

Interfaith Responses to Gender-based Violence: A Fireside Chat

Tuesday | 5 December 2023 | 9:00–10:30AM EST | Virtual

Concept Note

Introduction and background

The International Youth Committee of *Religions for Peace* has committed this year, 2023, as a year to work on the worldwide issue of Gender-based violence. Gender-based violence (GBV) is a form of injustice which affects millions of girls and women in the world and is deeply rooted in structural, and institutionalized gender norms and practices. According to UN WOMEN, “Globally, an estimated 736 million women - almost one in three -have been subjected to physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence, non-partner sexual violence, or both at least once in their life (30 per cent of women aged 15 and older)”. GBV is a leading cause of death, physical and mental illness, and disabilities of women and girls of all ages. The impact on women and children witnessing violence and their environment is tremendous. GBV is a barrier to women’s equal rights to participate in all structures of society, citizenship, and access to and control over resources.

Advancing gender equality is one of the thematic areas of *Religions for Peace*. Recognizing that GBV is intricately linked to gender inequality, *Religions for Peace* is committed to take the lead through multi-religious collaboration. This event, ***Interfaith Responses to Gender-based Violence: A Fireside Chat***, follows the commitment that the International Youth Committee (IYC) made at the recent 2023 Parliament of World Religions in Chicago, IL., USA, that took place in August. While at Parliament, the IYC led 2 workshops on GBV, speaking to their various regions and successful actions and initiatives that they have led and/or been a part of.

Ending violence against women requires concerted efforts. Religious, civic, and political leaders must engage men and boys to act as Ambassadors and Allies in preventing gender-based violence. The Restoring Dignity statement proposed by *Religions for Peace* European Women of Faith Network was accepted unanimously in 2012, in Sarajevo, BiH. The European Council of Religious Leaders endorsed the statement on [Restoring Dignity: A Commitment to End Violence against Women](#), underlining that violence against women is wrong and that faith communities must support the dignity and full human rights of all women and girls, particularly in helping to stop violence against and the discrimination of women ([The Dignity of Women - Scriptural Reflections, Religions for Peace UK](#)).

Religious and faith communities can contribute to needed changes within the social structure that allows the perpetuation of violence against women and girls. Examples include promoting positive faith-based interventions and responses, as well as offering and providing support to survivors. Another aspect involves contributing to legislative processes that protect and promote women’s rights and their status in communities, especially where laws discriminate. Faith leaders have a potentially transformative role, together with communities of faith, in tackling root causes of gender inequality and GBV, by speaking out and supporting initiatives that uplift the dignity of victims and those made vulnerable as a result of GBV including women based on both moral and political concerns.

Religions for Peace

It is against this backdrop that this fireside chat will engage several outstanding *Religions for Peace* leaders, by diving deeper into the topic of engaging multi-religiously and multi-collaboratively to advance women's dignity and address gender-based violence.

Logistics

The event will take place on 5 December 2023, from 9:00–10:30AM EST. It will be in the format of a fireside chat and will involve a maximum of 4 speakers. The event will be moderated two moderators from International Youth Committee of *Religions for Peace*. The event will last for an hour and a half and be in Zoom webinar format, livestreamed on social media and will allow written questions from those who attend the webinar.

- A fireside chat is a personal and interactive discussion involving moderator(s) and guests, allowing an audience to gain insights into the guests' personal stories and thoughts on various topics. A fireside chat aims to make everyone feel relaxed and leave the audience with more information than before. Fireside chat is not a panel discussion, so there is no need to have prepared slides, notes, etc. The questions will be more focused on getting speakers' personal and professional opinions on the topic of the fireside chat, interchangeably.

Organizers

Religions for Peace is where the world's religious communities join together to ensure that all people enjoy peace, harmony, and prosperity. We see the world's challenges and understand they can benefit from an interfaith, innovative, and inclusive response. Our more than 90 national and 6 regional Interreligious Councils, or "IRCs," bring together, not only the vast influence and resources of all faith traditions, but also their spiritual commitment to achieve solutions that leave no one behind. *Religions for Peace's* global movement is distinguished by its global leadership, Interreligious Councils, and interfaith women and youth networks, which are working at local, national, regional, and global levels as changemakers. They respond to challenges – everything from violence and discrimination to environmental degradation – with bold solutions.

International Youth Committee of Religions for Peace is where young faith leaders bring moral urgency and innovative ideas to interfaith movement and are equal partners in all Religions for Peace work. The International Youth Committee (IYC) is comprised of 15 leaders representing the world's faith traditions from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe, North America, and Latin America and the Caribbean. These leaders were elected by their peers during the 10th World Assembly in 2019 and stand as a voice for young people within all Religions for Peace work and action. Members of IYC invest the energy, commitment, and creativity on fulfilling all six of Religions for Peace strategic priorities.

A Fireside Chat on Interfaith Response to Gender-based Violence

5 December 2023 | 9:00– 10:30AM EST

Draft Agenda

Co-Moderators:

Dr. Renz Christian Argao - Coordinator, *Religions for Peace* International Youth Committee

Ms. Emina Frljak - Deputy Coordinator, *Religions for Peace* International Youth Committee

9:00 – 9:02 Moment of Silence

9:02 – 9:08 Opening and Welcome – Ms. Kristine Leonardo, Programme Associate of the Multi-Religious Humanitarian Fund, Gender and Environment

9:08 – 10:10 Fireside Chat

Speakers

1. **Ms. Ravinder Kaur Nijjar** – Chair, *Religions for Peace* UK Women Interfaith Network
2. **Dr. Piero Liebman** - Member, *Religions for Peace* International Youth Committee
3. **Rev. Dr. Matilda Matabwa** – Chairperson, *Religions for Peace* Women in Faith, Malawi
4. **Mr. Humberto Carolo** - Member of the *Religions for Peace* Advancing Gender Equality Standing Commission

10:10 – 10:25 Q&A Session

10:25 – 10:30 Closing remarks **Dr. Karen Leslie Hernandez**, Programme Officer Partnerships and Interreligious Education, *Religions for Peace*