

Peace in Action

February 2026



Women of Faith: Leaders, Thinkers, Advocates

Dear Friends,

Ramadan Mubarak and wishes for a blessed Lent. These coinciding seasons of reflection and spiritual growth remind us of our shared spiritual practices, and our shared responsibility to build societies rooted in equity, compassion, and mutual respect.



This past month was marked by a sobering milestone for global security: **the expiration of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START)**. For *Religions for Peace*, this development is more than solely a policy shift. Our movement was born as a moral response to the existential threat of the Cold War nuclear arms race; seeing the world return to a state of heightened strategic instability only strengthens our resolve to advocate for a future rooted in peace rather than competition.

This edition of *Peace in Action* is centred on women's equality – particularly how women of faith are working intensively to advance equality on numerous fronts around the world. The **70th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70)**, March 9 to 19, 2026, centres on one primary goal: Access to Justice.

On March 18, we will hold a CSW Parallel Event – Women of Excellence: Leading Transformative Change for Shared Sacred Flourishing. **Registration is here to attend in-person.** We will also announce the winners of our second Women of Excellence in Multi-Religious Action Award.

This edition features a broad look at women in religion as well as a survey of the many efforts interreligious councils in more than 90 countries are undertaking to eliminate grave instances of human rights violations.

Around the world, women religious leaders are playing critical roles in advancing legal reform to eliminate discriminatory laws, building systemic equality to ensure rights on paper translate into rights in practice, and increasing political participation to get more women into leadership and decision-making roles. Rev. Augustina Joan Elga Sarapung offers some insight in a Q&A into how women religious leaders are making inroads on increasing the voices of women in religion.

Our work at the intersection of faith and justice remains as important as ever, and we look forward to continuing to pursue a shared sacred flourishing with you in this new year. Please consider donating to support our important work – just click on the link below!

In peace,

Dr. Francis Kuria
Secretary General

FOCUS

Sanctuary and Trust: The Power of the Woman of Faith

As International Women's Day approaches (March 8) along with the 70th session of the **Commission on the Status of Women** (CSW), it is a natural time for the Religions for Peace movement to consider the status of women within religious structures. The priority theme for this year's CSW includes "eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices, and addressing structural barriers." What would it look like if we considered how discriminatory practices and structural barriers exist within faith communities? This piece explores how women across faith traditions are finding creative ways to gain empowerment despite barriers.



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Diverse Initiatives are Leveraging the Influence and Reach of Religious Leaders in Addressing the Global Crisis of Violence Against Women and Girls

Violence against women and girls remains one of the most widespread and persistent human rights violations in the world. Religious leaders increasingly are playing a critical role in addressing it, with support from *Religions for Peace* interreligious councils around the world.

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FROM THE FIELD

Lifting Voices, Leading Change: How Women of Faith are Dismantling Global Violence

Through "Lifting Voices, Leading Change: Women of Faith for Gender Equality", Religions for Peace is directly involving women of faith to address societal violence toward women and advance gender equality. The program is generously supported by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. By centering the leadership, lived experiences, and moral authority of women of faith, the project seeks to create new pathways to address societal violence and advance

gender equality at every level of society. The program, launched in mid-2025, includes programming in three countries – Kenya, Malawi, and Mexico.



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The Capacity to Lead: A Conversation with Rev. Elga Sarapung

Rev. Augustina Elga Joan Sarapung is an ordained Protestant pastor and the Coordinator of the Indonesian Interfaith Network (JAI) as well as director of the Institute for Inter-Faith Dialogue in Indonesia (DIAN Institute), which is affiliated with *Religions for Peace*. She offers her insights on the current climate for women seeking religious leadership.

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UPDATES



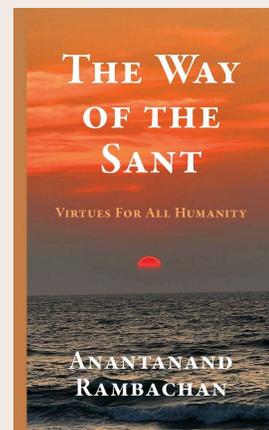
Honouring Women of Faith: The Women of Excellence in Multi-Religious Action Award

Religions for Peace, with the generous support of the Gates Foundation and the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, is proud to announce the second edition of the Women of Excellence in Multi-Religious Action Award. *Religions for Peace* received 10 nominations for this year's award from around the world. Read more about the award, the nominees, and their important work.

