

Religions *for* Peace



# BUILDING A BETTER WORLD

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THE WOMEN LEADING RELIGIONS FOR PEACE

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This publication is a work in progress, as the *Religions for Peace* global movement is ever-growing. *Religions for Peace* will continue to highlight the women leading the *Religions for Peace* global movement annually in succeeding volumes.

The opinions expressed in this article are not necessarily representative of the positions of *Religions for Peace* leaders, Secretariat, or institutions.

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# FOREWORD

Peace and security, human rights and sustainable development can only be achieved when women are an integral part of the work at all levels. This principle is at the heart of *Religions for Peace*, the world's largest international multifaith organisation, which Professor Azza Karam leads as the first woman and the first Muslim to serve as its Secretary General in its 52-year history.

However, she does not lead alone. Many diverse women provide leadership at the highest levels of *Religions for Peace*, which include the organisation's Interreligious Councils, mobilising in more than 90 countries, and the World Council, which serves as its governing board.

Under these women's stewardship, *Religions for Peace* continues to strengthen the foundation for peaceful, just, and inclusive societies; promote gender equality; foster a sustainable environment; champion freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; ensure access to interreligious education; and build multireligious and global partnerships.

Despite the obstacles they still face in a historically male-dominated sector, they have dedicated their talent and time to tackling some of the world's most intractable issues. Their perseverance and impact is truly worthy of celebration.

Never before have women led interfaith movements in such numbers and with such diversity.

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Religions for Peace is proud to have played an integral part in breaking this glass ceiling as we continue to support women leaders across the globe.

# THE WORLD COUNCIL

The World Council serves as the global leadership body of *Religions for Peace* by supporting the national and regional Interreligious Councils, the Interfaith Youth Networks, and the Women of Faith Networks.

## Co-Moderators

Dr. Kezevino (Vinu) Aram has spent decades advancing peace, interfaith dialogue, child health, education, and poverty alleviation across the globe. As Director of Shanti Ashram and Executive Committee Member of *Religions for Peace*, Dr. Aram has led numerous children's health programmes, including a practicum for Harvard School of Public Health graduate and doctoral students. She also serves on the Board of Directors of the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue.



*Dr. Kezevino (Vinu) Aram*



*Reverend Kosho Niwano*

Reverend Kosho Niwano, who serves as the President-Designate of Rissho Kosei-Kai, attends interfaith congresses to actively promote interreligious cooperation both domestically and internationally. She has also authored the book, Kaiso-samani Naraite *The Buddha in Everyone's Heart*, (Kosei Publishing, 2013). In October 2022, she was honoured with the Multi-Religious Peacemaker Lifetime Achievement Award for her contributions to global peace by *Religions for Peace* and the Ansari Institute of Notre Dame University.

## Co-Presidents

Dr. Pritpal Kaur Ahluwalia, currently serves as Education Director at the Sikh Coalition, the largest Sikh civil rights organisation in the United States. In this role, she oversees the educational endeavors of the Sikh Coalition. These include reviewing and creating educational content and resources about Sikhs. She also works to advance the Sikh Coalition's multi-year advocacy in the area of state standards curricula to ensure that Sikhism is taught in public school classrooms across the United States and that teaching materials are accurate. She holds a Ph.D. in Sikh Studies from the University of Birmingham (U.K.) and was one of the inaugural Faiths Act Fellows for an interfaith programme run by the Tony Blair Faith Foundation and the Interfaith Youth Core. She served as a Faith Coordinator for the Nishkam School Trust before moving to the U.S.



*Dr. Pritpal Kaur Ahluwalia*



# THE WORLD COUNCIL

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Honorable Dr. Layla Alkhafaji, Elected Member of Political Bureau-Alhikmah Movement, serves as a model of strength and courage. When Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait led to his defeat in the First Gulf War, Dr. Alkhafaji was among the political prisoners released. She had spent almost ten years behind bars after being convicted of "anti-government activity"—visiting a woman whose brother was in prison. In 2005, Dr. Alkhafaji helped draft the new Iraqi constitution, worked on the 2005 transitional elections, and was elected herself in December of that year.



*Dr. Layla Alkhafaji*



*Ms. Bani Dugal*

Ms. Bani Dugal, Principal Representative of the Bahá'í International Community to the United Nations, has held numerous positions as part of the UN community of international NGOs since 1994. These include serving as a member of the Steering Committee of the NGO Working Group on the Security Council. She also practiced law before the Supreme Court of India prior to relocating to the United States in 1988.

The Honorable Ela Gandhi, Trustee of the Gandhi Development Trust, has continued her family's commitment to service by serving on the frontlines of the global interfaith movement. She sat on the Transitional Executive Committee in the South African Government, which was instrumental to the country's transition to a post-Apartheid state of normalcy. She went on to serve in South Africa's Parliament from 1994 to 2004, where she focused on motherhood support and welfare programmes. After leaving Parliament, she developed a 24-hour domestic violence support organisation and founded the Gandhi Development Trust, which she still chairs.



*Honorable Ela Gandhi*

# THE WORLD COUNCIL

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Ms. Sheran Harper, is the Worldwide President and Chair of the Board of Trustees for Mothers' Union, a global, women led, Christian membership movement that has been providing a support network for families since 1876. Professionally, she is a Physiotherapist who established and managed Physiotherapy Departments and trained Rehabilitation Therapists for the Ministry of Health in Guyana. Ms. Harper has been a member of Mothers' Union since 1987 and for the last 20 years she has served Mothers' Union with a high level of commitment in several leadership roles at Diocesan, Provincial and Worldwide levels. In the fulfilment of these roles, she visited over 20

countries for Mothers' Union, primarily as the Lead for the Worldwide Parenting programme; passionately advancing women's empowerment and leadership; campaigning for policies which strengthen family life; promoting peace and reconciliation within a diversity of cultures; and advocating for increased gender justice by working sensitively with communities. She was recognised by the Government of Guyana for her work nationally and internationally, and was presented with a National Award in 2020 – the Golden Arrow of Achievement.



