



Foreign &
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Office

Preventing Violent Extremism by Building Inclusive and Plural Societies: How Freedom of Religion or Belief can Help

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**Conference Summary Report
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OFFICIAL

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Context

As the international community seeks to understand how best to combat violent extremism, this conference was designed to explore the idea that a key part of the answer is to build open, equitable, inclusive and plural societies in which fundamental rights are respected, including freedom of religion or belief (FoRB), freedom of expression and freedom of association.

It took as its starting point the idea that where people are free to follow their chosen religion or belief, to share it with others and to worship in the company of others, then extremist ideologies are seen in sharp relief as dangerous, anti-social counter-currents to the public good. Conversely, where governments and societies promote or condone discrimination on the basis of religion or belief they create fertile ground which violent extremists can exploit. This can include the development of deep-seated prejudice within society which sets individuals and groups against each other.

The conference brought together a wide range of individuals (expert and non-expert) from different spheres (government, parliamentarians, media, lawyers, business executives, NGOs) working either on freedom of religion or belief or on countering violent extremism to share best practice ideas and identify opportunities for working together in pursuit of solutions. It aimed to inspire and equip participants with new ideas to extend and defend the right to freedom of religion or belief and to build resilience against extremism.

Key Messages from our Speakers

- > Promoting the need to value everyone, regardless of their religion or belief, through education has to be a key priority. It is a huge target for extremists' attacks because they recognise its importance. We must teach children critical thinking skills and the ability to challenge.
- > Religious leaders occupy a unique position in society that can be pivotal. They set the parameters of acceptable behaviour for many. If we try to effect societal change without involving them we are excluding a key catalyst for change.
- > The path to radicalisation is enormously varied, so context-specific responses are required.
- > We could do more to raise awareness of traditions of religious freedom (such as the Charter of Medina, Cylinder of Cyrus and Edict of Milan) to dispel the idea that freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) is a modern, Western, concept.
- > Thought should be given to how to advance a "religion-friendly" form of FoRB rather than seeing it as a purely secular human right.
- > We need to communicate FoRB in such a way that people do not see it as an attack on their beliefs.
- > It helps to find ways of reducing the temperature and volume of discussions about FoRB – for example through focusing on international legal norms, or talking about the issues from the perspective of "the rule of law".
- > To get to the roots of intolerance we need to bring people to a place where there is dissonance/friction in order to prompt conceptual change.
- > We need to adopt a more preventative approach, like that followed by the UN's Sub-Committee on the Prevention of Torture (SPT) to create space for dialogue around FoRB and build an ongoing relationship with the relevant authorities, rather than rely on one-off interventions around specific cases.
- > The international community could devote more attention to working on the action points in UN Resolution 16/18 (on combating religious intolerance), and on implementing the Rabat Plan of Action (on the intersection between FoRB and freedom of expression).

- > To be meaningful, interfaith dialogue must tackle difficult traditions and issues. It must also be based on a clear analysis of what change will be delivered as a result. To be effective, the process must begin long before the actual meetings. It should look to involve more than just the “usual suspects” and be action-oriented.
- > Religious education should teach about “the other” – about the beliefs of other religious traditions, but also about how to respond respectfully to followers of other religions or beliefs. This means not simply “tolerating” the other, but respecting, honouring and forgiving them.
- > Young people need to be start of the solution from the start, given ownership and involved throughout in a meaningful way.
- > National Action Plans on preventing violent extremism should include work on education and the concept of “the other” as set out above. Kenya’s experience demonstrated the value of ensuring National Action Plans are launched at Head of Government or Head of State level to ensure they are embraced by social, political and cultural spheres.
- > Faith-based NGOs can be more effective than purely secular NGOs in delivering aid in deeply religious societies as both aid provider and recipient have the language of faith in common.
- > Faith-based organisations should lobby for FoRB for all, ideally in conjunction with others. This will increase their impact as it will help to avoid them from being seen merely as a lobby group for their own particular interests.
- > Likewise, lobbying on individual cases of persecution, or for visits of the UN Special Rapporteur, is more effective if done by a group of countries. The international community should consider which countries are likely to have the most influence in a given situation.
- > We should make more use of the Universal Periodic Review system – ensuring that recommendations are as precise as possible and encouraging states to have discussions with civil society groups beforehand.
- > In lobbying for the abolition of blasphemy laws we should look for arguments in Islamic texts. Charges in individual cases should not be brought by the local police, who are often under pressure from certain elements in the local community, but by an arms-length body.

