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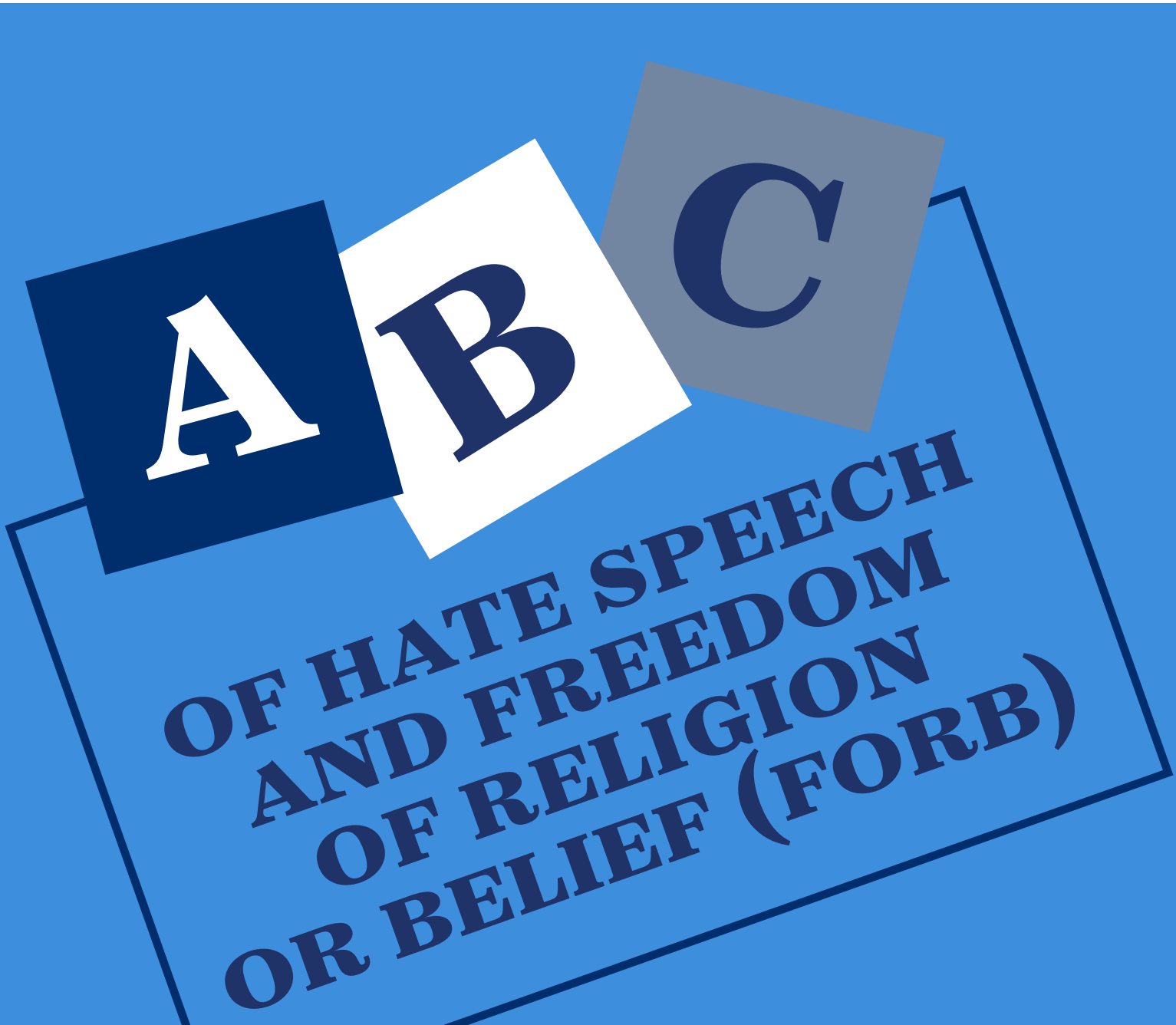

A B C

of Hate Speech and Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB)

Editor:
Emina Frljak

Editorial team:
Azra Mustafić
Lejla Hasandedić-Đapo

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PREFACE

Emina Frljak
Project Coordinator
Youth for Peace

In a world marked by growing diversity and interconnectedness, the principles of freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) stand as cornerstones for human dignity and democratic society. FoRB is not only a fundamental right enshrined in international law but also a vital component for fostering peaceful coexistence in increasingly pluralistic communities. Yet, it is often challenged by rising incidents of hate speech - both online and offline—which target individuals and groups based on their religious identities.