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The Way of the Sant: Virtues for all Humanity

Prof. Anantanand Rambachan's latest publication, *The Way of the Sant: Virtues for all Humanity* is an illuminating and deeply inspiring exploration of virtues as the living roots that ground and nourish the tree of life. The book presents virtue not merely as an abstract ideal but as an enduring value cultivated through mindful practice, vividly reflected in the lives of the *Sants* - Hindu exemplars of truth and service. The publication serves as a practical and spiritual guide, encouraging readers to embrace small acts of kindness, forgiveness, and compassion in daily life. Prof. Rambachan invites the readers to embody humility, empathy, and courageous love, following the example of sants such as Tulsidas.



GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS

Religions for Peace monitors global developments in peacebuilding of special interest to those interested in interfaith collaboration and publishes occasional updates on various efforts. Developments of interest for February included a multi-stakeholder workshop on disarmament and a multi-stakeholder consultation on recommendations for the 70th Commission on the Status of Women, taking place in New York March 9-20, 2026.

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DID YOU KNOW?

The first International Day of Human Fraternity was observed on February 4, 2021. The day was inspired by a previous meeting between H.H. Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al Azhar, H.E. Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb.

ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Identifying Good Practices to Foster Effective Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue for Peace and Solidarity: Lessons Learned

Panel organized by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the UN and the Human Rights Center of the University of Essex featuring Dr. Francis Kuria as a panelist.

[VIEW MORE](#)

Join the conversation on social media:



IN THE MEDIA

[Kenya: Catholics and Muslims Unite for Lent and Ramadan](#)

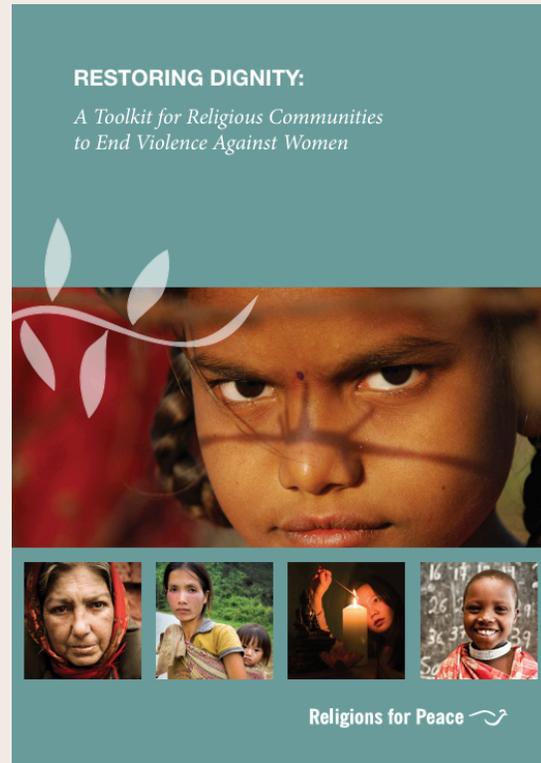
[Cardinal Bo: Myanmar Forgotten by World, but not by God - Vatican News](#)

[Sheikh Abdullah bin Bayyah Wins “Peacemakers” Award](#)

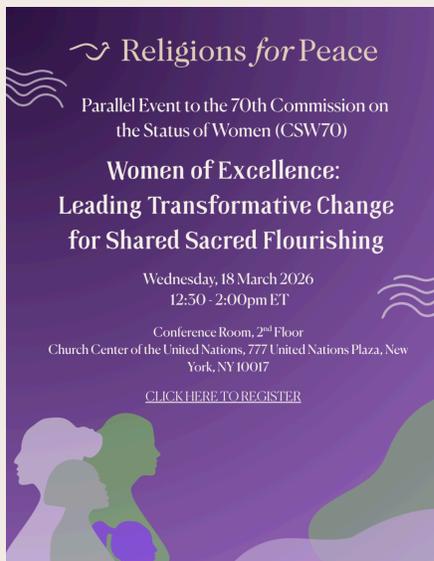
FEATURED RESOURCE

Restoring Dignity Toolkit for Religious Communities to End Violence Against Women

This toolkit is designed for religious leaders and communities, who have the moral responsibility to prevent violence against women and girls and provide care and support to all who have suffered and endured it. The toolkit offers religious leaders and communities the tools to act together in partnership within and across faiths as powerful agents of prevention, protection and support for ending all forms of violence against women and girls.



UPCOMING EVENTS



CSW Parallel Event

Women of Excellence: Leading Transformative Change for Shared Sacred Flourishing

This panel discussion will highlight the innovative work of women of faith advancing justice at the grassroots level, with a particular focus on challenging and transforming harmful practices, discriminatory norms, and structural barriers.

18 March 2026 - 777 United Nations Plaza, New York NY

12:30pm - 2:00pm EDT

[REGISTER HERE](#) to attend in-person

Donate

Religions for Peace



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