Key Quotes

- *“Blasphemy laws cut off the theological oxygen that could energise the debate around moderate Islam”* - Tom Farr, Berkley Center, Georgetown University
- *“If you don’t understand religion, including the abuse of religion, you don’t understand the world”*- Lyse Doucet, quoted by Lord Alton
- *“The great foreign policy challenge is how to amplify moderate voices without delegitimizing them”* – David Saperstein, US Ambassador for International Religious Freedom
- *“Most societies are infused with a religious framework, so saying religion is just one force among others simply doesn’t work”* – Sarah Snyder, Archbishop of Canterbury’s Advisor for Reconciliation
- *“Western governments come with their research and tell us what we should do. When it goes wrong, they say the Africans don’t know how to do it.”* – Archbishop Ben Kwashi, Nigeria
- *“We need religion to cure religion”* – Shaykh Abdullah Bin Bayyah
- *“Religion is a type of energy. Like nuclear power it can be a positive or a negative force. We need to distinguish between the two types”* – Shaykh Abdullah Bin Bayyah
- *“The leadership of faith-based organisations in a large measure brought peace in Northern Ireland”* – Virginia McVea, Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
- *“Religion is a unifier, a divider, a problem and a solution.”* – Ed Kessler, Woolf Institute
- *“Religious illiteracy fuels conflict and antagonism.”* – Ed Kessler, Woolf Institute

Conference Summary

Why Open, Equitable, Inclusive and Plural Societies help guard against extremism

The conference began with high level context-setting presentations. The UK government's Minister for Human Rights, the Right Honourable Baroness Anelay, opened the event by setting out the idea behind it and underlining Britain's unshakeable commitment to the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of religion or belief. After a video message of support from the Commonwealth Secretary General, Rt Hon Baroness Scotland, the conference then heard from Helen Berhane, a gospel singer who had been imprisoned in a shipping container in Eritrea for almost two years for sharing her faith. Helen's impassioned presentation reminded her listeners of the grim reality of persecution.

Why Freedom of Religion or Belief is Particularly Relevant

Tom Farr, Director of the Religious Freedom Project at Georgetown University's Berkley Center set out the particular value of freedom of religion or belief. He pointed out that a religiously-literate approach to the issue is more likely to resonate with socially conservative societies, and that a purely secular answer to extremism will inevitably be inadequate. Lord David Alton called for the bringing to justice of those who have carried out atrocities in the name of religion and spoke of the need for a persuasive new narrative for the internet. Andrew Copson of the British Humanist Association explained how the right to freedom of belief protects the rights of those with a secular or humanistic belief too. If we champion religious freedom alone, that can sometimes amount to seeking additional rights and privileges for one group in society. David Saperstein, US Ambassador for International Religious Freedom, suggested that the relationship between freedom of religion or belief and combating violent extremism was absolutely key. The biggest current foreign policy challenge for governments was to amplify moderate religious voices without disempowering them.

How can Open and Plural Societies help in Peace-building? Why do we see Extremist Groups emerge in Failed States?