*Ms. Sheran Harper*



*Dr. Antje Jackelén*

H.E. Dr. Antje Jackelén, is Archbishop Emerita of the Church of Sweden and an Adjunct Professor of systematic theology and science at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. In 1980, she was ordained in the Church of Sweden and held positions in parish ministry until 1996. From 1999 to 2001, she was regional director for Europe of the Science and Religion Course Program of the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences, Berkeley, California, USA. Between 2001-2007, Dr. Jackelén taught systematic theology and religion and science at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and was director of the Zygon Center for Religion and Science. From 2007-2014, she was Bishop in Lund diocese, Church of Sweden. A founding member of the International Society for Religion and Science (ISSR), she has served on the board of directors of the Metanexus Institute on Religion and Science and the board of the European Society for the Study of Science and Theology (ESSSAT). In June 2017, Dr. Jackelén was awarded The Lambeth Cross for Ecumenism by the Archbishop of Canterbury "For her services to ecumenism – especially her leadership in addressing human, theological and social issues in partnership and dialogue."

# THE WORLD COUNCIL

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*Bishop Dr. Margot Käsmann*

Bishop Dr. Margot Käsmann served as a pastor and later Secretary General of the German Protestant Kirchentag. From 1999 to 2010, she served as state bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover. In 2002, she received an honorary doctorate from the University of Hannover. From 2009 to 2010, she was chairwoman of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD). From August to December 2010, she was a visiting professor at Emory University in Atlanta (USA). In the period from January 2011 to March 2012, she taught and conducted research as a visiting professor for ecumenism and social ethics at the Ruhr-Universität

Bochum (Max Imdahl Visiting Professorship). From April 2012 to June 2018, she served as Ambassador of the EKD Council for the Reformation Jubilee 2017. Dr. Käsmann has been retired since July 2018 and is primarily devoted to the writing of books. In addition, she is involved in selected projects such as the international children's aid organisation Terre des hommes, the German Foundation for the World Population or the social street magazine Asphalt. Since April 2019, Dr. Käsmann publishes the monthly magazine Mitten im Leben.

Ven. Hyo Chul Kim is the Chairperson of Won Buddhism of USA, Inc., the Executive Director of the Won Dharma Center, the member of Supreme Council of Won Buddhism and represents Won Buddhism at the United Nations. Ven. Kim was fully ordained in the Won Buddhist Order in Korea in 1979 and served at local temples and retreat centres over three decades. She has been a leading figure in introducing Won Buddhism to the world by making Buddhist thoughts and practices more accessible to people in contemporary society. Understanding the interdependent nature of life, she focuses on creating a spiritual community where people of

various faiths and backgrounds work and grow together to bring peace and justice for all beings. She has been striving to realise a vast and immeasurable paradise here and now. By expanding spiritual power, overcoming materialism and by helping people discover and cultivate their true nature, she hopes to build a world of Peace, Oneness and Equality.



*Ven. Hyo Chul Kim*

# THE WORLD COUNCIL

Dr. Aruna Oswal, who now serves as the Chairperson of the Abhey Oswal Group & Aruna Abhey Oswal Trust, began her journey in 1989 with the Lions Club of Juhu of District 323 A3. In 1999, she became the President and rapidly climbed the ladders of Lionism. In 2004-05, she became the District Governor of District 323 A3, where she developed fellowship and service projects, such as a project that distributed 1,000 sewing machines for women's empowerment. In October 2022, she was honoured with the Multi-Religious Peacemaker Lifetime Achievement Award for her contributions to global peace by *Religions for Peace* and the Ansari Institute of Notre Dame University.



*Dr. Aruna Oswal*



*Dr. Elizabeth H. Prodromou*

Dr. Elizabeth H. Prodromou is visiting associate professor of conflict resolution at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, where she directs the Initiative on Religion, Law, and Diplomacy. Dr. Prodromou served as vice chair and commissioner on the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (2004-2012) and was a member of the U.S. Secretary of State's Religion & Foreign Policy Working Group (2011-2015). She has been involved in research and advisory work for international and non-governmental organisations on religious freedom and human rights and she is active in interfaith and

ecumenical peacebuilding initiatives around the world. She is co-editor and contributor for *Eastern Orthodox Christianity and American Higher Education* (2016) and *Thinking Through Faith: New Perspectives from Orthodox Christian Scholars* (2008).

Dr. Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, President of the Divine Shakti Foundation and Secretary General of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, works to bring education, empowerment, and holistic well-being to women and children. Sadhvi-ji has lived at Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh in the Himalayas for nearly 25 years, where she gives spiritual discourses, satsang and meditation, as well as leading a myriad of humanitarian programmes. Sadhvi-ji also authored the books, Hollywood to the Himalayas (Insight Editions, 2021), Come Home to Yourself: Wisdom for Life from the Parmarth Niketan Ashram (Penguin Ananda, 2019), and Mother Ganda: The Holy River (Haranand Publications, 2019).



*Dr. Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati*



# THE WORLD COUNCIL

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H.E. Bishop Mary Ann Swenson was ordained both deacon and elder by Bishop Wilbur Choy. She served as Associate Pastor of Claremont United Methodist Church in Claremont, California; Pastor of Orchards United Methodist Church, Vancouver, Washington; District Superintendent of the Puget Sound District, Pacific Northwest Conference; Senior Pastor of First United Methodist Church, Wenatchee, Washington. She also served as Youth Director for St. Luke's UMC and Capitol Street UMC in Jackson, Mississippi, Elma UMC and Mason UMC in the PNW Conference and Claremont UMC in Claremont, California. Bishop Swenson served as Dean of the Cabinet, PNW Conference. While assigned to First UMC Wenatchee, she also was President of the Board of Directors of the Rape Crisis and Domestic Violence Centre and served on the North Central Washington AIDS Coalition.



*H.E. Bishop Mary Ann Swenson*



*Dr. Nayla Tabbara*

Dr. Nayla Tabbara, President of the Adyan Foundation, has published in the fields of various religions, including Islamic theology; education on interreligious and intercultural diversity; and Qur'anic exegesis and Sufism. Dr. Tabbara has also participated in numerous research projects and organisations. These include the International Federation of Catholic Universities research group on religions and cultures, which focused on the topic "Conflicts Related to Religious and Cultural Diversity," as well as the UNESCO Lebanese-Russian project on youth and intercultural and interreligious dialogue. She also spoke at the Vatican's conference on the 50th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*.

Dr. Maria Lia Zervino is the President of the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations, the umbrella body representing an estimated eight million Catholic women worldwide. As a longtime friend of His Holiness Pope Francis, Dr. Zervino wrote an open letter praising the Pope "for being the Francis of the 21st century," but saying that "not enough progress has been made in taking advantage of the wealth of women who make up a large part of the People of God." In July, the Pope appointed Dr. Zervino and two high-ranking nuns of the Dicastery for Bishops. This marked the first time that a laywoman has ever been appointed to any dicastery, and the first time any women have been appointed to the Dicastery for Bishops.



