



Religions for Peace Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct for *Religions for Peace* (*RfP*) (“Code”) applies to all affiliates, leaders, representatives, members, consultants, staff, interns and volunteers at local, national, regional, and international levels (“*RfP* entities”).

The Code outlines the *RfP* mission, its values and principles, and links them with standards of professional conduct. This Code is required precisely because of the international, multi-religious, and multi-cultural composition of the organisation, which shares a common vision, principles and purpose, yet is built on and needs to demonstrate respect for many forms of diversity.

RfP advances common action among the world’s religious communities for peace. No single religious community leads *RfP*. Instead, representatives from diverse religious institutions and traditions make up all *RfP* structures and leadership. This multi-religious representation and collaboration is consistent with *RfP*’s four guiding principles:

1. Respect religious differences and seek to honour the identity and community of each religious tradition;
2. Leverage the existing spiritual, moral, and social assets of the world’s religious communities to act on deeply held and widely shared values;
3. Build and/or strengthen representative, sustainable multi-religious mechanisms, co-owned by religious institutions and communities;
4. Partner local, national, regional, and global multi-religious structures, with governmental, intergovernmental, and non-governmental civil society actors.

All *RfP* entities commit to embodying the vision, mission, and purposes of *RfP* in conduct, thus providing a respectful, inclusive, and welcoming environment that is free from any discrimination, abuse, exploitation, misconduct, and/or harassment. This Code is also consistent with the values developed by the United Nations Global Compact, (“UNGC”) which outlines fundamental responsibilities in the areas of human rights, labour, the environment, and anti-corruption.

All *RfP* entities are expected to meet the standards set out in this Code and to cooperate in preventing, assessing, auditing, and transparently addressing any issues inconsistent with this Code. The Code is intended to be a living document and a guide for the *RfP* movement, which allows for practical application, adaptation, and improvement.

RfP entities are required to have effective systems to communicate the Code to their constituencies, employees, volunteers, consultants, and partners. *RfP* entities shall maintain the documentation necessary to demonstrate compliance with the Code and with applicable international and local laws and regulations. This includes a formal acknowledgment in writing that they have received, read and understood their responsibilities in adherence to the Code.

RfP entities shall also put in place a mechanism for reporting any violations to the Code and actively raising awareness among its members, affiliates and beneficiaries about the reporting mechanism.

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In accordance with [Article II of the R/P International Standing Rules](#), individual and institutional members and affiliates of R/P who have engaged in activities contrary to the vision, mission, and purposes of the organization, as well as to this Code of Conduct, may have their membership withdrawn by the relevant R/P organizational level to which they belong. Before such action is taken, notification and an opportunity to be heard shall be given.

If and when issues are not resolved and alleged misconduct persists, the R/P International Executive Committee shall reserve the right to withdraw its recognition and license to use R/P names and symbols from such individuals or affiliates. In addition to expulsion, extreme violations may also be subject to legal recourse in the applicable region and country.

R/P's Values and Responsibilities

Fiduciary Responsibility

The officers and employees in R/P entities are fiduciaries of the organization and its mission. They stand in a fiduciary relationship to the organization in that they are entrusted to protect its reputation, resources, and act on its behalf. Fiduciaries may not benefit themselves at the expense of the organization and all officers and employees must disclose potential conflicts of interest. All R/P entities are expected to conduct their work with integrity in accordance with the vision and mission of R/P.

Use of Organizational Assets

R/P entities and partners are prohibited from using organizational assets, intellectual property, or proprietary interests for personal gain. All R/P entities must comply with applicable privacy and data protection laws and ensure the protection, security, and lawful use of personal data. Theft and embezzlement of tangible and intellectual property are clear violations of this principle and any such acts will be prosecuted to their fullest.

Reliability

R/P entities are expected to foster a culture of reliability to ensure that all actions align with R/P's broader vision and mission. R/P entities are obliged to attain ethical norms in carrying out stated intentions, in keeping promises, and fulfilling contracts. R/P's quest for organizational reliability extends to third party suppliers and partners.

