

Mobilising Faith Communities in Ending Sexual Violence in Conflict



Report of the international inter faith conference
held 8 to 9 February 2015 at Lancaster House, London
hosted by We Will Speak Out and
the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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1. Overview

The following is a report of an international conference, which gathered together faith leaders from a range of traditions to continue dialogue on their roles and responsibilities in ending sexual violence in conflict affected communities. The conference included the sharing of experience and discussion on how faith leaders can work together to challenge harmful cultural attitudes and practices related to gender; care for the most vulnerable and most affected; support better documentation of evidence of crimes committed, and advocate for survivors of sexual violence.

The conference, 'Mobilising Faith Communities in Ending Sexual Violence in Conflict' was co-hosted by the We Will Speak Out coalition to end sexual violence and the UK Government's Foreign & Commonwealth Office and took place at Lancaster House, London, 9 to 10 February 2015.

This event built on discussions at the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict held in London, 11 to 13 June 2014, hosted by the then UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Mr William Hague, and the Special Envoy of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Ms Angelina Jolie Pitt.

"We noted that good laws and international agreements in themselves are not enough if attitudes don't change. In this respect, faith groups have a key role to play, including in their role providing care, treatment and support for survivors. Through their networks, they often have access and influence with local communities that no other actor has. As such, they are uniquely placed to change hearts and minds, and challenge cultural and social norms, including notions of masculine identity as it affects sexual violence. The Summit recognised the need to engage faith-based organisations as active partners in the fight against sexual violence, both in helping to formulate strategy and in providing front-line support to survivors."

From the Chair's Summary at the conclusion of

The Rt Hon Baroness Anelay of St Johns, Minister of State at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, welcomed participants to the conference. The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Justin Welby, Mr William Hague and Ms Angelina Jolie Pitt gave opening addresses.



The chair of the We Will Speak Out coalition, Ms Veena O’Sullivan, introduced the themes of the conference which were the role of faith leaders in:

1. Defending values of faith and human rights
2. Tackling impunity and promoting justice and accountability
3. Supporting survivors
4. Engaging men and boys
5. Peace building and peace processes.

At the end of the conference, the faith leaders presented a declaration to Baroness Northover, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for International Development, together with a series of recommendations addressed to all faith leaders, governments and humanitarian agencies.

The Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, was unable to participate in the working sessions that considered the declaration but has stated his support. See page 24.

2. Background

Rape and sexual violence have been used as a tactic of war in conflicts across the world. Sexual violence is frequently used for political ends, as a means of ethnic cleansing and to terrorise local populations. It destroys lives, fuels conflict, creates refugees, jeopardises ceasefires and undermines long-term prospects for reconciliation. Sexual violence is indiscriminate, affecting men and boys as well as women and girls. All too often the victims face a life of shame and stigma, while the perpetrators go free. Only a handful of people have ever been brought to trial. As a result, those who order or carry out rape and sexual violence in conflict expect to get away with it.

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In recent years there has been growing international recognition of the critical need to address sexual violence in conflict. Through a series of UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) the United Nations has repeatedly condemned and called for the end of all forms of sexual violence against women and children in situations of armed conflict and made clear their link to wider international conflict prevention efforts. States, the UN, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the International Criminal Court and medical, social and legal practitioners have all made significant advances in prevention, protection and survivor support. But despite these efforts, sexual violence in armed conflict has continued to occur frequently, often reaching appalling levels of brutality.

Based firmly on the belief that the UK has the moral obligation and the diplomatic power to change this, on **29 May 2012 William Hague launched the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative (PSVI)** with the Special Envoy of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Angelina Jolie Pitt. The aim of the initiative is to raise awareness, rally global action, promote greater international coherence and increase the political will and capacity of states to do more to address the culture of impunity that exists for these crimes, to increase the number of perpetrators held to account and to ensure better support for survivors. In 2013 William Hague undertook to use the UK's Presidency of the Group of Eight (G8) to ensure greater international attention and commitment to tackling the use of sexual violence in conflict through a clear political statement from the G8 of its determination to make real, tangible progress on the issue. On 11 April, accompanied by Angelina Jolie Pitt and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC), Zainab Hawa Bangura, G8 Foreign Ministers adopted a historic Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Building on the success of the G8 Declaration, on 24 June 2013 William Hague hosted a debate during the UK's Presidency of the UN Security Council on tackling sexual violence in conflict which focused on the need to challenge the culture of impunity and promote accountability. A new UN Security Council Resolution (2106) which contains a series of actions to improve the UN response to sexual violence in conflict was adopted. This was the first resolution on the subject in three years and was co-sponsored by 46 UN member states. Recognising the importance of broadening even further the international coalition of support behind the campaign, on 24 September 2013 William Hague and SRSG Bangura jointly launched the Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict during the 68th session of the UN General Assembly.