Raffaello Pantucci of the Royal United Services Institute explained how there is no one single cause of radicalisation, that drivers are context-specific and so there can be no single answer to the question of how to combat it. The role of religion in radicalisation varies according to context. But open and accountable government helps to give people a stake in their own communities. Sarah Snyder, the Archbishop of Canterbury's Director of Reconciliation, took a different view. She and colleagues assessed that most societies are infused with a religious framework, so it simply didn't work to say that religion is just one force among others. Religious leaders can also be a pivotal influence on opinion in their societies as they set the parameters of

acceptable behaviour for their congregations. If we try to affect societal change without them we are excluding a key catalyst for change. Ben Kwashi, Archbishop of Jos, Nigeria, echoed this view. It was vital for faith leaders to come together to solve problems governments couldn't solve. More attention should be paid to young people, who were in critical need of positive narratives. The role of the media, who often fuel conflict, was also crucial. And it was important to let local partners lead. Too often donors had come to Africa with pre-packaged solutions and then blamed their local implementers when they didn't work.

How are Open and Equitable Societies better economically?

Brian Grim of the Religious Freedom and Business Foundation opened this panel by explaining the value of working with business to create demand for more open and plural societies. His research into the value of faith to the US economy had been shared 17,000 times on social media, demonstrating the impact that an economic focus can have. The Chinese state news agency had reported on his Foundation's Global Business and Peace Awards because one winner had targeted the China market. He described his work to develop a corporate diversity index for faith, and to get businesses mentoring young people. Philip Booth of St Mary's University, Twickenham, noted that business was a powerful force bringing people together and could help promote harmony. Farad Azima of CentroMed Group noted that religion, by its very nature, is in some senses divisive, as a strong belief in one truth excludes all others. Kamran Malik from Ernst & Young highlighted how his company's clients were increasingly focusing on inclusivity, which meant ensuring that their staff were comfortable bringing their whole selves, including their religion, to work. Investing in religious literacy in organisations paid dividends in terms of staff well-being, but also because religiously literate staff can help bridge the gap between cultures. True religious literacy means moving from tolerance of other religions, through acceptance, to respect. Senior leaders needed to promote custodial care and ensure that no group felt excluded.

Putting ideas into Action: What can we do about it? What tools are available? Who can we work with?

Working with Faith Leaders

Shaykh Abdallah Bin Bayyah of the Forum for Promoting Peace explained that his organisation, which had been the driving force behind the Marrakech Declaration on minorities in Muslim societies, sought to use the power of religion to cure religion. Religion was a powerful force which could be used for either good or evil. The only way forward was a proper understanding of religion – using religious texts to refute misguided interpretations. Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali of the Oxford Centre for Training, Research, Advocacy and Dialogue demonstrated that freedom of religion or belief is not a new concept, but is grounded in key historical texts such as the Cylinder of Cyrus, the Pillars of Ashoka and the Constitution of Medina. It was important to raise awareness of these traditions. Interfaith

dialogue was a useful tool, but needed to tackle difficult issues. There needed to be greater respect for freedom of conscience, especially in the workplace. Yusuf Al-Khoei of the Al-Khoei Foundation stressed the role faith leaders have to play in building real links with people of other faiths by working together on practical projects. It was important to break down psychological barriers. Bishop Angaelos of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the UK commented that the world no longer allowed religious leaders, governments and NGOs to function in silos. We needed to work together. But if tolerance was our benchmark, it was no wonder we fell short of our goal. We needed to promote true acceptance, and equal citizenship for all, rather than a special (but still lesser) status for religious minorities. Speaking of ideals was a powerful way of building unity rather than tribalism. And if all faith groups spoke together the message was more powerful.