Transparency

R/P considers honesty and respect for truth as fundamental ethical imperatives. R/P entities must assure the timely disclosure and accuracy of organizational, programmatic, and financial information. Transparency promotes dignity and freedom, enables wise decision making, advances knowledge, and enables broader cooperation. R/P entities must protect against, and prosecute, known fraud and deceit.



Dignity

R/P entities affirm to develop human potential. All *R/P* entities shall provide protections for health, safety, expression, and privacy, and enforce proscriptions on humiliation, coercion, and offenses against basic human rights.

Profoundly rooted in the multi-religious consensus on human dignity and shared well-being, *R/P* rejects all forms of harassment (including sexual exploitation and abuse), in our relationship with co-workers, constituencies, and partners.

Harassment

Harassment in any form is strictly prohibited. Harassment includes inappropriate conduct, comment, display, action, or gesture -based on another person's sex, color, race, religion, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and any other protected characteristic.

Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to: epithets, slurs, or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; denigrating jokes; and the display or circulation of written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility toward an individual or group based on a protected characteristic.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is one form of harassment. Sexual harassment may involve individuals of the same or different gender. Like all harassment, sexual harassment is strictly prohibited.

Sexual harassment can be:

- Verbal: Sexual innuendoes, suggestive comments, jokes of a sexual nature, sexual propositions, or threats.
- Non-Verbal: Sexually suggestive objects or pictures, graphic commentaries, suggestive or insulting sounds, leering, whistling, or obscene gestures.
- Physical: Unwanted physical contact, including touching, pinching, coerced sexual intercourse, or assault.

Sexual Exploitation & Abuse

R/P and its Members are required to enact mechanisms for identifying, protecting against, and managing cases of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) based on international best practices.

R/P considers SEA as defined by the United Nations as:

- Sexual Exploitation: Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

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- Sexual Abuse: The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

R/P prohibits SEA against children and adults in line with the UN definition of SEA.

R/P and its affiliates shall include procedures/processes of vetting candidates (for staffing, consultants, contractors, partners) regarding SEA and child safeguarding. This includes adopting a checklist for prevention of SEA sensitive recruitment, contracting and performance management.

SEA committed against child or adult beneficiaries, personnel, or community members by personnel and beneficiaries will undergo detailed investigation in accordance with internal guidelines and procedures.

R/P staff, networks, contractors, and stakeholders are required to report any forms of SEA according to *R/P*'s misconduct reporting procedures (see APPENDIX II: Reporting Protocols). *R/P* will ensure that all SEA reporting is free of employment or beneficiary risk, strictly confidential (with the option for complete anonymity), and transparent regarding how, why, and to whom information is shared.

All *R/P* personnel, networks, and stakeholders are required to undergo mandatory training on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA). The training will be online or in person based on approved tools and resources.

R/P renounces the use of child labour and prohibits business partners from employing underage workers. The employment of young workers below the age of 18 shall only occur in non-hazardous work and only when young workers are above a country's legal age for employment, or the age established for completing compulsory education.

Fairness

R/P entities are expected to provide a workplace free from discrimination. There shall be no discrimination for reasons such as race, colour, age, pregnancy, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, religion, political affiliation, union membership, or marital status. *R/P* entities are required to provide equal pay for equal work, pay workers according to applicable wage laws, including minimum wages, overtime hours, and mandated benefits. Additionally, *R/P* requires procedural fairness which guarantees all employees' due process.

Transparency and Rule of Law

R/P entities must identify and comply with applicable international and local laws, regulations, and standards. All forms of bribery, corruption, extortion, and embezzlement, including facilitation payments, are prohibited. *R/P* entities shall ensure they have adequate processes in place to prevent bribery and comply with applicable laws.



