
10th UNAOC Global Forum, Cascais, 25-27 November 2024

**Thematic Panel 6:
“Faith in Dialogue: Religious Mediation for Peace”**

27 November 2024, 14:00 - 16:00, Estoril Convention Centre

Draft

In an era often characterized by the association of religious actors with violence and terrorism, religious and spiritual traditions can serve peaceful ends through dialogue initiatives, conflict prevention and resolution. Two decades after the 2005 United Nations Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders, the importance of religious actors in the promotion of peace mediation, non-violence, cultural understanding, harmony, and cooperation on a global scale has become essential.

Security Council and General Assembly resolutions have addressed issues related to the role of religious actors in key areas. UN Security Council Resolution 2686 (2023)¹ in particular, encourages religious and community leaders to speak out against hate speech, to develop and share good practices to promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence, and to address hate speech and extremism that can lead to armed conflict and represent an obstacle to durable peace and reconciliation.

In areas of conflict, religious actors do much more than engage in interfaith dialogue. In countries afflicted by conflict, religious confessions have successfully gathered religious and community leaders to establish crisis de-escalation initiatives and engage in peacebuilding initiatives.

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations has aimed to support local religious and community leaders in their actions and engagements, providing direct financial support to local organizations to enhance interreligious dialogue and cooperation.

From climate change to the global pandemic, our world is confronted with systemic crises that call for a stronger commitment of religious leaders of all faiths to work together for peace around the world, in the words of the UN Secretary-General appeal of 2020. An important recognition of the role and mission of religious actors.

The session will further examine the role of religious leaders and faith actors in peace mediation and dialogue processes. The panelists representing diverse faith denominations will exchange views based on their engagement in the mediation of conflicts, highlighting the specificities of religious contributions to peacemaking.

¹ UN Security Council Resolution 2686, 2023. Available at: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n23/170/22/pdf/n2317022.pdf>

The speakers will address the following guiding questions:

- How can religious leaders leverage their influence to promote peace and prevent conflict in regions where religion is often seen as a divisive factor? What strategies have proven effective in countering hate speech and extremism?
- In what ways can interfaith dialogue serve as a unique tool in peace mediation and reconciliation processes? Can you share specific examples of how these dialogues have contributed to mediation processes?
- What role could the United Nations play in supporting religious actors in peacebuilding, and how can partnerships between FBOs and secular organizations enhance the effectiveness of these efforts?
- Considering global crises like climate change and pandemics, how can religious leaders from diverse faith traditions collaborate on shared goals to foster resilience and promote peace? What are some of the emerging best practices on interfaith collaboration?