*Dr. Maria Lia Zervino*

# THE WORLD COUNCIL

## *Honorary Presidents*

The designation of Honorary President is bestowed upon those who have demonstrated their diligence and leadership in *Religions for Peace* or another related field. Honorary Presidents may be requested by the Executive Committee to provide leadership and representation in areas of *Religions for Peace* activity.



*Ms. Rajni Bakshi*

Ms. Rajni Bakshi is a Mumbai-based author and a Gandhi Peace Fellow. Her books include Bazaars, Conversations and Freedom: For a Market Culture Beyond Greed and Fear, which won two Vodafone-Crossword Awards; Bapu Kuti: Journeys in Rediscovery of Gandhi, which inspired the Hindi film “Swades” starring Shah Rukh Khan; and Long Haul: the Bombay Textile Workers Strike 1982-83. Rajni has also written several monographs including Trusteeship: Business and the Economics of Well-being; Civilisational Gandhi; An Economics for Well-Being; Let’s Make it Happen: A Backgrounder on New Economics; A Warning and an Opportunity: The

Dispute over Swami Vivekananda’s Legacy. From 2013 to 2016, Rajni was the Gandhi Peace Fellow at Gateway House: Indian Council on Global Relations, a Mumbai-based foreign policy think tank. She serves on the Boards of Child Rights and You (CRY), Citizens for Peace (CfP) and the Centre of Education and Documentation (Mumbai and Bengaluru). She is also a member of the Executive Committee of the Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, an autonomous body under the Ministry of Culture.

Dr. Georgette Bennett founded the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding in 1992 to combat religious prejudice and the Multifaith Alliance in 2013, to mobilise support for alleviating the suffering of Syria’s war victims. Among many other honours, Dr. Bennett has been recognised by the Syrian American Medical Society for her work on behalf of Syrian refugees. Dr. Bennett is also a founding Board member of Global Covenant Partners and a key participant in the Global Covenant of Religions. GCR is made up of an international group of top interfaith leaders who are working to delegitimise the use of religion as a justification for violent extremism. Dr. Bennett also served in the U.S. State Department Religion and Foreign Policy initiative’s working group which developed recommendations for the Secretary of State on countering religion-based violence.



*Dr. Georgette Bennett*

# THE WORLD COUNCIL

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*H.E. Amb. Marie-Therese Pictet-Althann*

H.E. Amb. Marie-Therese Pictet-Althann is a Permanent Observer of the Order of Malta to the UN Geneva. In 1999, Marie-Thérèse Pictet-Althann founded the Diplomatic Spouses' Circle, now the International Circle of Geneva, which she served as President until 2009. She was also Vice-President of the Geneva Diplomatic Club and served on its committee. In 2011 she co-founded with Cardinal Silvano Tomasi the Foundation "Caritas in Veritate" and served as its Vice-President until 2015. From 2005 to 2017 she was a member of the Board of the EORTC Cancer Research Fund (European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer,

Brussels) and between 2013 and 2020 President and then Vice-President of the Geneva Association of Friends of the "Orchestre de la Suisse Romande." She has been an International Gender Champion since the leadership network was launched in 2015 and represents the Order of Malta on the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance since 2020. In 2002, she was awarded the Order of Malta's Cross pro Merito Melitensi with Crown and in 2015 with Plaque. She became Dame Commander of the Papal Order of Saint Gregory the Great in 2014.

Priestess Beatriz Schulthess is one of *Religions for Peace's* esteemed Honorary Presidents. She was instrumental in negotiations that led to the Proclamation of the International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples in 1993. She helped draft both the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Universal Declaration of the Rights of the Child, as well as participating in the revision of Convention 169 for Indigenous and Tribal Peoples. In addition to being appointed advisor to the UNCED's Secretary General on Indigenous issues, she also actively promoted the UN Conference on Environment and Development.



*Priestess Beatriz Schulthess*

# THE WORLD COUNCIL

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Mme. Cissé Hadja Mariama Sow has been at the forefront of the women's movement in her country and has worked tirelessly to ensure that women in Guinea have the same rights as men. She is president of the Union of Women Ulama of Guinea (UFOG), working for women's causes for more than 50 years and advocates education and training for women to learn to defend their rights as wives and mothers. The Guinean struggle under the first president appointed after independence (1958-1984) was so well conducted that Mariama served as an example to women from other African countries, especially those from francophone countries. She has worked extensively with youth organisations, particularly in the youth wing of the African Democratic Rally (GDR) and the National Organisation of Free Trade Unions of Guinea. She was elected general secretary of the Union of Revolutionary Women of Guinea. In 1972, she was elected to the National Assembly, where she sat for 12 years. She was the first president of the West African Women's Association (WAFA).



*Mme. Cissé Hadja Mariama Sow*





# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S COORDINATING COMMITTEE

The International Women's Coordinating Committee leads our Global Women of Faith Network. The Committee helps ensure that women of faith are not simply included, but also leading the work of *Religions for Peace*.

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*Reverend Sister Agatha Ogochukwu Chikelue,  
Chair*

Reverend Sister Agatha Ogochukwu Chikelue sits on the Governing Board of ACRL-RfP as a Co-Chair of the Nigeria Women of Faith Network. Sister Agatha is a Nigerian Catholic nun from the Congregation of Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy. She also serves as the Executive Director of Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace, Co-Chair of the Nigerian & African Women of Faith Networks, and Chair of the *Religions for Peace* International Women's Coordinating Committee. Having witnessed ethno-religious violence in Nigeria, she has built strong networks of Christian and Muslim women who are united against violence and working collaboratively for peace.

Reverend Megumi Wada, Director of International Interreligious Cooperation at Rissho Kosei-Kai, began there as a staff member, overseeing the peace activities of the Donate One Meal Movement and interreligious dialogue and cooperation. From 1998 to 2007, she worked as a representative of Rissho Kosei-Kai-United Kingdom and staff of the head office of the International Association for Religious Freedom in Oxford, England. After returning to Tokyo in 2007, she served as the Director of the Coordinating Department of *Religions for Peace*-Japan for 12 years.