This publication seeks to explore the delicate balance between safeguarding freedom of religion or belief and addressing the damaging effects of hate speech. Our goal is to spark dialogue, provide clarity on the complexities of these issues, and inspire action toward building societies where diversity of belief is respected and protected, free from the threats posed by hate speech. In doing so, we hope to contribute to ongoing efforts that strive for a more just, peaceful, and inclusive world.

The grassroots initiative known as the “ABC of Hate Speech and Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB)” offers key concepts and practical examples of initiatives that promote education for dialogue, freedom of religion or belief and countering hate speech. Presented in a simple and accessible way, this guide is an essential resource for anyone looking to understand the fundamentals of FoRB and hate speech.

INTRODUCTION

Azra Mustafić
Lejla Hasandedić-Đapo

The ABC of Hate Speech and Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) is a timely and essential initiative for Europe and beyond. The key concepts presented here serve to enhance understanding of FoRB and hate speech while promoting peace, social cohesion, and inclusiveness. This publication also acts as an entry point for those seeking foundational knowledge in the field of FoRB and addressing hate speech.

Divided into five main sections—terminology, observances, significant documents, influential (historical) figures and workshops—this book offers a comprehensive overview. Readers are encouraged to explore different terminology related to FoRB and hate speech, as well as important figures who contributed to developing this field of work.

In the same way, readers are invited to delve into the various (inter)national observances, and documents that have shaped the field of FoRB and hate speech. An extensive bibliography accompanies this journey, offering further resources for those inspired to deepen their knowledge.

TERMINOLOGY

Abuse report

An abuse report is a formal notification made to an authority, organization, or service provider about an incident or pattern of harmful behavior, typically involving physical, emotional, sexual, or psychological maltreatment. The purpose of an abuse report is to alert the relevant entity to the abusive actions, ensuring that appropriate measures are taken to investigate and address the situation, protect the victims, and prevent further abuse. This process often involves detailed documentation of the incident(s), including information about the perpetrator, the victim, and any evidence or witnesses that can support the claim. Abuse reports can be made by victims, witnesses, or third parties who have credible information about the abuse. (Reporting Hate Speech - No Hate Speech Youth Campaign, n.d.).

Agnostic

An “agnostic” is someone who believes that the existence of God or ultimate reality is unknown, uncertain, or unknowable. Agnosticism is frequently defined by scepticism or a suspension of judgment toward religious or metaphysical claims, particularly those involving the existence of deities or supernatural beings. Agnostics typically refuse to believe in gods due to a lack of empirical evidence, logical proof, or compelling arguments for or against their existence. Agnosticism can take several forms, ranging from agnostic atheism (a lack of belief in gods due to insufficient evidence) to agnostic theism (a belief in gods despite uncertainty about their existence) (Flew, 2024). Agnostics may value scepticism, critical inquiry, and intellectual humility when analysing religious and philosophical topics, acknowledging the limitations of human knowledge and the complexities of metaphysical inquiries (Bowker, 2000).

Alternative narratives

Alternative narratives seek to undermine hate speech by creating an alternative altogether and stressing a different point of view. Alternative narratives are actions which aim to undercut hate speech narratives by focusing on what we are "for" rather than what we are "against". Alternative narratives may not challenge or refer to extremism directly, but instead attempt to influence political debates by proposing alternative proposals and ways of looking into social issues or problems, hence changing the frame of the discussion. Alternative narratives do not focus so much on the reaction to single events, but rather work to build an alternative mind-set to sustain the change they want to bring into society. In short alternative narratives are wide long-term projects aiming to create an alternative vision of society and offer a "what we are for" as a different perspective to look at the issue from (De Latour et al., 2017).

Apostasy

Apostasy is defined as the act of renouncing or abandoning one's religion. It can also be associated with the refusal to adopt or follow a given religion (generally within a territory controlled by that religion). The definition of an apostate is someone who performs this action, and the religion in question may have sanctions or punishments directed against that person (Cole, 2022).