Working with Parliamentarians and International Parliamentary Networks

Gavin Shuker MP, Co-Chair of the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group for International Religious Freedom or Belief, described the valuable role that parliamentarians can play, working together to raise awareness of violations of the right to freedom of religion or belief, and the tools available for them to do this. He called for different faith groups to work together, as well as groups representing the non-religious, as this demonstrates the value of freedom of religion or belief not just for one group but for society as a whole. Baroness Elizabeth Berridge, representing the International Panel of Parliamentarians on FoRB, explained how the network had grown rapidly from small beginnings to the point where nearly 100 parliamentarians had attended a recent capacity-building training course in Berlin. The group existed to provide a powerful international voice in support of FoRB, through joint letters, lobbying and solidarity visits to support colleagues in societies where the right to freedom of religion or belief is under threat. Luke Waggoner of the International Republican Institute described the work that IRI does to assess local drivers of extremism and to share them with members of parliament to help guide their crafting of policy and their development of messages that seek to shift societal dynamics in such a way that the avenues of VE are devoid of incentive. It is working in places like Tunisia, Tanzania, and Burma. Mervyn Thomas of Christian Solidarity Worldwide explained the value to an advocacy organisation of working with parliamentarians. If an issue was raised in parliament in the UK it would appear on live television, and might well receive publicity on other channels too. International networks were extremely effective as one country's voice might carry more weight in a particular situation than another's. Lisa Pearce of Open Doors described how her organisation galvanises public support to raise awareness of the persecution of Christians. People from over 55 countries had signed a recent petition in support of Christians in the Middle East. They brought the authentic voices of people suffering for their faith into the campaigns championed by parliamentarians.

Working through the Commonwealth

Josephine Ojiambo, Deputy Secretary General of the Commonwealth, spoke of the way that the Commonwealth is working to build capacity in its member countries, and bridging the walls between freedom of religion or belief and countering extremism. Harriet Hoffer of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Initiative explained the work being undertaken to provide training, resources and events to build the capacity of Commonwealth parliamentarians to lobby on FoRB. They were currently mapping how FoRB is being raised in parliaments, and

working to set up a Commission of Experts and Regional Centres of Excellence to support parliamentarians. Virginia McVea, Chair of the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions described the role of National Independent Human Rights Institutions in advising their governments on their obligations under the treaties they have ratified. All NIHRIs should be encouraging the implementation of the UN Secretary General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. Embassies might encourage them to put this in their business plans. NIHRIs should also make sure the voice of faith-based organisations is heard.

Implementing the UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action on Preventing Violent Extremism

Mona Rishmawi of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights stressed the importance of putting young people right at the centre of any response to extremism as young people often only listen to what their peers tell them. She stressed the need to focus on changing behaviour, not belief, and the importance of investing more widely in the communities where we are working as it is impossible to prevent extremism without fully understanding the drivers. Martin Kimani, Kenya's Special Representative for Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE), noted that Kenya's newly-agreed PVE Action Plan specifically focuses on religious freedom. He described how its launch had deliberately been delayed in order to ensure it would be launched by the President, which would get it into the social, political and cultural spheres. Khalid Koser of the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) described how this new global fund is working to support small community-level projects to counter violent extremism in a number of pilot countries. The GCERF had added value by encouraging a multi-sectoral approach to countering extremism, and by operating at local level rather than regional level.

Interfaith Relations – What Works?

Sebastian Shaw, Archbishop of Lahore (Pakistan) set out the importance of interfaith work, particularly when one section of society is under attack, as had happened in Lahore last Easter. Josh Cass of the Three Faiths Forum noted that, to be successful, interfaith dialogue had to be an active process. It involved deeply attentive listening, and needed to be part of a process that began long before the actual meetings. Skills development and a focus on action were important factors. The most successful inter-faith dialogues involved getting to a place where the participants could engage on difficult questions. Ed Kessler of the Woolf Institute added that successful interfaith work needs intentionality, sensitivity and nuance. He pointed out the importance of working through diaspora communities, for example the Russian diaspora in the UK.

Working through the UN

Ahmed Shaheed, UN Special Rapporteur (designate) on FoRB, explained how the mandate of Special Rapporteur functioned. He pointed out that lobbying a country to issue an invitation to the Special Rapporteur to visit was most effective if done by a group of countries. It was often better to focus on individual cases rather than wider issues, as governments were more likely to seek to resolve the former. He called on the NGO community to engage with the Special Rapporteur's mandate and support his work.