The Declaration is action oriented, ambitious and expresses a shared commitment and determination to see an end to the use of rape and sexual violence as weapons of war. It has a clear focus on tackling impunity and accountability but also contains a set of wider political and practical commitments — many of which were the focus of discussions at the Summit. States also reaffirm in the Declaration that rape and serious sexual violence in armed conflict are war crimes and constitute grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions. From the 113 countries, which endorsed the text at its launch, the Declaration has so far been endorsed by 155 UN member states.

At the launch, William Hague invited all endorsing countries to join him at the **Global Summit to End Sexual Violence** in June 2014 to identify how the international community could turn the provisions of the Declaration into a programme of practical action.¹ This was the largest gathering ever brought together on the subject, with 1,700 delegates and over 120 country delegations many led at Ministerial level. The

¹<http://bit.ly/1zTBvJD>

Summit agreed practical steps to tackle impunity for the use of rape as a weapon of war, and to begin to change global attitudes to these crimes. During the Summit the UK's Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) supported We Will Speak Out in hosting a series of events, which highlighted the importance of engaging with faith leaders as key allies in this area.

We Will Speak Out (WWSO)² is a global coalition of Christian-based NGOs, churches and organisations, supported by an alliance of technical partners and individuals who together commit themselves to see the end of sexual violence across communities around the world. National multi-faith WWSO coalitions have been launched in South Africa, USA and DRC and the global WWSO coalition is expanding both its membership and reach. The WWSO coalition is committed to empowering women and girls, to transforming relationships between women and men, and to ensuring that the voices of survivors of sexual violence – women, girls, men and boys – are central to their work.

The conference '**Mobilising Faith Communities in Ending Sexual Violence in Conflict**' was envisaged as an important step in supporting faith leaders and their communities, as well as faith-based organisations, to be strong advocates, speaking out more consistently and forthrightly at every level, from household to global, and to move beyond words to practical and collaborative action, serving as agents of change in addressing sexual violence both in conflict and during peace.

3. Themes of the Conference

The faith leaders' discussions focussed on five thematic areas:

The role of faith leaders in:

1. Defending values of faith and human rights
2. Tackling impunity and promoting justice and accountability
3. Supporting survivors
4. Engaging men and boys
5. Peace building and peace processes.

For each theme, two WWSO facilitators offered a background to the topic and introduced two faith leaders (or, for theme 1, a faith leader and the Partnerships Advisor for UNAIDS, and for theme 2, a faith leader and a member of the FCO's PSVI team) who made presentations based on their knowledge and experience. For theme 3, a message from survivors was read out. Presentations are on-line at www.wewillsspeakout.org/interfaithevent2015.

Each presentation was followed by discussion in groups. As the conference proceeded, a number of recommendations emerged and these are included in section 5 below. Background material for each theme together with questions considered during group sessions is included in this report in Annexe 2.

3.1 Summary of discussions

Theme 1. Defending values of faith and human rights

Participants discussed the influential role of religious leaders who often serve as the voice of the people and are able to engage with governments on human rights issues. They agreed that faith leaders have a

² www.wewillsspeakout.org

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duty to speak out against injustice and promote the values of their faith, but that there are failures in this respect – especially concerning issues of gender equality and violence against women and girls. It was recognised that negative cultural norms sometimes have more influence than national legislation and that faith leaders could do more to address this, engaging both with their communities and governments.

Theme 2. Tackling impunity and promoting justice and accountability

Participants affirmed that religious leaders can be advocates for legislation that supports work to end sexual violence, holds perpetrators accountable and protects victims, promoting their consonance with faith values. They acknowledged that most faith leaders are unaware of the International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict³ and that awareness raising and education would assist faith leaders and communities to speak and act together.

Where legislation is not being implemented, the role of faith leaders becomes even more significant at community level. However, it was recognised that, in practical terms, there are challenges for faith leaders and communities in engaging with the work and pastoral care needed in promoting justice and accountability. For example, most faith leaders are male whereas most victims and survivors of sexual violence are female; faith leaders may lack the capacity and resources to respond effectively to requests for support; they need to understand how to ensure confidentiality for survivors and yet seek justice. Faith leaders have an additional role in accompanying perpetrators who, even as they face the consequences of their actions, need opportunity to be transformed.

