

Religions for Peace

Terms of Reference for the *2026 Women of Excellence in Multi-Religious Action Award*

Background

Women of faith are the backbone of all faith communities and religious institutions and are often at the forefront of social transformation, leading multi-religious efforts that promote shared human flourishing. In 2000, *Religions for Peace* conducted a study of 300 religious institutions worldwide and concluded that approximately 90% of those delivering services within and through the institutional religious infrastructure of healthcare, education, nutrition, sanitation, and general services, were women. Similarly, a 2026 brief from UNDP concurs that women's leadership is crucial in times of crisis, with women driving transformative change by uplifting and strengthening their communities, sustaining dialogue, restoring trust, advocating for change, and building powerful support networks.¹ Recognising and amplifying their contributions is essential to achieving sustainable development, advancing gender equality, and realising a future of peace and Shared Sacred Flourishing.²

However, with only four years left to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, SDG 5 (gender equality) remains off track, and the work and contributions of women remains largely obscured or even deliberately unrecognised. This remains true even as growing evidence shows that supporting women and girls and advancing gender equality drives transformative benefits across all areas of society, with higher levels of gender equality predicting greater well-being among both women and men and contributing to greater human and societal flourishing for all.³

Against this backdrop, in a global context where the rights of women and girls are facing unprecedented challenges, the need to amplify the recognition of their indispensability in realising a just, peaceful, and sustainable world has never been greater.⁴

Through the Third Call for Nominations for the *Women of Excellence in Multi-Religious Action Award*, *Religions for Peace* aims to recognise and highlight the vital efforts spearheaded by women of faith in service of human rights, peace and security, and sustainable development at the grassroots level. The *Women of Excellence in Multi-Religious Action Award* is made possible with the generous support of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and other partners. The award will be presented at a ceremony in **New York in the first quarter of 2027**, to honour the contributions of grassroots women of faith and

¹ UNDP, [Holding Communities Together: Women's Leadership in Times of Change](#)

² UN, [The Gender Snapshot 2024](#)

³ Satoshi Araki and Francisco Olivos, Gender inequality, well-being, and ill-being: A macro analysis of human and societal flourishing, *Social Science & Medicine*, Volume 366, 2025, 117670, ISSN 0277-9536, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2024.117670>

⁴ UN Press Release, [‘Patriarchy Is Regaining Ground’, Secretary-General Warns, while Women’s, Girls’ Rights Face Unprecedented Threat](#), United Nations, Security Council, [2025 Report of the Secretary-General: Women and peace and security](#)

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elevate the visibility of the awardees, enabling them to find new partners and supporters, and inspire others to learn from their work.

The Award

The Third Call for Nominations for the *Women of Excellence in Multi-Religious Action Award* will highlight the indispensable role of women of faith in achieving the six [Strategic Priorities of Religions for Peace](#) and invite individuals and *Religions for Peace* Interreligious Councils (IRCs) to nominate outstanding women of faith who are making a tangible impact at the grassroots and local community levels, with a particular focus on honouring women whose contributions have not yet received the recognition they deserve at national, regional, or global levels.

Three recipients will be selected to receive the award and honoured at an official ceremony. As part of the recognition, recipients will receive a cash prize (US \$2,500 per recipient) intended to support the continued expansion and scaling of their work within the global *Religions for Peace* movement. In addition to the award ceremony, all nominees will be recognised through a global media campaign designed to elevate their work and amplify its impact.

The Award also aims to strengthen interreligious networks by enabling recipients to share experiences, build connections, and deepen collaboration among women of faith across the global *Religions for Peace* movement. To this end, *Religions for Peace* will continue engaging with recipients following the award ceremony to understand how the recognition and prize funding received through the Award have been leveraged to strengthen, expand, and scale their work, while capturing lessons learned and best practices that can inform and inspire future multi-religious action within and beyond the *Religions for Peace* movement.

Award Criteria and Process

With the Third Call for Nominations, *Religions for Peace* invites individuals and organisations to nominate grassroots women of faith - religious leaders and non-traditional faith actors - who have contributed to the six Key Strategic Priority Areas of *Religions for Peace* ([Promoting Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies](#); [Advancing Gender Equality](#); [Nurturing Sustainable Environment](#); [Championing Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion](#); [Strengthening Interreligious Education](#); [Fostering Multi-religious Collaboration and Global Partnerships](#)) through multi-religious collaboration at the grassroots level.

The following criteria should be considered before completing the nomination form:

- i. To be eligible, the nominee must be a woman of faith who is a member of a *Religions for Peace* Interreligious Council or Chapter, Women of Faith Network, or Interfaith Youth Network at the regional, national, or subnational level.⁵

⁵ Each interreligious body affiliated with *Religions for Peace* is self-led, but also part of the global *Religions for Peace* movement. These action oriented councils and women and youth networks are multi-religious and "public" in character. They are led by the representatives of diverse religious communities and are designed to provide a platform for cooperative action throughout the different levels within these religious communities, from grassroots to the senior-most leaders. Successful *Religions for Peace* bodies serve as bridges between diverse religious communities that can help build trust, reduce hostility in areas of conflict and provide a platform for common action.

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- ii. Members of the Award Selection Committee and previous Award recipients are not eligible for nomination for the Award.
- iii. Self-nominations will not be accepted.
- iv. Award recipients will be selected from nominated women of faith—religious leaders and non-traditional faith actors—who have contributed to the six Strategic Priorities of *Religions for Peace* through multireligious collaboration at the grassroots and local community levels and whose contributions have not yet received the recognition they deserve at national, regional, or global levels.

The launch date for the Third Call of the *Women of Excellence in Multi-Religious Action Award* is set for **3 September 2026**. The submission process is detailed in the attached nomination packet.

Evaluation and Selection

Following submission by the announced deadline, all nomination packets will undergo an internal review process before being evaluated by an Award Selection Committee comprising religious leaders, women of faith, past award recipients, and experts from academia and civil society. Based on the established criteria, the Committee will evaluate nominees against factors including the nominee's active engagement and leadership, their contribution to advancing multi-religious collaboration, and their impact on interfaith social cohesion at the grassroots level.

Award Selection Committee Members will receive an instruction packet outlining the judging procedures, nominee profiles, and evaluation forms to support their review process. Following their assessment of the nominations, Committee Members will submit their top three selections to *Religions for Peace*, identifying grassroots women of faith from the following regions: Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, and North America.

Upon completion of the evaluation process, the Award Selection Committee will convene virtually to review the nomination dossiers and vote to determine the award recipients. Following the Committee's decision, *Religions for Peace* will coordinate a multifaceted media campaign highlighting the nominees and publicly announce the award recipients in the lead-up to the award ceremony.

Deadline for Submission of Nominations

The deadline for submitting nominations is **12:00 AM ET on 31 October 2026**.

Award Ceremony

The recipients will be invited to the Award Ceremony that will take place in the **first quarter of 2027**.

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding the Award or the nomination process, please contact us at award@rfp.org