

The Ansari Institute for Global Engagement with Religion is Partnering with *Religions for Peace*, the World’s Largest and Most Representative Multi-religious Movement Advancing Common Action for Peace.

28 September 2022: The partnership will allow the two organisations to work together on joint educational initiatives, collaborate on projects designed to advance understanding of interreligious work, and research multi-religious collaborative programs on human rights, peace and security, and sustainable development at various country levels.

The partnership, which will be formally announced at the institute’s upcoming [Nasr Book Prize Symposium](#), is a natural move for both organisations. *Religions for Peace* has a rich history of supporting multi-religious cooperation for holistic peace, and the Ansari Institute embraces an openness to the wisdom of diverse faith traditions. Both organisations exercise respectful cooperation with local and global actors, and collaborations across disciplines.

Professor Azza Karam, Secretary General of *Religions for Peace*, serves on the Ansari Institute’s Advisory Board, which also provides financial support for an internship programme through *Religions for Peace*. “Our collaborative work can harvest knowledge and practices of multi-religious peace building around the world”, said Professor Karam.

“We are honored to partner with *Religions for Peace*,” said Mahan Mirza, the Ansari Institute’s Executive Director. “It is important now more than ever to bring together different voices and to learn from the collective wisdom of the world’s traditions to tackle some of the most pressing challenges confronting us today.”

The partnership will focus on:

- **Conducting joint initiatives fostering the education of students** at the Ansari Institute, the Keough School Global Affairs, and the University of Notre Dame; this will include helping students gain exposure to interreligious work on peace and world affairs, and may include practical training as well as internships at *Religions for Peace*.
- **Collaboration on projects to advance understanding of interreligious work.** This may include investigations and consultations as well as training, strategic exchanges, and joint publications.
- **Researching multi-religious collaborative programs on human rights, peace and security, and sustainable development at various country levels.**

The two will also award *Religions for Peace*’s Multi-religious Peacemakers who have provided stellar leadership and systematic contributing to global efforts for peace. The three honorees this year are: Mr. Abdul Ilah Rafie Marafie, Rev. Kosho Niwano, and Dr. Aruna Oswal (see below bio details).

For more information please contact –

Religions for Peace, International: Ms. Sohaa Khan (skhan@rfp.org)

Ansari Institute: Mr. Josh Stowe (jstowe1@nd.edu)

Mr. Abdul Ilah Rafie Marafie

Marafie serves as International Trustee for *Religions for Peace* and Chief Patron Trustee for the Marafie Foundation.

He was born into the Marafie family, one of Kuwait's ancient merchant families. After secondary school education, he completed studies in business management. In 1975, he joined the family-run business and found time to assist with Marafie Foundation activities. Since his father's passing in 1976, he has been actively involved in managing the foundation as its chief patron trustee. The foundation has completed approximately 1,000 projects in the Baltistan area of northeast Pakistan consisting of schools, clinics, community centers, and has another 300 projects planned.

Marafie also associates with many NGOs in Kuwait, including Kuwait Transparency Society, an organization fighting against corruption. Currently, he is the chair of the First Hotels Co. (the owning Company of Radisson SAS HotelKuwait) and he also serves as a member of the board of directors of the Marafie Group.

Reverend Kosho Niwano

Rev. Kosho Niwano serves as Co-Moderator and executive committee member of *Religions for Peace* and President-Designate of Rissho Kosei-Kai, a lay Buddhist movement.

She was born in Tokyo as the first daughter of Rissho Kosei-Kai President Nichiko Niwano. After receiving a law degree from Gakushuin University, she studied at Rissho Kosei-kai's Gakurin seminary. She studies the teachings of the Lotus Sutra and shares them with members who visit the Great Sacred Hall for worship services and special events.

Niwano also promotes interreligious cooperation domestically and internationally in her capacity as President-Designate of Rissho Kosei-kai by attending interfaith congresses. She is a councilor of Shinshuren (Federation of New Religious Organizations of Japan), a member of the board of directors of *Religions for Peace*-Japan, and member of the board of directors for The King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue.

Niwano is the author of a book titled, *Kaiso-sama ni naraitte (The Buddha in Everyone's Heart)*.

Dr. Aruna Oswal

Dr. Aruna Oswal is an entrepreneur, philanthropist, and social activist.

She serves as Co-President and International Trustee of *Religions for Peace* and has served in a variety of other leadership roles, including: Chair of the Abhey Oswal Group & Aruna Abhey Oswal Trust; Vice President for the World Jain Confederation; and past International Director and Trustee for the Lions Clubs International.

Oswal has received honors from former Indian President A. P. J. Abdul Kalam and former Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who presented her with the Jain Ratna Award. She has also received numerous honors from Lions Club International. As a leader in that organization, she has overseen numerous fellowship and service projects, including the distribution of more than 1,000 sewing machines for women entrepreneurs.