Participants recognised the need for partnerships with rights-based organisations that can provide basic training to assist faith leaders in being effective first line responders.

Theme 3. Supporting survivors

Faith leaders have often been the voice for the voiceless and have a tremendous role to play in standing in solidarity with the most vulnerable. Survivors of sexual violence in conflict have often gone to a place of worship as their first place of refuge, however they may not have found it to be a safe space. Participants reflected that understanding the experiences and needs of survivors is essential. They recognised the potential of faith leaders to create safe spaces for survivors and educate local communities in order to break taboos around speaking out and to remove the burden of stigma from survivors. They can also provide a range of practical support to survivors, and advocate for and mobilise other key institutions to do the same. Faith leaders are uniquely well-placed to work against sexual violence by addressing harmful cultural attitudes and practices, and challenging negative perceptions and misinformation. Participants also discussed the need for faith leaders to promote theologies that affirm women and men as having equal value, and to put their own houses in order.

Theme 4. Engaging men and boys

It was recognised that sexual violence cannot end without the full involvement of men and boys and that faith leaders have a key role to play in helping men and boys to develop positive understandings of masculine identity. Since most faith leaders are male, this provides an opportunity for them to model positive masculinities that respect and uphold the rights of women and girls. However, participants

³ <http://bit.ly/1xlrsmG>

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reflected that faith leaders themselves are often shaped by harmful prevailing beliefs and perspectives. They would therefore benefit from opportunities and support to explore this. They identified a need to work with boys from an early age so that they understand the potential for harmful masculinities and the impacts of misusing power against women and girls. Schools and other facilities run by faith groups provide opportunities for engaging with children in this way.

Participants also discussed the need to break the silence around sexual violence against men in contexts of conflict and to advocate for the amendment of relevant UN resolutions that do not include men and boys when referring to survivors.

Theme 5. Peace building and peace processes

Faith leaders have a significant role to play in peace building and peace processes. All faiths have a commitment to peace yet historically there has been a lack of effective inter faith movements for peace. Participants also considered that it is important for faith groups to work with secular groups and to involve women in peace building.

Lessons could be learned, for example, from the actions of Christian and Muslim women in Liberia who, after years of civil conflict in their country, took the decision to wear white and parade in the streets until there was peace. They barricaded the peace negotiators, who were men, into the negotiation room. The women were not recognised leaders but felt empowered to advocate and take a stand for peace.

There are examples of successful processes that have enabled people to move from conflict towards peace. Faith leaders can gain understanding of the potential of their role and learn from others who have walked this path before.





4. Faith Leaders' Declaration

Inter Faith Declaration on mobilising Faith Communities to End Sexual Violence in Conflict

We have come together at the inter faith consultation on 'Mobilising Faith Communities to End Sexual Violence in Conflict', 9-10 February 2015, because we recognise our particular role and responsibility as leaders in helping bring to an end the use of rape and other forms of sexual and gender based violence in conflict. This consultation advances the discussion at the 'Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict' held in London in June 2014.

As faith leaders, we acknowledge that all faiths affirm the dignity of human beings and so condemn sexual violence. We share a common understanding of our potential to mobilise people at all levels to work together to end sexual violence in conflict. We will challenge the culture of impunity that exists for these crimes, and use our influence to mobilise and encourage

leadership and commitment across governments, communities and religious institutions to protect human rights and provide safe spaces and support to survivors and their families.

We will promote the dignity and rights of survivors of sexual violence, both female and male. The shame for these crimes lies with the perpetrators and not those who suffer them. We have a critical role to play in tackling the root causes of sexual violence, including the subordinate and unequal status of women around the world, and harmful cultural, religious and social norms, including distorted notions of masculine identities. Ideas of culture or tradition, or misapplication of sacred texts, must never be used to allow impunity for perpetrators of sexual violence. We will also seek to work with perpetrators to end the cycle of violence.

Based on our discussions, we have determined the distinctive role of faith leaders in:

- Defending values of faith and human rights
- Tackling impunity and promoting justice and accountability
- Supporting survivors of sexual violence
- Engaging men and boys in promoting positive masculinities and transformed gender relations
- Peace building and peace processes.

We have agreed to implement recommendations for collaborative action in these areas, as set out in the Report of the Inter Faith Consultation on Mobilising Faith Communities to End Sexual Violence in Conflict. As faith leaders, we commit ourselves to take these actions:

- We will speak out against sexual and gender-based violence in conflict at every opportunity
- We will take action together to promote human rights and see girls, women, boys and men freed from the threat and impact of sexual violence in conflict across the world.
- We will stand together in solidarity with all those affected by sexual violence.
- We will promote the development and implementation of laws that protect and promote justice to bring an end to sexual, and other forms of gender based violence during and after conflict, holding governments to account.
- We will strive to build peace and promote reconciliation, challenging the internal and external causes of conflict.
- We will dedicate ourselves to finding lasting solutions; mobilising leadership at all levels and implementing these values within our own faith community.