Professor Sir Malcolm Evans of Bristol University suggested that it might be useful to establish a preventative approach to FoRB, on the model of the UN's Sub-Committee on the Prevention of Torture (SPT), which can visit any country where individuals are deemed to be at risk of torture without the need for an invitation from the government concerned. This mechanism is less condemnatory than responding to violations and creates space for dialogue. It creates an ongoing contact to discuss issues with the authorities in a given country. Elizabeth O'Casey of the International Humanist and Ethical Union talked about the valuable role freedom of expression played as a component of FoRB. She drew attention to the Rabat Plan of Action, which covers the intersection between the two rights, and encouraged practical action to deliver the action points in UN Resolution 16/18 and its successor resolutions. Diane Ala'i of the Bahai International Office in Geneva stressed the importance of all faith groups working together to promote FoRB. She focussed on the valuable role the Universal Periodic Review can play in holding states to account for their performance on human rights. It was helpful to encourage states to consult civil society, including faith groups, in the run up to their review. All recommendations should be as precise as possible.

The Role of Education

Professor Cole Durham of Brigham Young University noted that it was important to communicate FoRB in a way that others did not see as an attack on their beliefs. So concrete narratives were more effective than abstract appeals. It was important to consider peer groups as most so-called "lone wolves" did not act completely alone. Tina Ramirez of Hardwired Global shared the programme that her organisation has been implementing to give indigenous leaders the tools to advance human dignity. They had discovered the importance of getting people to a place where there is dissonance or friction, and the realisation that others have suffered too. This helps aid conceptual change. She noted that the Yazidi community in northern Iraq helped illustrate the consequences of eliminating a minority community from society by planting a garden of flowers and then removing all the flowers of a single colour. Milo Comerford of the Centre for Religion and Geopolitics pointed out that the importance of education is evidenced by the fact that it is a huge target for extremists' attacks. His Centre's research demonstrated that jihadis are often well educated and that there is no demonstrable link between poverty and extremism. Many have however studied subjects that involve a high degree of rote learning and which do not teach critical thinking skills, or the ability to challenge. It was important to inspire the reform of curricula and teacher training to teach these skills, along with the ability to deal with nuance and subjectivity. Sheelagh Stewart and Amina El-Abed of the British Council spoke about the work they had done to help students develop skills such as listening to others and valuing their views. They assessed that resilience is a product of confidence, adaptability, purposefulness, comfort with difference and building a social support network – all of which are skills that can be learnt. They shared lessons from a programme "We are Tunisian" to build national pride among young Tunisians.

Working with the Legal Profession

Nazila Ghanea of Oxford University explained the legal framework that surrounds the right to freedom of religion or belief. Brett Scharffs of Brigham Young University described the way that his university has been running courses on religion and the rule of law in various

countries in South East Asia and Africa. The courses have a strong academic character and include relevant experts from a range of countries. This enables them to focus on the law and on practical issues such as regulation and problem-solving and so reduce the temperature of the debate around religion.

Working with Youth

Ian Jamison of the Tony Blair Faith Foundation shared the lessons of the Generation Global programme, which has helped young people to get to know “the other”, which in some cases may be the person sitting next to them. Students learn skills which they then practice through video conferences, and in a safe, moderated online space. Huda Nassar of the Awareness Foundation talked about her Foundation’s programme to empower Christians as Ambassadors for Peace and a counter-force to intolerance. In 2017 this programme will be expanded to train young Christians and Muslims together. Kelsey Bjornsgaard of the Institute for Strategic Dialogue described the YouthCAN global network of young grassroots activists. The Institute support the network through capacity building by means of online toolkits and offline youth innovation workshops to develop online content targeted at specific audiences. The key to success is to involve young people in a meaningful way; to give them ownership and to ensure follow up.

Regional Panels

The conference ended with four regional panels tasked with developing recommendations for action in each region. These are included in the overall list of recommendations on page 16-18.

Middle East/North Africa

A key issue in the MENA region is the treatment of minority religions. There is a need for religious minorities to be accorded the same rights as the remainder of the population. The panel noted that education is a vital tool to ensure that children understand the need to respect everyone equally, regardless of their religion. There is also a need for legal systems not to discriminate against individuals on the basis of their religion. It was noted that solutions need to be found in Islamic religious traditions, not imposed from the outside.