Atheist

An "atheist" is someone who does not believe in the existence of gods or deities. Atheism is defined as the lack of belief in any divine or supernatural beings, and it is frequently characterized by scepticism, rationalism, or naturalism toward religious claims. Atheists typically reject theism and religious doctrines in favour of using empirical evidence, reason, and scientific inquiry to understand the world and answer existential questions. Atheism can take many forms, ranging from outright rejection of gods to a lack of belief in their existence. Some atheists actively deny the existence of gods (strong atheism), whereas others simply do not believe in gods due to a lack of evidence or compelling reasons to believe (weak or agnostic atheism) (Bowker, 2000).

Belief

Belief is a mental state where one accepts or agrees to a statement without having complete intellectual knowledge to support its truth. It can either be an intellectual judgment or a unique feeling that differs from disbelief, as per the ideas of David Hume (Cranston & Jessop, 2024), an 18th-century Scottish sceptic. Belief is a cognitive state in which someone believes something to be true or accepts the existence or validity of a proposition, idea, or concept, often in the absence of direct empirical evidence. Beliefs can include religious, philosophical, ideological, or personal convictions, and they have an impact on attitudes, behaviours, and decision-making processes (Britannica, 2024).

Blasphemy

In the most general sense blasphemy is an offense, in word, symbol, or action, against the sacred. The sacred may be the deity, a person, an object, or a doctrine. Blasphemy is usually associated with monotheistic religions—religions that recognize and worship one God. The offense can also occur in polytheistic religions—religions with more than one God. It is often the case, however, that polytheistic religions would use "sacrilege" to connote similar concepts (Blasphemy | Encyclopedia.com, n.d.).

Conscientious Objection

Conscientious objection is the act of refusing to obey a particular order or rule or to do a particular type of work for moral or religious reasons (Conscientious Objection, 2024). A conscientious objector feels duty bound to act according to deeply held religious or philosophical beliefs. Religious conscientious objectors, for example, might interpret the commandment "Thou shall not kill" as the divine injunction against killing any human beings (Takemura, 2022).

Conversion

Religious conversion is a process that entails a change in religious affiliation, worldview, and identity. In turn, the conversion process dialectically establishes (and often changes) the very entities to which and from which people convert. It involves a new religious identity, or a change from one religious' identity to another. Conversion requires internalization of the new belief system. There are different types of religion conversion which include: active conversion which is the free agency, volitional choice to acquire new beliefs and religious identity, marital conversion, secondary conversion, deathbed conversion, and forced conversion (Gooren, 2016).

Counter-narratives

Counter-narratives confront another narrative in a rather direct way by referring to it and offering counterarguments and facts. Counter-narratives are used to directly deconstruct, discredit and demystify violent extremist messages. They are useful as an instrument to block or challenge concrete expressions of hate. The main objective of short-term counter-narratives is to occupy public spaces, either online, such as producing memes mocking hateful content, or offline by expressions of "love speech", including the subversion of hate speech on graffiti walls. In short, counter-narratives are directly confronting an oppressive narrative to undermine authority and myths that oppression relies on. They are usually small-scale and last for a shorter period (De Latour et al., 2017).

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is bullying with the use of digital technologies. It can take place on social media, messaging platforms, gaming platforms and mobile phones. It is repeated behaviour, aimed at scaring, angering or shaming those who are targeted. Examples include spreading lies about or posting embarrassing photos or videos of someone on social media, sending hurtful, abusive or threatening messages, images or videos via messaging platforms and impersonating someone and sending mean messages to others on their behalf or through fake accounts (Cyberbullying: What Is It and How to Stop It, 2024).

Discrimination

Discrimination is the process of making unfair or prejudicial distinctions between people based on the groups, classes, or other categories to which they belong or are perceived to belong, such as race, gender, age, religion, physical attractiveness or sexual orientation (Discrimination - Amnesty International, 2023). Different forms of the discrimination include racial and ethnic discrimination, discrimination against non-nationals, sometimes known as xenophobia, discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people, gender discrimination, discrimination based on caste, discrimination based on disability and so on.

Excommunication

Excommunication is a form of ecclesiastical censure by which a person is excluded from the communion of believers, the rites or sacraments of a church, and the rights of church membership but not necessarily from membership in the church as such. Some method of exclusion belongs to the administration of all Christian churches and denominations, indeed of all religious communities (Britannica, 2024).