*Reverend Megumi Wada,  
Deputy Chair*



*Ms. Nageeba Hassan Tegulwa*

Ms. Nageeba Hassan Tegulwa (Africa) has participated in interreligious dialogues and conferences organised by a variety of countries and organisations, including the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council (UMSC), Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC), *Religions for Peace* Interreligious Council of Uganda and Refugee Empowerment Centre (REC) in Uganda, Somaliland and Thailand. Her passion for women's involvement in peacemaking has led to successful global gender initiatives, including the incorporation of women's desks in the constitutions of both UMSC and IRCU. Representing religious leaders at the second Ministerial Meeting on the Enhancement of Security Cooperation and the Operationalisation of the African Peace and Security Architecture, she pushed for the creation of the East African Community (EAC) Interreligious Council.

# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S COORDINATING COMMITTEE

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*Professor Amany Lubis*

Professor Amany Lubis (Asia) is the first woman who served as Chancellor of the largest Islamic University in Indonesia, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta. As an Islamic scholar, Prof. Lubis was appointed as Chairperson of the Indonesian Ulema Council for Women, Youth and Families for the 2015–2020 period. On 7 January 2019, she was appointed as Rector of the Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta by the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Lukman Hakim Saifuddin. Her new position made her the first woman who served as Chancellor of the largest Islamic University in Indonesia, Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta.

Dr. Suphatmet Yunyasit (Asia) serves as Secretary-General of the *Religions for Peace* Interreligious Council of Thailand. She has organised and facilitated intra- and interreligious dialogues designed for conflict transformation and relationship building between conflicting parties in Thailand's three southernmost provinces. Her current project focuses on the participation and roles of the Buddhists of the South in conflict transformation and peacebuilding. She is the author of The Siamese of Malaysia: Linkage of Two Lands.



*Dr. Suphatmet Yunyasit*



*Ven. Huang Zhi'an*

Ven. Huang Zhi'an (Asia) is President of Taoist Association in Hunan province and Vice President of China Taoist Association. She became a Taoist in 1980 and now the Abbot of Heng Mountain Temple. She was also member of National People's Congress of R.R.C from 2003 to 2008, and now is the member of the 13th National Committee of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S COORDINATING COMMITTEE

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*Dr. Lakshmi Vyas*

Dr. Lakshmi Vyas (Europe) serves as the President of the Hindu Forum of Europe. Being a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) member, she attends and contributes to the committee of the Royal Borough of Greenwich. She is responsible in her Institution to make policies and to incorporate the recently introduced changes on account of Brexit – which includes Prevent Duty, Safeguarding, Equality and Diversity and several minor policies imbedded in them. Dr. Vyas is well versed in Hinduism and has clear views on immigration and integration as the head of quality. She works with youth and learners from all walks of life.

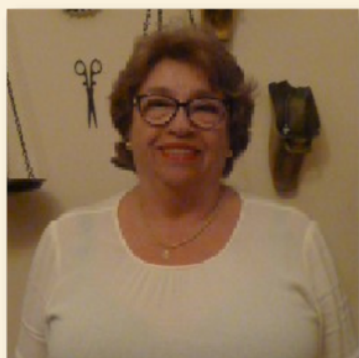
Bishop Victoria Cortez Rodriguez (Latin America & The Caribbean) was ordained to the ministry of the word on 24 July 1990. She was installed as the Lutheran Bishop of Nicaragua in 2004. Bishop Cortez was a professor at the National University of El Salvador between 1976 and 1982. The university was violently closed by the army in 1982 adding to the many acts of repression the Salvadoran government was doing during those years against its people. It was during this time Bishop Cortez began her collaboration with the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod founding Socorro Luterano Salvadoreño (Salvadoran Lutheran Aid), which provided refuge to the displaced women and children that were escaping the government's persecution and bombings in the countryside. The government immediately targeted Bishop Cortez alleging she was a subversive guerrilla because of her work with the Salvadoran Lutheran Aid and because of her former ties to the university. Fearing for her life, Bishop Cortez went into exile in Nicaragua in 1983. Bishop Cortez continued her work with the Lutheran church tending to Salvadoran refugee camps in Nicaragua. In 1990, close to the signing of the peace accords, Salvadorans living in Nicaragua began to return to El Salvador. However, Bishop Cortez responded to a call to stay in Nicaragua to establish the Lutheran church “Fe y Esperanza” (Faith and Hope Church) in Nicaragua. She now serves as the Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Nicaragua and the Executive Director of the “Fe y Esperanza” church.



*Bishop Victoria Cortez Rodriguez*

# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S COORDINATING COMMITTEE

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*Dr. Evelyn Zentner de Falck*

Dr. Evelyn Zentner de Falck (Latin America & The Caribbean) is a founding member of the *Religions for Peace* Network of Women of Faith for Latin America and the Caribbean. Within this period, she was nominated as Coordinator of the Network for the region. In 2001, she became a member of the International Council of Jewish Women (ICJW) and served as Regional President of the ICJW for Latin America from 2006 – 2010. In 2000, she became President of Sociedad Femenina Israelita de Quito (SFI), an institution committed to support Holocaust survivors who had immigrated to Ecuador. She served in this position until 2010 and eventually helped to broaden the outreach of the SFI in

support of poor Jewish community members, schools for children living under poor conditions, women who have been raped and abused, old age homes for poor people and young men living with AIDS. From 1990-2000, she sponsored 21 orphan girls as well as a school for poor and violated children, whose parents had criminal backgrounds (1999 – 2008). During the same period, she also worked on a voluntarily basis with children with Down Syndrome.

Grand-Mother Marie-Josée Rankin-Tardif (North America) was known as a journalist and news anchor in major TV and radio channels in Quebec (Radio-Canada, RDI, LCN, Radio Rock Détente), but also in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Great-Britain. Since 2005, she focused her entire work on issues related to self-awareness and interpersonal communication. In 2007, her life took a complete turn when the Algonquin elders offered her a Sacred Pipe. This is a great mark of respect and recognition, commencing a long journey of learning the language, philosophy and traditional medicine of this thousand-year-old people. That is why Marie-Josée – now called Kokom (grandmother) – teaches and

travels regularly with Grandfather T8aminik as his female counterpart. In 2013, she co-founded Kina8at with Elder T8aminik, where she chairs the Board of Directors. Like T8aminik, she is also a counselor and trainer at the Canadian School of Public Service and a consultant and lecturer at Notre-Dame University (Indiana, USA). She sits on various national and international committees, including the *Religions for Peace* Women of Faith Network and the Ethics in Action committee set up by the Vatican.