We call on all faith leaders to join us in speaking out and to work together with governments, national and international stakeholders, and communities to help end the use of sexual violence in conflict.

5. Recommendations

Theme 1: The Role of Faith Leaders in Promoting Values of Faith and Human Rights

Faith leaders to:

1. Revisit and promote values of faith and human rights that uphold the equal dignity of all women and men, girls and boys, ensuring that these are lived out in our language and actions.
2. Assert zero tolerance of all forms of sexual and gender based violence within and beyond our own communities.
3. Serve as role models, acknowledging past failures, breaking the silence, challenging harmful attitudes, and speaking truth to power wherever sexual violence is used during and after conflict.
4. Work together, and with other community leaders and governmental and non-governmental agencies, to build confidence within communities, empowering families and individuals to prevent and end sexual violence.
5. Promote the rights of women and girls to live safe from harm and have access to opportunities for personal development and empowerment.



Governments to:

1. Work with faith leaders across all faiths and seek to understand the role of faith in promoting human rights and dignity for all.
2. Collaborate proactively and partner with faith leaders and faith communities, providing resources where necessary, in the promotion of knowledge and understanding of human rights.
3. Advocate with other governments to comply fully with all international agreements concerning human rights and ensure these are reflected into effective policies and legislation for the people.

Humanitarian agencies to:

1. Understand the importance and value of working with faith thereby promoting meaningful partnerships with the faith community in humanitarian responses.
2. Develop strategic partnerships and support female and male faith leaders and their communities in addressing root causes of sexual violence.
3. Support the documentation and dissemination of the learning and good practices of faith leaders and communities.

We request the UK Government to promote understanding of the role of faith leaders as defenders of human rights, investing in faith champions who model the same and ensuring their meaningful participation in shaping policy and practice.

Theme 2: The Role of Faith Leaders in Tackling Impunity and Promoting Justice and Accountability

Faith leaders to:

1. Speak out to ensure that blame and shame are shifted entirely from victims of sexual violence to those who propagate, perpetrate or condone it.
2. Seek to address the culture of impunity at national and community levels, calling governments and judiciaries to account for the robust implementation of national and international legislation concerned with the prevention and prosecution of sexual violence and, where it does not already exist, calling for national legislation that is survivor-centred and well resourced in its operation.
3. Ensure faith leaders and other representatives of religious institutions are not immune from prosecution for sexual abuse and violence, and have explicit policies and practice that reflect the same.
4. Support governmental and non-governmental agencies in raising awareness of the 'International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict' and promote understanding of their own role within community-based support systems in its implementation.
5. Network and develop relationships with other agencies and service providers to provide survivors with protection and access to justice.

Governments to:

1. Establish and implement laws and provisions to end impunity and protect survivors of sexual violence, promote knowledge and understanding of these laws, including in remote areas, using appropriate forms of media.
2. Build the capacity of their staff to understand the importance of, and processes involved in ending impunity.



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3. Develop a clear strategy aimed at ensuring effective law enforcement. This must include an engagement with authorities such as police and army personnel who may themselves may be complicit in promoting impunity.

Humanitarian actors to:

1. Involve faith leaders and faith communities in understanding and addressing the root causes contributing to the culture of impunity.
2. Work with and support faith leaders and communities to address harmful cultures, beliefs, attitudes and practices within faiths that promote impunity.
3. Challenge and support faith leaders to make sure violations are duly reported and dealt with.

We request the UK Government to work proactively with faith leaders in exploring their potential in supporting the implementation of the International Protocol. We hope faith leaders will be involved in training concerning the use of the Protocol, which will lead to context specific processes for their involvement in its implementation. We advocate for a clear expression within the Protocol of how faith leaders can support the implementation of the protocol at the community and national level. This is even more critical in contexts where there is a breakdown in the functioning of effective government.

Theme 3: The Role of Faith Leaders in Supporting Survivors of Sexual Violence

Faith leaders to:

1. Speak out against sexual violence and gender injustice, and the harmful practices and traditions that lead to such violence, and be a catalyst in mobilising all faith leaders to do the same.
2. Create and provide safe spaces, support and accompaniment to all survivors of sexual violence – women, girls, men and boys – demonstrating solidarity, ending stigma and affirming them as valued and loved members of communities.
3. Take the initiative in reaching out to survivors, understanding their needs, listening to their experiences and seeking their advice and counsel to shape actions.
4. Identify and invest in the key actors, women and men, within faith institutions who provide support to survivors and their families.