Sub-Saharan Africa

The panellists identified an inconsistency between the constitution and criminal laws in many countries. They commented that co-ordinated action is key to achieving change. Different faith communities need to rebuild trust, for example by inviting other communities to services and meals. Advocacy training and mentoring is needed for human rights defenders, as is wider training in citizenship/civic awareness. Judges and prosecutors also need training. Programmes need to be adapted to suit the communities they seek to target.

South Asia

The panellists noted the need to find Islamic arguments against blasphemy laws, and to be aware of the Hindu nationalist agenda. Biases in textbooks and teachers' methodologies also need to be corrected.

South East Asia

The panellists noted the important role social media can play in countering extremist messaging. They commented on the increase in religious-based ethno-nationalism in the region. Religious and political leaders should join forces to defend FoRB. In an entrepreneurial culture it was worth making the case that for economic growth to be sustainable a culture of non-discrimination was necessary. They noted that the Indonesian tradition of Islam was often a valuable counter-balance to more extremist traditions. They recommended supporting initiatives at grassroots level.

Key Case Studies shared at the Conference

The Religious Freedom and Business Foundation

(www.religiousfreedomandbusiness.org) have been working on a number of initiatives to encourage businesses to protect FoRB. Their most recent research initiative concluded that the value of faith to the US economy was over one trillion dollars. The Global Business and Peace Awards, awarded to a wide variety of companies from across the globe, have been extensively covered by the media in countries that normally do not cover religion-related issues (eg China). The Foundation is also developing a Corporate Diversity Index on faith – to measure whether employers allow their staff to bring their faith to work with them, and supporting a project to give young people life and career skills.

Ernst & Young (www.ey.com) are providing religious literacy training for their clients. They have found that there has been a much greater focus on inclusivity across all their clients in the last few years, and a greater desire to ensure that their staff are able to feel comfortable bringing their whole selves to work. They have also discovered that people who are religiously literate can help to bridge the gaps between cultures.

The UK All-Party Parliamentary Group on International Religious Freedom or Belief (www.freedomdeclared.org) brings together UK parliamentarians from all political parties to raise the profile of this issue in parliament and with the UK government. It also has links with a wide range of stakeholder organisations, representing a variety of different faiths and beliefs, and has offered a forum for joint action between different faith groups.

The International Panel of Parliamentarians on FoRB (IPPFoRB) (www.ippforb.com) brings together parliamentarians from across the globe with an interest in FoRB. It is not an organisation, but a network, so its members do not speak on behalf of each other. Its members have however issued joint advocacy letters, and carried out a solidarity visit to Burma. A letter to the government of Sudan was read out at the trial of some pastors imprisoned for their faith and helped secure their release. It is now supporting capacity-building for parliamentarians, around 100 of whom attended a recent training course in Berlin. It is working to galvanise the setting up of national APPGs on FoRB.

The International Republican Institute (IRI) (www.iri.org) are working with parliamentarians in 25 different countries on preventing violent extremism. They have conducted hundreds of opinion surveys. They have worked with parliamentarians in places such as Tunisia, Bosnia, Burma and Tanzania.

The Commonwealth Initiative on FoRB (www.CiFoRB.org) empowers Commonwealth parliamentarians to protect and promote FoRB through research, education and advocacy. They are currently conducting research into how FoRB is being raised in Commonwealth parliaments and holding focus groups with parliamentarians. They plan to move to regional centres of excellence.

National Human Rights Institutions (eg the Equality and Human Rights Commission in the UK) exist in many countries across the world. Their role is to advise governments on their obligations under the treaties they have ratified.

Hardwired Global (www.hardwiredglobal.org) have been training key civil society leaders to understand and speak up about the concept of FoRB. They have also been working with teachers in the MENA region to introduce this concept in secondary school classrooms through developing lesson plans.

The Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) (www.gcerf.org) is a global fund, based in Geneva, which is supporting small community-based projects to build resilience against violent extremism. It has proved an effective catalyst in encouraging a multi-sector approach in the countries/regions in which it is working (Bangladesh, Burma, Mali, Kenya, Kosovo and Nigeria) and has helped to make those countries international actors in this area.