*Grand-Mother Marie-Josée  
Rankin-Tardif*



# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S COORDINATING COMMITTEE



*Dr. Mamta Shaha*

Dr. Mamta Shaha (North America) is a Board-Certified Pediatrician and an Assistant Professor of pediatrics at New York University. She is also a Board-certified Ophthalmologist from Bombay University. She has served as a member of the Advisory Committee of the Adult Education Center. She worked as Joint Secretary and Secretary of the Gujarati Semaj of NY (a 3,500-family member strong organisation). She further served on the women's committee and had organised a very successful women's convention on women's empowerment. She is actively involved with JAINA (Federation of Jain Association in North America) and has served

as JAINA North East Vice president for two years and served as a director of the Jain Center of America NY for 4 years. She currently chairs two committees in JAINA: As a Chairperson of the JAINA Media Committee, she produced and directed the weekly Jain TV show "Mangalam" for 10 years. This was broadcast on local ethnic channels and internationally in UK, Europe and India. She also launched an internet channel on Jain religion which is accessible through an App, called "Jaina-Mangalam." She also established the "Women's Committee" in JAINA and serves as a Chair of the Committee.



# INTERNATIONAL TRUSTEES & AMBASSADORS

*Religions for Peace* International Trustees & Ambassadors assist the World Council to advance our mission through partnership development, expertise, resource mobilisation, and identification and solicitation of funding opportunities.

Ms. Audrey Kitagawa, JD, is the President/Founder of the International Academy for Multicultural Cooperation, the President of the Light of Awareness International Spiritual Family, and the former Advisor to the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict at the United Nations. She is a co-facilitator of the United Religions Initiative UN Cooperation Circle and Chair Emerita of the NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns. She has been enstooled into the royal family as the Nekoso Hema, (i.e. Queen Mother of Development), of Ajiyamanti in Ghana, West Africa, and has a school which she helped to build named after her in her African name, the Nana Ode



*Ms. Audrey Kitagawa*

Anyankobea Junior Secondary School. She has been listed in Who's Who Of American Law, Who's Who Of American Women, Who's Who In America, Who's Who In The World, and Prominent People of Hawaii. She is the recipient of the Spirit of the UN Award which is given to outstanding individuals who have demonstrated the vision and spirit of the United Nations as expressed through the UN Charter, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



*Commissioner M. Christine MacMillan*

Commissioner M. Christine MacMillan serves as the Chair of Micah Global and works as the Senior Advisor to the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) to the United Nations. As founding director of the Salvation Army International Social Justice Commission, she promoted research as a pivotal approach in addressing social issues with a participative input of those who experience the challenges of humanitarian inequities. In July 2012, she was selected by the WEA to serve as their Senior Advisor for Social Justice, where 600 million Christians join forces under the banner of impacting God's so loved and unloved world. While serving with the WEA as Associate Secretary General for Public Engagement, she oversaw the work of the WEA

United Nations teams in Geneva and New York inclusive of WEA networks in the fields of: Refugees, Climate Change, Humanitarian Advocacy, Peace & Reconciliation, Human Trafficking and Health and Healing. She continues with the WEA as a Senior Advisor – Social Justice while chairing their Global Task Force on Human Trafficking and representing the WEA at the United Nations.

# INTERNATIONAL TRUSTEES & AMBASSADORS

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Ms. Maddalena Maltese is a media professional with more than a decade of experience covering global politics, human rights, migration, culture and religion, producing stories for written media outlets and news services in Italy and the USA. During the first three years of the Syrian War, she covered stories related to the life of religious communities in Aleppo, Damascus, and other cities, inspiring several initiatives to promote peace, fundraising campaigns, and conventions. The same happened due to her reporting on the role of faith-based organisations at the borders of Italy, Malta, and Texas. She has traveled to several countries for in-depth reporting on migration, poverty, social development, religious and social projects, and youth initiatives.



*Ms. Maddalena Maltese*

Empowering social and human development, legality, peacebuilding, and intercultural and interreligious unity is her passion inspired by Chiara Lubich, the founder of the Focolare Movement and a champion of promoting unity and fraternity among people of different social backgrounds, religions, and cultures. She has been serving the Focolare Movement as a consultant for several projects related to youth and community leaders.



*Dr. Katherine Marshall*

Dr. Katherine Marshall is a senior fellow at Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs and professor of the practice of development, conflict, and religion in the Walsh School of Foreign Service. She leads the World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD). Her wide-ranging work aims squarely at advancing human welfare, bridging divides and building partnerships among religious and non-religious institutions and policies. Dr. Marshall, who worked at the World Bank from 1971 to 2006, has over four decades of experience on development issues in Africa, Latin America, Southeast and South Asia, and the Middle East, focusing on the world's poorest countries and most vulnerable groups. She

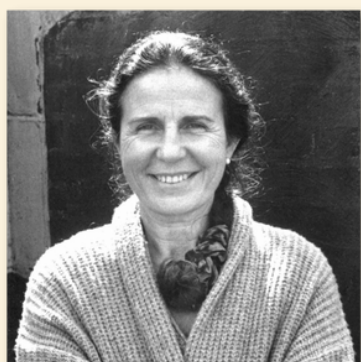
led the World Bank's faith and ethics initiative between 2000 and 2006. She is a pioneering operational leader who has mentored countless younger staff and works from numerous perspectives to strengthen partnerships with countries and communities.

# INTERNATIONAL TRUSTEES & AMBASSADORS

Dr. Reham Abdullah Salamah Nasr is the General Director of the Al-Azhar Observatory for Combating Extremism, and also Head of its Urdu department since 2015. Dr. Reham is a member of The Egyptian Family house and an expert on Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) initiatives, contributing to several efforts at regional and international levels. She has represented Al-Azhar in a number of multilateral fora, including the United Nations, the European Union (EU), and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Dr Reham accompanied the Egyptian Presidential delegations to China and India, and was a member of the Peace Emissaries who travelled to Pakistan in 2015. She is an Associate Professor at the Department of Urdu Language and Literature, Faculty of Humanities, at the Al-Azhar University. Dr. Reham completed her M.A. and Doctorate in Urdu Language and Literature, while also working at the Al-Azhar Centre for Translation, contributing to the translation and validation of more than five books, and many articles from Urdu to Arabic, and vice versa.