R/P requires all its entities to operate in an environmentally conscientious manner and to take measures to improve efficiency and reduce the consumption of resources. *R/P* also accepts its responsibility for maintaining the “commons”— natural environment, public spaces, or legitimate governments.

Responsiveness

R/P and *R/P* Members endeavour to extricate the indifference that often characterizes bureaucratic systems. *R/P* acknowledges that other parties are affected by the organization’s activities and must be responsive to all justifiable claims. *R/P* and *R/P* Members are tasked with responding to complaints from directly impacted person(s), reports from witnesses of misconduct, and rumours of misconduct suggestions from employees, contractors, and all engaged parties. *R/P* and *R/P* Member investigations and correspondences shall be conducted in strict confidence and involve only those deemed necessary to the investigation, and disclosures will only be made on an as-needed basis.

R/P and *R/P* Members shall regularly raise awareness among its affiliates, beneficiaries and others on the reporting mechanisms for violation of the Code.

Communication Protocol and Etiquette

As the fabric of *R/P*’s mission, it is essential that internal and external communications be honest, accurate, and candid in all regards. Effective communication encourages a continuous dialogue that facilitates the free flow of important information amongst all stakeholders and audiences. *R/P* is tasked with fostering a culture of communication within and between its broad and diverse network of staff and affiliates.

The fluid and accurate flow of information between *R/P* International and its affiliates is instrumental for informed decision-making. All *R/P* entities embrace the opportunity to strengthen the communication channels to assist furthering the organization’s mission (Please see **APPENDIX IV: Communications Guidelines**).

Effective news and social media bring awareness to *R/P*’s mission and work. Public understanding, goodwill and favourable attitudes towards *R/P*’s undertakings are particularly important in furthering the organization’s vision and mission. All *R/P* affiliates recognize that the integrity of the *R/P* name and logo are core assets of the organization. Maintaining and managing the *R/P* brand requires the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and accountability to which all *R/P* entities are committed. All *R/P* entities share the cost and benefit associated with the use of the *R/P* brand. *R/P* Affiliates must be sensitive to the fact that their actions, even within their own national or regional context, may significantly affect others. Affiliates are mutually accountable to their fellow affiliates and to the *R/P* global movement for the management of its organizational brand.

For all communications, a reasonable analysis of the impacts, risks, and possible unintended negative consequences of the proposed action must be considered, and *R/P* entities shall undertake only those actions which are compatible with its core principles. In planning and carrying out activities such as public advocacy and campaigning, all *R/P* entities shall avoid a material adverse effect on the *R/P* global



reputation, credibility and reliability. *R/P*'s International standing and reputation depends upon the ethical conduct of everyone under the *R/P* umbrella.

All external communications must properly attribute all participants and sponsors associated with a promoted cause or event, and all affiliates must assure that *R/P* receives reciprocal attribution where appropriate.

Reporting Misconduct

Any individual or *R/P* entity which believes that they have experienced or witnessed a violation of this Code of Conduct, including harassment, sexual exploitation and abuse or other inappropriate behaviour, should reference the appropriate *R/P* entities reporting mechanisms, per *R/P*'s reporting protocol (Please see **APPENDIX II: Reporting Protocols**).



APPENDIX I:

Provisions of the International Standing Rules

Article II:

Section 2. Recognition of Different Levels of Organization. The International Executive Committee (see IV. C.4.a) shall retain the right to approve the legal form of any Local Unit, National Chapter or Regional Religions for Peace affiliate, or any change in such legal form, including the formation of a separate legal entity from a division of Religions for Peace, and the transfer of assets related to such division to such separate legal entity.

Section 3. Use of Religions for Peace Name and Symbols. It is a condition to the affirmation of each Local Unit, National Chapter and Regional Religions for Peace affiliate with Religions for Peace and the use of the names and symbols associated with Religions for Peace that the right to use each such name and symbol is granted and licensed by Religions for Peace thereto and that no Local Unit, National Chapter or Regional Religions for Peace affiliate shall have a right to use any such name or symbol except pursuant to such grant and license.

