts and is recognized as the senior Islamic scholar responsible for interpreting the Quran. There are no *qadi* courts on the mainland.

Religious groups must register with the registrar of societies at the Ministry of Home Affairs on the mainland and with the Office of the Registrar General on Zanzibar. Registration is required by law on both the mainland and in Zanzibar, but the penalties for failing to comply with this requirement are not stated in the law. To register, religious groups must provide the names of at least 10 members, a written constitution, resumes of their leaders, and a letter of recommendation from the district commissioner. Such groups can then list individual congregations, which do not need separate registration. In addition, Muslim groups registering on the mainland must provide a letter of approval from the National Muslim Council of Tanzania (BAKWATA), a government body. Muslim groups registering in Zanzibar must provide a letter of approval from the mufti, the government's official liaison to the Muslim community. Christian groups in Zanzibar can register directly with the registrar general.

Members of several churches, as well as prominent Muslim citizens, expressed concern at a prior killing and at an acid attack on religious leaders that had gone unresolved after several years of investigations by the police. The government made arrests, but again made little progress in prosecuting outstanding cases involving violent attacks against religious targets.

Religious leaders from various faiths continued to discuss tensions in Zanzibar. The Zanzibar Interfaith Committee (ZIC), which includes Muslim and Christian leaders, as well as government officials from the Office of the Mufti,

organized a workshop on 7 March 2015. At the workshop, religious leaders were urged to advocate for peace in advance of a planned (but later postponed) constitutional referendum and the 25 October general election. Civil society groups continued to promote religious tolerance and interfaith cooperation.

Several members of a self-described Islamic community development organization were charged under a terrorism statute for a series of violent incidents, including several attacks against Muslim and Christian religious leaders. By year's end (2015), the case had not yet come before the court for a hearing.

GERMANY

Freedom House 2017	score 95 (out of 100)
World Justice Project / Rule of Law 2016	score 0.83 (out of 1.0)
Human Development Index 2015	rank 4 / score 0.926 (out of 1.0)
Gender Inequality Index 2015	rank 9 / score 0.066 (above 0.0)
Pew Research Centre / Freedom of	Government Restrictions Index 3.7
Religion or Belief 2015	Social Hostility Index 5.3
Score 10 is the worst on both indices	

Details on Freedom of Religion or Belief

The total German population was estimated at 80.9 million in 2015. Unofficial estimates and figures provided by religious groups indicate the Roman Catholic Church had approximately 23.9 million members and the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD, defined as a confederation of Lutheran, Reformed, and United Protestant regional Churches) approximately 23.0 million members.

Other Protestant denominations account for less than 1 per cent of the population, including the New Apostolic Church, Baptist communities (including Evangelical Christian Baptists, the International Baptist Convention, Reformed Baptists, Bible Baptists, and others), and other evangelical, nondenominational Christians. Orthodox Christians number approximately 1.5 million.

According to government estimates, there are approximately 4 to 4.5 million Muslims, 5 per cent of the population. This includes approximately 2.6 million Sunnis, 500,000 Alevis, and 226,000 Shia. In addition, officials and NGOs estimate Muslims to make up a majority of the 1.1 million migrants and asylum seekers who arrived in the country in 2015. Estimates of the Jewish population vary between 100,000 and 250,000. Other religious groups include Buddhists,

Hindus, Jehovah's Witnesses (222,000), and Scientologists (5,000-10,000). Roughly 28 million persons (33 per cent of the population) either have no religious affiliation or are members of unrecorded religious groups.

Legal and societal environment

The German constitution prohibits religious discrimination and provides for freedom of faith and conscience and the practice of one's religion. Some state governments and federal agencies continued to decline to recognize certain belief systems as religions, in particular Jehovah's Witnesses and the Church of Scientology, making them ineligible for tax benefits. State-level authorities have issued public warnings about some minority religious groups and discriminated against their members in public-sector hiring. Government leaders at all levels have participated in rallies and spoken out against anti-Semitism. They have also participated in demonstrations to condemn the use of terror and violence and expressed support for what they described as moderate forms of Islam.

Anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim speech and actions such as verbal and physical assault on those perceived to be Jews or Muslims continued in 2015. Civil society leaders spoke out against anti-Semitism and religious intolerance. Members of civil society, including the Central Council of Muslims in Germany, the Turkish community, and prominent Jewish groups, held public rallies against intolerance and extremist violence, and promoted tolerance programmes and efforts to improve Muslim integration.

Many civil society groups continued to seek improved societal respect for religious freedom through tolerance programmes, multifaith groups, and dialogue. In April the German-Moroccan Forum started an initiative in Essen to meet monthly to create dialogue and tolerance among members of Jewish and Muslim communities. The Saalam-Shalom Initiative in Berlin likewise held seminars to engage in dialogue on current topics, such as headscarves and kosher and halal practices. Jewish NGOs such as the Central Council of Jews and the Jewish Forum for Democracy and Against Anti-Semitism provided input and assistance on a variety of government-sponsored tolerance education programmes focusing on anti-Semitism.

In November 2015 television officials withdrew the nomination of singer Xavier Naidoo as the country's representative at the 2016 Eurovision song contest after protests on social media criticized some of his song lyrics as anti-Semitic.

Sources

Statistical data

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United Nations Development Programme/UNDP (2016): *Human Development Reports. Table 1: Human Development Index and its Components*; available via http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI

United Nations Development Programme/UNDP (2016): *Human Development Reports. Table 5: Gender Inequality Index*, available via http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII

World Justice Project (2016): *Rule of Law Index 2016*; available via http://data.worldjusticeproject.org

Country details

US State Department (2016): *Religious Freedom. Country Reports 2016,* available via https://www.state.gov/j/drl/irf/rpt/index.htm