*Dr. Reham Abdullah Salamah Nasr*



*Mrs. Idanna Pucci*

Mrs. Idanna Pucci produced the award-winning documentary-feature, *Eugenia of Patagonia*, on the pioneering life in Chile of her grand-aunt who founded a town at the end of world, and served for years as mayor of a vast region, battling for the people and the environment. Having obtained the International Diploma of Humanitarian Assistance from the CIHC in New York, Idanna then served with the Open Society Institute in Burma and the United Nations in East Timor. Her work, *Brazza in Congo: A Life and Legacy* (Umbrage Editions, NY) is an illustrated biography of another ancestor, the explorer Pietro Savorgnan di Brazzà, after whom Brazzaville, the capital of the Republic of Congo, is named. She then conceived and narrated the award-winning documentary *Black Africa White Marble*, which recounts her battle against the present-day ruler of Congo-Brazzaville. In 2015, she co-curated *The Transformative Power of Art*, an exhibition at the United Nations in New York. With her husband, Terence Ward, she also produced *Talk Radio Tehran*, a documentary that follows high-spirited Iranian women as they fulfill their aspirations in spite of the gender-apartheid that dominates the country.



# INTERNATIONAL TRUSTEES & AMBASSADORS

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Joumana Silyan-Saba serves as the Director of Policy and Discrimination Enforcement for the Los Angeles City Civil and Human Rights and Equity Department (LA Civil Rights). She served as a policy director in Mayor Garcetti's Office for Public Safety, and led the strategic goals to build social cohesion, and increase social protective factors to prevent all forms of hate, extremism and violence. Previously she served as a Senior Policy Analyst for the City of Los Angeles Human Relations Commission where she led multi-faith engagements, and worked to promote religious pluralism, civic engagement and advocated to advance access and inclusion of disenfranchised communities. In 2015, she was invited to the White House, where she briefed Vice President Biden. She advised the National Academies of Sciences (NAS) Planning Committee on exploring the use of health approaches in community-level strategies to prevent extremism, and the subsequent publication. She has also published research and contributed to articles on these topics. She was invited to conduct trainings with the U.S. Department of State on community-law enforcement partnerships in both Nepal and India. She has also served as an Adjunct Assistant Professor at California State University Dominguez Hills and taught graduate courses on public policy conflict and peacebuilding. She is a certified mediator in accordance to the California Dispute Resolution Act.



*Joumana Silyan-Saba*



# SECRETETARY GENERAL'S ADVISORY BOARD

The Secretary General's Advisory Council is a distinguished group of world leaders identified by the Secretary General to guide and support her work and advise on *Religions for Peace* programmes, under the guidance of the Executive Committee of the World Council.

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Ambassador Ammo Aziza Baroud serves as the Permanent Representative of Chad to the United Nations. Prior to her latest appointment, Ms. Baroud served from 2017 to 2020 as her country's Ambassador to the Benelux countries (Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg) and Permanent Representative to the European Union and the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States. Before representing Chad internationally, Ms. Baroud was a Member of the National Assembly from 2011 to 2017. She also held a number of senior positions within the Government, including Minister for the Economy, Development Planning and International Cooperation (2008-2010), Adviser to the President of the Republic (2005-2008) and Minister for Public Health and National Solidarity (2003-2005). Ms. Baroud received her master's degree in applied economics from the Université Paris Dauphine in 1989.



*Ambassador Ammo Aziza Baroud*



*Ms. Pamela DeLargy*

Ms. Pamela DeLargy is a public health and population specialist who is rejoining academia after a 25 year career in international development and humanitarian response where she worked in the areas of population and development, migration, gender, and development (including reproductive health). As the head of UNFPA's humanitarian programmes, she worked to bring attention to the needs of women and adolescents in emergency situations by leading a number of United Nations efforts to expand and improve basic standards for humanitarian programming and she was among the first within the international humanitarian community to work toward understanding and responding to HIV and conflict and sexual violence in conflicts. She also served for a number of years in Eritrea, Sudan, and Ethiopia and is a specialist on the Horn of Africa, where she also did her earlier dissertation research. Prior to joining ASU, she was Senior Advisor to the UN Special Representative for Migration (London) and a Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Global Affairs of the London School of Economics. Her recent research and writing is on the cross-Mediterranean migration crisis. She also works closely with ASU's Education for Humanity initiative, which seeks to bring access to higher education to camp-based and urban refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Uganda, and Ethiopia.

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Dr. Mary McAleese was the 8th President of Ireland, the first person from Northern Ireland to hold that role. The theme of her Presidency was Building Bridges and throughout her fourteen years in office she worked to heal the fractured politico/sectarian relationships on the island of Ireland and between Ireland and Britain. During her Presidency she invited and hosted HM Queen Elizabeth II on the first state visit to the Irish Republic by a British monarch. She is chair of the Von Hugel Institute at St. Edmund's College, University of Cambridge and she chairs the Advisory Board of the University of Notre Dame's Ansari Institute for Global Engagement with Religion. She is the author of *Children's Rights and Obligations in Canon Law; The christening contract* (Brill 2019). In 2019 she was awarded the Alfons Auer Award in Ethics of the Catholic Faculty of Theology at the University of Tübingen. In 2020 she received the Woman of Courage Award of UNANIMA International at a ceremony in the United Nations HQ, New York.



*Dr. Mary McAleese*



*Ms. Sharon Rosen*

Ms. Sharon Rosen has served as Search for Common Ground's Global Director of Religious Engagement since 2017. In this role, she oversees the development and project implementation of Search's global religious engagement strategy. Ms. Rosen first joined Search in 2005 as Senior Advisor to the Jerusalem office and continued as the office's Co-Director for nine years before assuming her current role. She co-founded and directed Education for Life, an international non-governmental organisation that provides tools for the development and wellbeing of children within state educational systems. She was also a faculty member at the Jerusalem Centre

for Near East Studies teaching courses on Bible, gender, and contemporary relevance. Ms. Rosen is an expert on designing and implementing interreligious programming that builds collaboration across religions and promotes peace. She is also an experienced facilitator in conflict resolution and strategic planning. In her time at Search, she co-created and leads the Universal Code of Conduct on Holy Sites initiative and has managed multiple projects on religion, development, health, and media.