Section 5. Termination. Any Religions for Peace Local Unit, National Chapter or Regional Religions for Peace affiliate that has engaged in activities contrary to the Purposes and multireligious character of Religions for Peace and persists in such activities after it has been called to the attention of its officers, may have its recognition withdrawn. In the case of a National Chapter or a Regional Religions for Peace affiliate, such action is to be taken by the World Council. In the case of a Local Unit, the action is to be normally taken by the National Chapter as an agent of the World Council. Before such action is taken, notification and an opportunity to be heard shall be given. It is understood that such action is taken in the sole discretion of the appropriate body. At such time such Local Unit, National Chapter or Regional Religions for Peace affiliate shall cease to use the names and symbols associated with Religions for Peace or otherwise to present itself as being part of or affiliated with Religions for Peace.



APPENDIX II: Reporting Protocols

Each *R/P* entity should have clearly established mechanisms and protocols (e.g., a reporting template developed by the Human Resources/Operations office) to receive reports of misconduct. These mechanisms should also ensure the provision of psychosocial support if and when necessary, including guaranteeing a safe space, the provision of guidance on action steps to be taken and have in place a referral process/procedure that links victims of harassment and/or sexual exploitation and abuse to relevant service providers. These mechanisms should be clearly spelled out to all employees, consultants, and staff at the very outset of recruitment.

Reporting of incidents should be accompanied by relevant documentation per the respective procedures and protocol of the relevant *R/P* mechanism - copied to the respective governance body. For example, if the perceived misconduct is at the national IRC level, the Executive Committee of the national IRC should be the main governance body ultimately accountable for responding and taking due action, including, if and when deemed necessary, through legal means. The executive body will demand documentation and assurance that all requirements of reporting, as noted by the Human Resources/Operations of the respective body, are fulfilled. Loosely worded verbal agreements are not acceptable. If the misconduct occurs (or is deemed to have occurred) at the Regional IRC level, then the executive body of the Regional IRC is the accountable governance entity to resolve the matter once presented through the protocol required by the regional office/entity mechanism, as per above requirements.

If the issue persists and resolution has not been possible at the national level, then the matter should be raised with the Regional IRC executive level, while simultaneously alerting the International Secretariat's Operations and Deputy Secretary General's Offices. These, in turn, after due consultation with the Secretary General, may bring the matter(s) to the attention of the International Executive Committee, with considerations / suggestions for resolution.

If the allegations concern a member of the *R/P* governing bodies, the Office of Operations will bring this to the attention of the office of the Secretary General, for consideration for submission to the International Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall then constitute an "Ethics Committee," consisting of no more than seven (7) members from different levels of the organization (World Council, National IRCs, Women of Faith Network, Interfaith Youth Network). Upon receipt of the report of behavior in violation of this Code of Conduct, the relevant level of the organization or the International Executive Committee and/or its Ethics Committee shall promptly consult with concerned parties and, if needed, assign a representative to conduct an investigation.

If it is determined that there is a violation of this Code of Conduct, relevant *R/P* national, regional, and international governance bodies should adopt appropriate disciplinary measures. These can include prohibition from attendance of future *R/P* meetings or events, removal from a committee appointment, the withdrawal of the recognition or license to use *R/P* name and symbols from the individual or affiliate, or any other action deemed appropriate by the relevant *R/P* governing body.

Violations that comprise harassment or sexual exploitation and abuse shall be attended to first by ensuring the victims receive the necessary psychological/health support or have access to such support even as the investigations processes and procedures continues.



APPENDIX III:

A Statement on Sexual Harassment from the Office of *Religions for Peace* International 22 OCTOBER, 2019

A Statement from the Office of *Religions for Peace* International 22 OCTOBER 2019

Sexual harassment and any form of violence against women is wrong. It occurs in public, in diverse institutions, and in the privacy of the home. It is unspeakably hurtful to women. It also damages families, communities and ultimately all of us.