During the conference we shared our updated Freedom of Religion or Belief Toolkit. This can be found online at the following link:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/561516/Freedom_of_Religion_or_Belief_Toolkit_-_2016.pdf

Action Points & Recommendations

For All

- While both FoRB and CVE are valuable in their own right, look for networking opportunities to bring together FoRB and CVE activities, so as to avoid stove piping and to create synergies and mutually reinforcing lines of effort.
- Consider funding research to test the extent to which countries with a high degree of religious freedom are more resilient against extremism, and to evidence the benefits of a religiously literate society and workforce;
- Invest more resource in marking International Religious Freedom Day each year to give a big annual push to FoRB as an issue;
- Support the International Panel of Parliamentarians on FoRB by suggesting additional parliamentarians to join the network;
- Design and support projects that target youth – teaching about valuing others, regardless of their religion or belief and helping them develop the critical thinking skills to reject extremist ideologies.
- Consider how to work with diaspora communities to effect change in their countries of origin.

For Governments

- Ensure that monitoring the implementation by their national government of the UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism is in the business plan of every National Human Rights Institution.
- To combat extremism and support cultures of tolerance, support programmes (textbook revisions, curricula review, teacher training) to ensure that students are taught to value and respect those from other religious backgrounds.
- Look for ways to support parliamentary engagement on FoRB issues, such as by facilitating the engagement of elected leaders in countries of concern, as well as by resourcing the setting up of a small secretariat to support the International Panel of Parliamentarians on FoRB;
- Support, through grants and other mechanisms, capacity-building initiatives for government leaders and parliamentarians in developing countries on ways to advance FoRB and to network internationally;

- Explore working more closely with faith leaders in projects to deliver societal change;
- Support countries to ensure that the provisions of their constitutions on FoRB translate into the legal framework. Consider training for judges and prosecutors.
- Support the capacity of civil society, build the capacity of justice systems and promote the protection of human rights defenders.
- Support media training programmes to ensure that inflammatory reporting does not exacerbate tensions between communities.
- Advocate for legal reform to promote equal citizenship, as well as encourage the removal of discriminatory laws and policies, such as blasphemy and apostasy laws, and the requirement to declare one's religion on ID cards.
- Encourage countries with problematic FoRB policies to welcome a visit by the UN Special Rapporteur on FoRB, or, if a member of the OSCE, seek technical assistance from OSCE/ODHIR and its Panel of Experts on FoRB;
- Support programmes to build the capacity of local lawyers and assist them with case selection and practical support.
- Ensure that programmes are suitably adapted for the society they target, and fully owned by local partners.
- Promote greater religious literacy among your own government's employees.

For OSCE/ODIHR

- Continue work on the link between FoRB and security and look for opportunities of sharing this perspective more widely with others;

For members of the International Contact Group on FoRB

- Governments continue to support the International Contact Group on FoRB by attending biannual meetings with appropriate officials from capital;
- Governments consider joint trips to countries of concern, as well as coordinated demarches to highlight violations of FoRB and coordination at international meetings;

- Continue to work to expand the Contact Group to include additional countries who fully support Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

For Civil Society

- Support other faith groups, and advocate on their behalf in conjunction with other organisations, when they experience difficulties. If we speak for each other, we are more powerful.
- Consider practical programmes to build trust between communities (eg joint community projects and sharing meals).
- Ensure work on Preventing Violent Extremism is co-ordinated with others to reduce duplication of work.
- Consider mentoring human rights defenders in countries where civil society is still developing.

For Parliamentarians

- If vested with budgetary powers in their system, consider providing resources for the issuance of grants to NGOs for the advocacy of FoRB abroad;
- Look for ways to engage problematic governments about FoRB violations through letters, parliamentary statements, and country visits - alone or with parliamentarians from other countries;
- In this vein, consider how they can add authenticity to their voices in support of FoRB issues by travelling with NGOs to visit affected countries.