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Ambassador Charlotta Sparre has 30 years of experience in international diplomacy, with a special focus on the MENA region, on regional security, governance and gender equality. She is currently the director of the Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa and has previously served as Ambassador of Sweden to Egypt (2013-2017), and to Jordan (2008-2013) and held several other positions for the Swedish foreign service. Charlotta Sparre is also a member of the Swedish women's mediation network. She has written numerous articles and was the co-editor of the book Reconstructing the Middle East, published by Routledge in 2017.



*Ambassador Charlotta Sparre*





# INTERNATIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE

The International Youth Committee leads the Global Interfaith Youth Network of *Religions for Peace*. It is comprised of fifteen leaders who represent the world's faith traditions from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, and the Middle East.



*Ms. Ana-Maria Daou*

Ms. Ana-Maria Daou is the Head of the Research and Courses' Unit at Adyan Foundation. She also currently serves as the Deputy Coordinator for the *Religions for Peace* International Youth Committee. Ms. Daou focuses on the organisation's networks in Lebanon and Iraq, as well as the programme of Religious Social Responsibility for religious leaders and activists. In addition, she co-authored the book chapter "Religious Pluralism, Interfaith Dialogue and Post-war Lebanon" in Bock, Fahy and Everett's Emergent Religious Pluralisms (Palgrave MacMillian, 2019).

Ms. Lyka Mtambo is the Youth Representative from *Religions for Peace's* Interreligious Council in Malawi: the Public Affairs Committee. She is a Legal Practitioner and the Managing Attorney of a firm in Lilongwe, Malawi. Ms. Mtambo is a Youth Volunteer for Public Affairs Committee of Malawi, an interfaith organisation that promotes human dignity in the Malawian society through advocacy, civic education and conflict transformation. She is also a member of the Africa Interfaith Youth Network. Ms. Mtambo currently serves as a board member of an nongovernmental organisation called Malawian Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (MANET+). MANET + is a coordinating and facilitating body that promotes effective networking amongst associates and support groups of people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS and organisations working on HIV and AIDS.



*Ms. Lyka Mtambo*



*Ms. Mirian Akuaba De-Souza*

Ms. Mirian Akuaba De-Souza is the Youth Coordinator for Ghana Conference of *Religions for Peace* (GCRP), *Religions for Peace's* Interreligious Council in Ghana. She is the Executive Director for Souza Royals Enterprise, which specialises in Event Planning and Decor and supply of general goods and services. She is also the founder of Organisation for Livelihood Empowerment-Africa, a non-profit organisation which seeks to enhance livelihoods among rural African communities that would positively impact their lives and their families out of poverty.

# INTERNATIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE

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Ms. Emina Frljak focuses on amplifying the voices of youth. She served as a youth representative from Bosnia-Herzegovina in a 2019 meeting with French president Mr. Emmanuel Macron and Serbian president Mr. Aleksandar Vučić. She spoke of the importance of dealing with the past, building peace, and encouraging dialogue among youth in the Western Balkans. Since 2015, she has served as an educator and project coordinator for interreligious dialogue, peacebuilding and youth activism at Youth for Peace.



*Ms. Emina Frljak*



*Rev. Stina Tysk*

Reverend Stina Tysk is the Global Networking Coordinator for World Student Christian Federation in Europe and member of *Religion for Peace's* International Youth Committee. She is one of the founders of the network Creation & Existence, an ecumenical network focusing on ecotheology and sustainability. Rev. Tysk is ordained in the Church of Sweden and is currently based in Gothenburg. She holds a B.A. in Theology from the University College Stockholm, and a M.A. in Theology, majoring in Biblical studies, from the University of Gothenburg. Her fields of interest lie in the topics of environment and sustainability, and the empowerment of women and youth.

Ms. Ligia Matamoros is a Latin American Youth Pastor for the Latin American Catholic Episcopal Council (CELAM). Her service with the Youth Ministry promotes processes where young people integrate their faith and their lives and become builders of the Civilisation of Love. In her work, she emphasises that young people are a great wealth for the different realities and promotes interreligious spaces that encourage networking, because they are an opportunity to lay bridges and build together, sharing and contributing from our own experience, joining efforts to walk the appropriate roads that allow transforming the realities that affect the lives of our peoples.



*Ms. Ligia Matamoros*

# INTERNATIONAL YOUTH COMMITTEE

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*Ms. Fatima Hallal*

Ms. Fatima Hallal is a Junior researcher and graduate student from Lebanon. Following the completion of her B.A. in Political Science and International Affairs at the Lebanese American University, Ms. Hallal was nominated and accepted for the International peace-making programme at Hartford Seminary whereby she studied interfaith dialogue and conflict resolution. Ms. Hallal was actively involved with Lothan Youth Achievement Centre and Adyan Youth Network between 2014 and 2017, she was also member of the Youth Advisory Council formed by the public diplomacy department in the U.S. embassy in Beirut.

In 2016, Ms. Hallal received the “Spirit of Service” award from the Outreach and Civic Engagement Unit at her university and in 2017 she won the best capstone project for the political science department for her senior project on “Youth, Civic Society and Radicalisation in Lebanon.”

Ms. Japman Kaur is a Programme Coordinator at McGill University and holds a bachelor’s in Kinesiology at Wayne State University. Ms. Kaur has a passion for leading community work and projects, especially involving youth. She co-produced the documentary “Pingalwara: In Letter & Spirit.” She hopes to use this experience to continue working with the All India Pingalwara Charitable Society in the future, in hopes of setting up educational programmes with them, so that they can continue their humanitarian work.



*Ms. Japman Kaur*

# RELIGIONS FOR PEACE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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*Professor Azza Karam*

Professor Azza Karam was elected as Secretary General of *Religions for Peace* International in August 2019, becoming the first woman and first Muslim to lead the international multifaith coalition. Under her leadership, *Religions for Peace* launched the Multireligious Humanitarian Fund (the Fund), which currently finances 37 multi-faith projects around the world, including COVID-19 response efforts and campaigns to support refugees and internally displaced peoples in Ukraine, Afghanistan, Syria, and other countries in conflict.