Governments to:

1. Establish and resource holistic strategies and programmes to support and rehabilitate survivors.
2. Ensure that relevant government officials are knowledgeable about the root causes of sexual violence and needs of survivors.
3. Ensure all relevant government departments have a zero tolerance policy to gender injustice and victimisation of survivors.
4. Engage with and involve survivors in shaping policies and programmes, including review processes.

Humanitarian agencies to:

1. Support faith leaders and faith groups to understand and address harmful beliefs and practices and respond appropriately to survivors.
2. Involve faith groups in programmes responding to survivors.



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3. Involve faith groups in community based referral pathways, document and disseminate examples of good practice and promote linkages between service providers and faith groups including those concerned with HIV and AIDS.

We request the UK Government to continue demonstrating meaningful engagement with survivors in the development of key instruments and processes like the International Protocol. Specifically, we ask the UK Government to involve survivors as technical advisors, empowering survivors to speak out.

Theme 4: The Role of Faith Leaders in Engaging Men and Boys

Faith leaders to:

1. Model just relationships between women and men.
2. Emphasise the caring, compassionate and nurturing attitudes, which flow from many holy texts to counteract the false cultural norms of male dominance, power, and control, which lead to “machismo” attitudes and violent behaviours.
3. Agree on non-violent messages from their specific scriptures and holy writings, which can be taught through leadership and theological training, with unity across the faith traditions.
4. Stand alongside and work with men and boys.
5. Become advocates within their communities to support men and boys in respecting women and challenging male stereotype roles and behaviours.
6. Create a network of faith leaders speaking out against sexual violence in conflict, learning from the example of addressing HIV and AIDS, supported by each other and interacting with government.

Governments to:

1. Recognise and support faith leaders as they challenge damaging social and cultural norms in their societies, including within the military, which lead to sexual and gender-based violence.



2. Re-examine the law of their countries where women are subjected to more harsh punishment than that experienced by men.
3. Advocate for the updating of international resolutions to recognise that men and boys are also victims of sexual violence in conflict.
4. Provide counselling and medical treatment for female and male victims of rape and sexual assault and provide psycho-social services to enable perpetrators, who are committed to change, to be rehabilitated.

Humanitarian agencies to:

1. Work with faith leaders to promote a united approach to men and boys when tackling sexual violence in conflict.
2. Support faith leaders to grow in awareness and understanding of the reality of sexual violence against women and men and to teach that survivors require positive support and affirmation when dealing with any sense of self-disgust and stigmatisation.
3. Support the development of non-violent masculinities based on faith traditions.

We request the UK Government to maintain their focus on engaging faith leaders and working with men and boys in the movement to end sexual violence in conflict. We request support for the initiatives from this meeting to develop resources on engaging men and boys and to encourage dialogue on these issues between faith leaders and secular groups. We call on the UK Government to support men and boys in the faith-based context through its international development programmes and to advocate for the international community to include men and boys as survivors in relevant UN resolutions.

Theme 5: The Role of Faith Leaders in Peace Building and Peace Processes

Faith leaders to:

1. Improve the quality of secular and religious cooperation, making a concerted effort to bridge differences in language, values and modes of working.
2. Explore the possibility of interfaith movements that have credibility and influence in each national context.
3. Provide opportunities for women, youth and children to contribute to peace building dialogues.
4. Empower women and youth at the grassroots to aspire to positions of leadership, within and outside religious institutions, and challenge patriarchal structures.
5. Model interfaith relationships of trust.

Governments to:

1. Understand the capacity of the faith communities in their regions to contribute to peace processes and include them in developing peace and mediation frameworks.
2. Promote affirmative action to ensure meaningful engagement of women in peace building.
3. Develop and implement anti-discrimination legislation, where necessary, to enshrine and embed women's participation in national law.

Humanitarian agencies to:

1. Provide women at grassroots and in leadership positions with mentoring and training to enable them to take their part in conflict transformation and peace building.



2. Build capacity of grass-root organisations to enable them to contribute to peace building and peace processes in countries affected by conflict.
3. Advocate for marginalised groups including indigenous peoples.

We request the UK Government to engage with the diversity of faith leaders and faith communities in times of peace and conflict.

