



Conference Recommendations: United against Violence in the Name of Religion – Supporting Religious and Cultural Diversity in Iraq and Syria

General Recommendations

- Immediate call to end violence in the name of religion;
- Encourage religious leaders to condemn all violence against others, be it within their tradition or outside, whether majorities or minorities, and to respect their rights;
- Focus on Citizenship, in education and social cohesion;
- Improve national policies, legal frameworks, infrastructure, personal encounters, etc. vis-à-vis majorities/minorities, youth, women, local communities, religious scholars;
- Introduce more dialogue oriented projects proactively;
- Focus on the relationship between religions and states, separation versus harmonization needs further discussion;
- Support displaced people and refugees including reintegration in their homes.

Social Cohesion

- Encourage law and policy makers to strengthen legal rules against violence in the name of religion;
- Counteract poverty and unemployment as main factors for extremism (economic growth is part of the solution);
- Work on developing good self-critical tools and methods in religions, interpretations of religious texts;
- Call for all international and religious organizations to help in the crisis of the Yazidi minorities in particular.

Media

- Create positive campaigns to counter extremist campaigns. Send positive messages to support mainstream voices;
- Establish media relations and trainings regarding the image of the other;
- Invest in youth as messengers for peace;
- Build a grassroots network of youth; youth to youth;
- Make existing information digestible through social media, which is the best way to reach youth.

Education

- Revise principles of education curricula and review curricula on religion (e.g. create religious diversity guide to world faiths);
- Reform educational systems with regard to the image of the other and interreligious relations;
- Design a formal framework for dialogue and exchange, by using religious texts that endorse dialogue;
- Include religious leaders in the creation of curricula, strengthening citizenship and supporting socio-cultural transformation;
- Train curriculum developers along with teachers and educators to include the idea of dialogue;
- Expand exchange of programmes in education and across communities.

Recommended Actions

- Collect, study, acknowledge and promote success stories of interreligious and peace initiatives;
- Introduce IRD education and training to students of religions including developing interreligious dialogue curricula;
- Train religious leaders to disseminate the values of diversity and citizenship;
- Establish a network of local religious leaders who believe in diversity and pluralism;
- Provide a social media platform to increase important mainstream voices;
- Provide a training for a large number of youth, and empower them on social media;
- Form a regional follow up committee to enact the recommendations.

KAICIID INITIATIVES

Preventing Atrocities

- KAICIID is collaborating with the Office of the UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide to provide religious leaders the means to help predict and prevent atrocity crimes. The project will be launched at a conference in March 2015.

Empowering Religious Leaders and Youth to Reach Broader Audiences and Advocate Pluralism

- KAICIID is empowering youth leaders to help this new generation preserve pluralism and religious and cultural diversity in future. For instance, in partnership with the UN's Special Envoy on Youth, and with the Right Start Foundation International, we will train youth leaders in dialogue and action in Spring 2015. These youth leaders will then be able to train their peers to use interreligious dialogue to support pluralism in their communities. At the same time, the training will strengthen young journalists' and media activists' ability to reach a broader audience with messages that support pluralism.
- Young people engage their world through social media. KAICIID is training youth leaders and religious leaders to better amplify their social media outreach to advocate plurality. KAICIID also worked with UNESCO to pilot media literacy training in 2014, and will expand both programmes in 2015.

Educators Preserve Plurality through Interreligious Education

- Educators are also crucial partners for KAICIID since they instill in a new generation a culture that will value and preserve social cohesion and dialogue. Together with the Adyan Foundation, a Lebanese NGO that fosters interreligious understanding and social engagement, as well as with other regional partners, KAICIID will convene a conference in March 2015 to support interreligious and intercultural education in the Middle East.

Arabic Religious Institutions Network to Support Social Cohesion

- KAICIID is building a network of Arabic Muslim and Christian religious institutions, universities, and civil society organisations.
- KAICIID is also working with ISESCO, the OIC, and Arabic civil society organizations to integrate interreligious dialogue and pluralism in university programmes.