Since September 2021, Professor Karam has also served as a member of the United Nations Secretary General's High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism (HLAB), which is tasked with developing concrete recommendations for more effective multilateral arrangements across a range of key global issues, including the centrality of women and girls

Ms. Deepika Singh, Associate Secretary General and Director of Programmes, has been an instrumental force in strengthening the organisation's legacy. Having dedicated 16 years at *Religions for Peace*, she now leads a team of Programme Officers who ensure the effective implementation of the Six Strategic Priorities across the different IRCs and networks of interfaith women and youth. She directs and monitors the overall programme strategy and implementation, work that is informed by almost two decades of professional experience in international affairs and development, including service in USAID-funded programmes in Nepal and consultancies with UNDP, UNICEF, and other international NGOs.



*Ms. Deepika Singh*



# RELIGIONS FOR PEACE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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*Ms. Jacqueline Grace*

Ms. Jacqueline Grace, Director of Global Development and Communications, brings more than two decades of non-profit and corporate leadership experience that includes working with foundations, government agencies, and international organisations such as the UN Global Compact Network USA and Keep America Beautiful. Under her stewardship, *Religions for Peace* is focused on building and strengthening multireligious and multisectoral partnerships, launching more strategic initiatives, and expanding the impact of the global *Religions for Peace* movement.

Ms. Natalya Shnipova serves as the Chief Financial Officer in the Department of Finance and Administration. Born and raised in Kazakhstan, Ms. Shnipova earned her B.A. in Hospitality Management from Saratov State Technical University, Institute of Management in Saratov, Russia. She holds an A.S. in Business Administration from Borough of Manhattan Community College and completed a second bachelor's degree in Finance and Investments at Baruch College of the City University of New York.



*Ms. Natalya Shnipova*



*Dr. Karen Leslie Hernandez*

Dr. Karen Leslie Hernandez, Programme Officer in Partnerships and Interreligious Education, brings extensive interfaith and interreligious expertise and experience, including in social services, having served at United Religions Initiative, Habitat for Humanity, and St. Anthony's in the Tenderloin, San Francisco. As a former Ambassador and Presenter with the Parliament of the World's Religions in Toronto, Salt Lake City and Melbourne, as well as a published writer, Dr. Hernandez brings a well-rounded perspective to *Religions for Peace*, as she works to cultivate grounded and fruitful programming with our valued Partners, with the International Youth Committee, as well as our women's network of leaders.

A proud Chicana with Indigenous Mexican roots, Dr. Hernandez is the only Latina interfaith practitioner working at this level of expertise in the United States.

# RELIGIONS FOR PEACE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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*Ms. Liliana Ashman*

Ms. Liliana Ashman, serves as the Executive Officer and Special Assistant to the Secretary General of *Religions for Peace*. Ms. Ashman is dedicated to working in matters that are based on mutual understanding, reconciliation, and peace-building efforts. She is a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV) having served in Ethiopia. Previously, she was Advancement and Partnership Director for CubaOne Foundation, an organisation that takes young Cuban Americans to Cuba to connect with their rich heritage and serves as a platform for reconciliation within the Cuban American diaspora. She additionally worked in Ireland with Smashing Times Theatre Company

on a variety of projects that used applied theatre as an approach towards conflict resolution, including responding to 'The Troubles.' She holds a B.A. from Drew University.

Ms. Kristine Leonardo, serves *Religions for Peace* International as the Programme Associate for the Multi-Religious Humanitarian Fund (MRHF), Gender & Environment. Until January 2022, she served as the Assistant to the Secretary General's Office, and supported the Secretary-General in day-to-day administration, travel, events management, internal and external communications, among many others. She graduated with an M.A. in Diplomacy and International Relations with specialisations in International Organisations, and International Law and Human Rights. Before joining *Religions for Peace*, she served the International Rescue Committee (IRC), where she coordinated with and managed the

immigration applications of refugee families, and provided translation and interpretation for French-speaking clients. She also served as the St. John Paul II Fellow at the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, where she prepared reports on the meetings of various UN agencies, including the 76th High-Level General Debate of the UNGA, UN Security Council, Fourth Committee, and the Peacebuilding Commission, to be sent to the Holy See offices in the Vatican.



*Ms. Kristine Leonardo*

# RELIGIONS FOR PEACE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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*Ms. Sohaa Khan*

Ms. Sohaa Khan serves as the Media and Communications Specialist at *Religions for Peace*. She graduated with an M.A. in Diplomacy and International Relations from Seton Hall's School of Diplomacy and International Relations in May 2022 with specialisations in International Law and Human Rights as well as Asian Studies. Her areas of interest are in studying social media and communications and the impact that the online world can have on inciting and exacerbating religious, ethnic, and racial tensions and violence. She touched on these issues in her articles Storytime: Social Media Leads to Violence and Religious Persecution at Home and Abroad: The Case of India. She served as the Deputy Editor-in-Chief for

the *Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*, the official publication for the School of Diplomacy. At *Religions for Peace*, she is in charge of developing communications plans, designing graphics, maintaining the website and social media platforms, and assisting the development team.

Ms. Geetika Chandwani serves as the Programme Associate for Development at *Religions for Peace* International. She worked in the field of architecture for five years, with extensive cross-cultural experiences in India, Japan, and the United States, which fostered her cultural adaptability and sensitivity. In December 2022, she received her M.A. in Diplomacy and International Relations, with specialisations in International Security and Global Negotiation. She has written extensively on emerging global issues, with articles published by the Inter Press Service (IPS), including The Opioid Addiction Crisis & US National Security; Future of Coral Reefs in the Time of Climate Change; and COP26: Combined Exclusive Maritime Zone for Africa to Combat Illegal, Unreported & Unregulated Fishing.



*Ms. Geetika Chandwani*

She has also written for the International Policy Digest on Mozambique's Conflict and the Question of Social Capital. Since joining Religions for Peace, she has significantly contributed to the organisation's development through donor outreach, grant research, and grant coordination. Lastly, she is fluent in five languages; namely, English, Hindi, Sindhi, Marathi, and Japanese.



These women all serve as exceptional role models, inspiring other women to follow their example. And this is vital, because women are not the only ones who are silenced when they are excluded from leadership. The voices of all the people they strive to serve—from women and girls affected by conflict, to religious and ethnic minorities whose rights are not recognised, to children suffering from poverty and mistreatment—also go unheard.

By sharing their wisdom, increasing diversity, and bringing new perspectives to interfaith organisations, these women are planting the seeds for a more just and safer world in the future.

*Religions for Peace* looks forward to highlighting more women who are advancing the mission and vision of *Religions for Peace* across the globe in the next volume of ***Building a Better World: The Women Leading Religions for Peace***.





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