6. Next Steps

The inter faith conference laid some important foundations for mobilising faith leaders to work together in preventing and ending sexual violence in conflict. The task now is to ensure that momentum is sustained and that the work is embedded in local and national communities. The faith leaders participating in the conference have committed to taking this work forward. They have been sent a 'feedback form', which requests information about their plans.

Proposed ways forward

For We Will Speak Out

1. Provide an on-line learning space at www.wewillspeakout.org, gathering documentation and showcasing examples of good practice by faith leaders and faith communities in response to sexual violence in conflict. This will contribute to building up evidence and promoting the sharing of experience and ideas.
2. Collate the ideas and plans received from conference participants in the feedback form and explore the potential of WWSO members to provide accompaniment and technical support to countries and faith leaders as they seek to move forward. This will become the action plan from this event.

3. Explore with WWSO members and conference participants the potential to promote the Declaration.
4. Request the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of Westminster to endorse the Declaration.

For the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office

1. Send the conference report including the Declaration and Recommendations to the UK posts in the countries represented among the participants.
2. Promote the Declaration and Recommendations with other governments to increase awareness of the work done so far and the potential to work with their offices as well in the focus countries.
3. The Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Special Envoy of the UNHCR to share the Declaration and Recommendations with other key stakeholders within the UN community.

Annexe 1. Conference Participants

Country	Name
Burundi	Mathilde Nkwirikiye
Democratic Republic of Congo	Archbishop Henri Isingoma Thérèse Mema Mapenzi
Ghana	Father Joe Komakoma
Sierra Leone	Archbishop Edward Tamba Charles
Somalia	Sheikh Almis
South Africa	Daniela Gennrich Bishop Margaret Brenda Vertue
South Sudan	Revd Dr Joseph Bilal
Swaziland	Bishop Ellinah Wamukoya
India	Revd Dr Packiam Samuel
Nepal	Bal Kumari Gurung Draupati Rokaya
Sri Lanka	Vijula Arulanantham
Argentina	Malena Manzato
Brazil	Archbishop Francisco de Assis da Silva
Guatemala	Dr Conchita Reyes Elsa Pamela León Ovalle
Mexico	Padre Sergio Cobo Gonzalez
Iraq	Ehsan Alhakim
Israel	Qadi Dr Ahmad Natour
Lebanon	Maha Milki Wehbe Nabil Costa

List continued overleaf

Palestine	Ms Suhair Ramadan
United Kingdom	Bishop Angaelos Rabbi Sylvia Rothschild Jaswinder Singh Nagra Sanjay Jagatia Dr Husna Ahmad OBE Iman Abou-Atta Revd Rose Hudson Wilkin Bishop Christopher Cocksworth Maha Ridha MBE Alia Azam Shahin Ashraf MBE
UNAIDS	Sally Smith
<i>Faith leaders unable to attend:</i>	
Central African Republic	Imam Oumar Kobine Layama
Uganda	Rev Sr Mary Goretti Kisakye IHMR
Democratic Republic of Congo	Florence Ntererwa Furaha
Ethiopia	Pastor Zerihun Degu Mengest
Syria; resident in Turkey	Sheikh Dr Mohamed Sohaib al-Chami
Syria	Ahmad Mouaz Al Khatib Al Hasanee

Annexe 2. Background material and questions for each theme

SESSION 1: Defending Values of Faith and Human Rights

Facilitators: Tanja Haque;
Steve Sanderson

Speakers: Sally Smith, Partnerships Advisor, UNAIDS, Geneva
Dr Nabil Costa, Lebanon

Background:

In international law there is a surprising reference to faith that is rarely noted. The fifth paragraph of the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights reads: "Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women..." This affirmation is presented as a reaffirmation, which suggests a continuing notion of faith.

Certainly, this is an instance where the words 'religion' and 'faith' are not synonyms. The sentence in the preamble is about faith, not about religion. Faith may be expressed in religion, but the meaning of faith is not restricted to religion. The meaning in the preamble of the word 'faith' has nothing to do with religion or belief in the sense that these are protected in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

But some will view the inherent dignity ascribed to every human being, as stated in the UN Declaration of Human Rights, as a profoundly religious concept. Similarly, the concept of divine justice has motivated

many faith communities to pursue the human rights discourse. This has been well captured in faith-based programmes linked to education and public health for instance, but surprisingly less so on access to justice.

At the grassroots level, collaboration is crucial between community-based faith leaders and Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS) institutions, such as the police, lower courts and the diplomatic community. However, these relationships are often fraught with mistrust and corruption.

