

**“Faith for Rights” peer learning discussions
by OHCHR/Geneva Academy on 9 November 2023**



Objectives:

- **Promote clarity on freedom of religion or belief (FoRB)** in its “FoRB Plus” sense, i.e. the interaction between [religions, beliefs and all other human rights](#).
- **Discuss the interlinkages among and needed follow-up** on five distinct but interrelated standards and resolutions: the [Rabat Plan of Action](#), Beirut Declaration on “[Faith for Rights](#)”, Human Rights Council [resolution 16/18](#) on “combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence, and violence against persons based on religion or belief”, [resolution 52/6](#) on “freedom of religion or belief” as well as [resolution 53/1](#) on “Countering religious hatred constituting incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence”.
- **Facilitate networking** on new areas of action to be identified through a **roundtable brainstorming** on how to address religious hatred, in follow-up to the Rabat Plan of Action, Beirut Declaration and Human Rights Council resolutions 16/18, 52/6 and 53/1, with the participation of diplomats, UN Treaty Body members, Special Rapporteurs, religious leaders, faith-based actors, regional mechanisms and civil society members at Villa Moynier on 9 November 2023.

Related soft law standards:

Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence ([A/HRC/22/17/Add.4](#), appendix):

“36. **Political and religious leaders** should refrain from using messages of intolerance or expressions which may incite violence, hostility or discrimination; but they also have a crucial role to play in speaking out firmly and promptly against intolerance, discriminatory stereotyping and instances of hate speech. It should be made clear that violence can never be tolerated as a response to incitement to hatred.

41. Steps taken by the **Human Rights Council**, in particular the adoption without a vote of resolution 16/18 on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence, and violence against persons based on religion or belief, which constitutes a promising platform for effective, integrated and inclusive action by the international community. This resolution requires implementation and constant follow-up at the national level by States, including through the Rabat Plan of Action which contributes to its fulfilment.

52. Relevant **human rights treaty bodies and special procedures mandate holders** should enhance their synergies and cooperation, including through joint action, as appropriate, to denounce instances of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence.”

Beirut Declaration and its 18 Commitments on “Faith for Rights” ([A/HRC/40/58](#), annex II):

“VI. We pledge to stand up for the rights of all **persons belonging to minorities** within our respective areas of action and to defend their freedom of religion or belief as well as their right to participate equally and effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life, as recognized by international human rights law, as a minimum standard of solidarity among all believers.

VII. We pledge to publicly denounce all instances of **advocacy of hatred** that incites to violence, discrimination or hostility, including those that lead to atrocity crimes. We bear a direct responsibility to denounce such advocacy, particularly when it is conducted in the name of religion or belief.”

#Faith4Rights toolkit, notably its module 6 on minority rights, module 7 on incitement to hatred, module 16 on leveraging the spiritual and moral weight of faith-based actors, module 17 on sustainable partnerships and module 18 on technology (www.ohchr.org/Documents/Press/faith4rights-toolkit.pdf).

2023 report of the Secretary-General on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief ([A/78/241](#)):

“59. Interfaith harmony and mutual respect should be promoted, in the interest of all communities. Exchanges of lessons learned and promising practices should continue to be promoted, including through the Faith for Rights framework. Political and religious leaders have a particularly crucial role to play in speaking out clearly, firmly and immediately against disrespect and intolerance – not only of their own communities, but of any group subjected to attack. They should also make it clear that violence cannot be justified by prior provocation, whether real or perceived.¹

60. Education initiatives, positive speech campaigns, research to understand and address root causes, and efforts to promote inclusion and equal rights all have an important role. Peer-to-peer learning and awareness-raising may promote respect and understanding between individuals and communities across religions and beliefs, upholding the dignity of all.”

Draft agenda at Villa Moynier on 9 November 2023:

- 10:00-10:10 **Welcome** by Ibrahim Salama, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
- 10:10-12:30 **Meeting among religious leaders and faith-based actors**, including from the
- Appel Spirituel de Genève (see [Geneva Spiritual Appeal](#) of 1999),
 - Plateforme interreligieuse de Genève (see [9 propositions for living together and respecting one another in a multi-religious society](#) of 2016) and the
 - “Faith for Rights” network (see [Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments](#) of 2017).
- 12:30-14:00 Lunch break
- 14:00-14:10 **Welcome** by Prof. Gloria Gaggioli, Director of the Geneva Academy, and by Abdoul Thioye, OHCHR Rule of Law, Equality and Non-discrimination Branch
- 14:10-16:30 **Roundtable brainstorming**, under [Chatham House rule](#), on how to address religious hatred, in follow-up to the [Rabat Plan of Action](#), [Beirut Declaration](#) and Human Rights Council resolutions [16/18](#), [52/6](#) and [53/1](#), with the participation of
- diplomats,
 - UN Treaty Body members,
 - UN Special Rapporteurs,
 - religious leaders,
 - faith-based actors,
 - regional mechanisms and
 - civil society members.

Venue:

Villa Moynier, Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, 120B rue de Lausanne, CH-1202 Geneva, <https://www.geneva-academy.ch>

Contact persons (for registration and further information):

- Michael Wiener, OHCHR Rule of Law, Equality & Non-discrimination Branch (michael.wiener@un.org)
- Ibrahim Salama, OHCHR Human Rights Treaties Branch (ibrahim.salama@un.org)
- Erik Fattorelli, OHCHR Special Procedures Branch (erik.fattorelli@un.org)

¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2023/07/turk-calls-states-combatweaponization-religious-differences>. See also <https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2023/10/religious-hatred-turk-urges-renewed-social-contract-based-trust-and>