Religions recognize the fundamental dignity of every woman and man. We know—each according to her or his respective religious tradition—that the true dignity of every woman is given by and rooted in the Sacred. This dignity is inviolable. It is not given by cultures, states, societies, communities or individuals. It cannot be taken away by them. But the recognition of this dignity must be “restored” whenever it is violated. It must be actively respected, honoured and protected.

Eliminating sexual harassment and violence against women is a religious duty. Doing everything we can to repair and restore the full dignity of women. Doing so will also nourish all of us for healthier, more fulfilling and dignified lives.

Religions for Peace is committed to:

- Working to engage religious communities to prevent acts of harassment and violence against women,
- Advocating for changes in public policies and attitudes that contribute to zero tolerance for all forms of harassment and violence against women,
- Mobilizing the compassion of religious communities to help care for and support survivors of harassment and violence.
- Continually engaging in self-reflection as a global institution and as affiliates to examine the ways we intentionally and unintentionally perpetuate beliefs and behaviors that violate the dignity of women.

Religious believers need to be the first to hold their own communities and leaders accountable both to the law and to their traditions’ highest religious standards. Collectively, all religious communities need to work together to help build the culture of honesty and transparency essential for the protection of all human beings and for advancing the sanctity and promise of every person.

APPENDIX IV:

INTERNAL Communications Guidelines for *RfP* International Secretariat

GENERAL GUIDANCE

For all staff, consultants and interns that serve the *RfP* International Secretariat's Office, please ensure that:

- External communications, whether written or spoken, emanating from the NY Secretariat to any and all actors must be reviewed and approved by the supervising unit or office Director. These guidelines apply to communications with members of the World Council, High Priests, Trustees, Advisors, Ambassadors, funders, Regional Secretariat Generals, Directors and Offices, *RfP* IRCs, UN, NGOs and governmental entities.
- Respective Directors must ensure that all external communications to the aforementioned groups are consistent with the stated goals and mission outlined by the Secretary General.
- Directors please make sure that communications directed to regional IRCs or partners are copied to the appropriate Regional Secretariat Generals or Directors. With consideration of reciprocity, we also request that regional Secretariat Generals and Directors copy the relevant International Secretariat Directors on communications with commonly shared external partners.
- We request that the subjects of email and letters clearly state the nature of information shared and the priority thereof (e.g., marking a message "Urgent" or "Time Sensitive"). As a courtesy to the intended recipient(s), we kindly ask that all communications are clear and brief.
- For messages that require International Secretariat clearance, please note that the SG Office now has two Associates: Please ensure the SG Special Assistant remains the primary conduit for such messages as she is responsible for directing relevant communications within the SG Office and will coordinate accordingly with IRC development and other offices.
- Failure to follow this Protocol, as with other aspects of the broader Code of Conduct, the Employee Handbook or the organisational bylaws, will be considered a breach of professional conduct by the Secretariat General and the Senior Management Team.

LOGISTICAL GUIDANCE

- Whenever a Director or Unit head is absent for any reason, s/he is expected to appoint an Officer in Charge and clearly note this in an automatic email response. The automatic response should clarify the duration of the absence and provide the name and contact information of the Officer in Charge.
- When a Programme/Communications Officer, Associate, or Intern is absent, they are also required to provide an automatic email response clarifying their absence and nominating a colleague to whom requests, or correspondences may be directed. The automatic response should provide the name and contact information of the referenced colleague.
- Senior Management Team meetings shall convene immediately after the Regional Directors and Secretariat Generals monthly meetings – unless decided otherwise by the Secretariat General or the Senior Management Team.
- All Regional Secretariat Generals and Directors are welcome to partake of the weekly International Secretariat Staff meetings.

** This Protocol is a living document and shall be regularly updated, amended, and shared by the Finance and Operations Office.