We recognise that faith leaders have sometimes contributed to the impunity surrounding sexual violence, by promoting unhealthy patriarchy, obstructing human rights and women's rights, or staying silent. Faith leaders need to be challenged to be part of the solution, to engage with the issue, change their own behaviours and tackle the root causes of gender-based violence (GBV) in their communities.

Questions for consideration:

- ⇒ What practical examples can you share from your own experience and observation that help promote human rights and in particular women's rights, and rights of the most vulnerable?
- ⇒ Recognizing that human rights violations are frequently the root causes of conflict and humanitarian crises, how can faith leaders be part of early warning systems in responding to human rights violations prior to the conflict and build a climate of peace and mutual confidence in post conflict situations?
- ⇒ Specifically, what is the role of faith leaders in the protection of minorities, strengthening of democratic institutions, and universal respect for human rights?

SESSION 2: Tackling Impunity and Promoting Justice and Accountability

Facilitators: Janette O'Neil, US.
Kat Wagner, BMS

Speakers: The Most Revd Kahwa Henri Isingoma, Archbishop of the Congo & Bishop of Kinshasa;
Sara Ferro Ribeiro, Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative Team, FCO

Background:

Rape convictions are appallingly low across the world, even in established, peaceful democracies. This is exacerbated in conflict and humanitarian contexts where justice systems and institutions collapse. In these situations, faith leaders, because of their influential and leadership role, have a valuable contribution to make in ending impunity.

If women and men continue to suffer sexual violence, it is not necessarily because the law is inadequate to protect them – it can also be because the law is inadequately enforced. But there has to be an end to impunity if we are to make any progress in preventing sexual violence in conflict. This cannot be the responsibility of the Government alone.

Faith leaders can contribute to ending impunity in three different ways:

- i. Strengthening referral pathways: providing information, raising awareness and linking survivors within these remote, conflict-affected communities to the services they need. This means understanding the

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immediate medical, psychosocial and protection needs of survivors. It also means understanding their medium and longer term needs, such as access to justice and assistance with socio-economic recovery.

- ii. Addressing the culture of impunity at the community level: speaking out to break the silence and stigma around the issue of sexual violence can help combat attitudes and social norms that condone sexual violence and contribute to impunity. It can also help shift the culture of blame and shame from survivors to perpetrators.
- iii. Advocacy: by holding local and State authorities to account in the implementation of existing laws, and pursuing cases, prosecution and remedies and reparations.

In June 2014, the UK Government launched the International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in conflict. The Protocol is a set of guidelines that explains how to (i) gather, document and store evidence of crimes of sexual violence in a safe and protective manner so as to increase its potential admissibility in future justice processes, and (ii) investigate the crimes, including interviewing and collecting testimony, in a manner which is both effective - but critically - sensitive to the victim or survivor.

Questions for consideration:

- ⇒ What have been the experiences of faith leaders in ending impunity?
- ⇒ Examine the challenges and opportunities faith leaders have had in working as first line responders in supporting survivors advocate for justice.
- ⇒ Reflect on the role faith leaders can play at the community level in creating a culture of ending impunity of perpetrators.
- ⇒ How can faith leaders support and encourage the use of the International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict amongst their communities?
- ⇒ Ensuring survivors are treated sensitively and appropriately is a central aim of the International Protocol. Are there particular experiences on which faith leaders can draw that will help reinforce this approach?

SESSION 3: Supporting Survivors

Facilitators: Rachele Vernon, US.

Maggie Sandilands, Tearfund

Speakers: Therese Mema Mapenzi. Assistant in charge of Conflict Transformation, Commission Diocésaine Justice et Paix (CDJP) Bukavu

Pephisa survivor peer movement, South Africa - message from survivors of conflict related rape now living in South Africa, read by Maggie Sandilands.

Background:

In conflict and humanitarian crises, places of worship often become the primary places of refuge for communities, and many survivors say they would prefer to seek help from their

religious leaders. Faith leaders are therefore often the de facto first responders to sexual violence. But survivors have not always received the support they expected and hoped for from faith leaders. Their experiences of faith leaders can range from silence to stigma and rejection.

Women, girls, men and boys, are all potentially at risk of sexual violence in conflict. But while women and girls are most at risk, the stigma and silence suffered by men and boys is probably even more complex because of the culture and constructs of masculinities that exist. The experience of survivors needs to be central to any discussion around sexual violence, and meaningful engagement of those affected should shape our strategies for prevention and response. Yet shame, stigma and the fear of rejection have enforced their silence.

Faith leaders have a key role to play in addressing this stigma, within faith groups and in the wider community, enabling survivors' voices to be heard, and improving safe access to services, care and support.

Questions for consideration:

- ⇒ What practical examples can you share from your own experience and observation of ways in which faith leaders and faith groups are already supporting survivors – what are their strengths?
- ⇒ What are the unique contributions or specific added value that faith leaders and faith groups can provide in supporting survivors, compared to other actors?
- ⇒ What are the key gaps and challenges that prevent faith leaders and faith groups from being able to adequately support survivors – what are their limitations?
- ⇒ What is required to improve the capacity of faith leaders and faith groups to more adequately support survivors?
- ⇒ How can we ensure meaningful engagement of survivors themselves in this discussion within faith communities and leadership?

SESSION 4: Engaging Men and Boys

Facilitators: Geoff Daintree, Christian Aid
Peter Grant, Restored

Speakers: Daniela Gennrich, South Africa;
Sheik Almis, Somaliland

Background:

This theme will explore how faith leaders, and men more broadly, can make a difference on these issues, within faith communities and their wider societies, by speaking out and modeling appropriate behaviour.

At the root of this is our view of masculinities and we will be exploring how the different faiths view the roles and responsibilities of men and how we can learn from each other. While most men are not perpetrators of sexual violence, they are the main perpetrators. Our vision is that all men and boys, including combatants, end sexual violence in line with the teachings of their faith. Boys need to learn different attitudes as they grow up in order that they take equality for granted and do not practice

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violence at any age. Many men and boys involved in conflict are people of faith and require good teaching about moral norms and appropriate behaviour from an early age. Men need to demonstrate respect for women and girls and a willingness to challenge each other about their attitudes and behaviour.

Within faith communities, men occupy most of the positions of leadership and have a huge potential both to model and to teach about non-violence and positive relationships. With an increasing awareness that gender justice challenges cultural and social norms, there is a danger of a crisis of identity among some men. Faith leaders have a significant role in challenging and changing damaging gendered social norms.

Questions for consideration:

- ⇒ What does your faith teach about the role and responsibilities of men?
- ⇒ How can faith leaders help men to end sexual violence in conflict?
- ⇒ What are biggest barriers hindering men from bringing about change and ending sexual violence in conflict?
- ⇒ How can a faith perspective help bring about changes in harmful social and cultural norms?
- ⇒ What are the particular challenges of ending sexual violence against men and boys?
- ⇒ Is there a particular role for military chaplains?

SESSION 5: Peace Building and Peace Processes

Facilitators: Revd Andrew Bowerman, Anglican Alliance
Sonia Pritchard, CAFOD

Speakers: Syed Ehsan El Hakim, Iraq
Mme Mathilde Nkwirikiye, Lawyer, Mothers' Union President for the Anglican Church of Burundi.

Background:

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building and stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution.

This theme will explore the role of faith in peace building with a specific focus on the inclusion of women in these dialogues and processes. Faith-based peace building is about finding commonalities, uniting people, and recognizing that all humans are created equal.

Religion can play a tremendous role in peace building, particularly in countries where religious leaders play a strong role in community affairs, help in mobilising for peace, and it can provide hope to people. On the other hand, religious leaders can, at times, contribute to promoting intolerance of other religions. They have a tremendous influence on youth and their attitudes about other faiths, which, if dealt with

incorrectly, can stir up emotions and incite violence. As women are differently affected, and often take up new roles, during conflict they are important stakeholders when it comes to building peace.

However, due to the different social norms, roles, rules and regulations for women, men, girls and boys, women often experience difficulties in getting included in peace building processes, including faith-based peace processes.

Questions for consideration:

- ⇒ What obstacles and advances currently exist for the involvement of women in faith-based peace building?
- ⇒ How can faith leaders help in increasing women's participation at peace negotiations and decision-making structures?
- ⇒ What are the advantages of faith and secular groups working together? What are the barriers?
- ⇒ What practical examples can you share where cooperation between faith and secular/women's organisations has been successful in relation to improved peace building processes and attempts to ending sexual violence in conflict?
- ⇒ What are some of the good examples of cooperation between faiths in achieving peace? What are some of the challenges here?

"Faith is a gift that awaits our discovery. Sharing that gift brings with it an obligation to oppose violence and domination and instead bring healing and peace to those who have been wounded and brutalised. In that context I welcome the work that the interfaith consultation, and the broader PSVI, is doing to reassert the dignity of the person and the respect owed to each of us. Together people of faith, in partnership with many others, can help to stem the scourge of sexual violence that disfigures so many societies. Together we can make a difference."

The Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Vincent Nichols



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