Faith

Based on Merriam-Webster Dictionary, faith is defined as "strong belief or trust in someone or something, like belief in the existence of God" (Faith, 2024), while the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy describes faith in its most general form as "trust" and more specifically as a "belief, trust, or confidence, not in a person, but in a proposition or body of propositions, such as religious doctrines" (Bishop, 2010). The Oxford English Dictionary defines faith as "strong belief in the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual conviction rather than proof" (Faith, 2024).

Freedom of expression

Freedom of expression includes the right to speak, to be heard, and to participate in political, artistic, and social life. It also includes the 'right to know': the right to seek, receive, and share information through any media. Freedom of expression is fundamental to political dissent, diverse cultural expression, creativity, and innovation, as well as the development of one's personality through self-expression. Freedom of expression is a foundational right, meaning it is essential for the enjoyment and protection of all human rights. While the right to freedom of expression is fundamental, it is not absolute. This means it can be limited in exceptional circumstances (What Is Freedom of Expression? - ARTICLE 19, 2023).

Freedom of religion or belief

Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) is a human right which has been guaranteed under international law within the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) since 1966. Article 18 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, states that 'everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion'. FoRB is not just the freedom to hold personal thoughts and convictions, but also being able to express them individually or with others, publicly or in private. It includes the freedom to:

- subscribe to different schools of thought within a religion
- change one's religion or beliefs, including to leave or abandon religions
- hold non-religious beliefs.

No-one should experience discrimination for exercising their right to freedom of religion or belief. This right prohibits the use of coercion to make someone hold or change their religion or belief. It also protects a person from being required to state an affiliation with any particular religion or belief. As with all human rights, FoRB belongs to people, whether alone or as members of a group, and not to the religion or belief itself. This means that it does not protect religions, or religious figures, from criticism. (Freedom of Religion or Belief: Understanding This Human Right, 2022).

Genocide

Genocide is an internationally recognized crime where acts are committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group. These acts fall into five categories: killing members of the group, causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group, deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part, imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group and forcibly transferring children of the group to another group (What Is Genocide? - United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n.d.).

Hate crime

Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person to, in whole or in part, be motivated by hostility or prejudice, based on actual or perceived age, disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or gender (What Is Hate Crime, n.d.).

Hate speech

Hate speech shall be understood as any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factor (United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, 2019).

Heresy

Heresy, theological doctrine or system rejected as false by ecclesiastical authority. The Greek word hairesis (from which heresy is derived) was originally a neutral term that signified merely the holding of a particular set of philosophical opinions. Once appropriated by Christianity, however, the term heresy began to convey a note of disapproval (Britannica, 2024).

Human rights

Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination. International human rights law lays down the obligations of Governments to act in certain ways or to refrain from certain acts, in order to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals or groups (Human Rights | United Nations, n.d.).

Incitement (to hatred)

The offence of incitement to hatred occurs when someone acts in a way that is threatening and intended to stir up hatred. That could be in words, pictures, videos, music, and includes information posted on websites. Hate content may include:

- messages calling for violence against a specific person or group;
- web pages that show pictures, videos or descriptions of violence against anyone due to their perceived differences;
- chat forums where people ask other people to commit hate crimes against a specific person or group (Incitement to Hatred, Violence or Discrimination, 2020).

Media literacy

Media literacy is the ability to apply critical thinking skills to the messages, signs, and symbols transmitted through mass media. It enables people to understand and evaluate all of the media messages that they encounter on a daily basis, empowering them to make better choices about what they choose to read, watch, and listen to (Potter, 2013). Media literacy is seen as an essential 21st century skill by educators and scholars, including media psychologists. Despite this, many people still dismiss media as harmless entertainment and claim they aren't influenced by its messages. However, research findings consistently demonstrate that people are impacted by the media messages they consume (Dill-Shackleford, 2016).

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is a key UN agency dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights worldwide. Led by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the OHCHR monitors and reports on human rights violations, gathering information and documenting abuses. It also provides technical assistance to governments and civil society organizations to enhance human rights capacities. Through advocacy and public campaigns, the OHCHR raises awareness about human rights issues and promotes international standards. The OHCHR supports UN Special Procedures and contributes to the development of international human rights law. By collaborating with other UN agencies, governments, and civil society, the OHCHR addresses challenges and advances a comprehensive human rights agenda. (High Commissioner, n.d.).

Online harassment

Online harassment can be defined as the use of information and communication technologies by an individual or group to repeatedly cause harm to another person. This may involve threats, embarrassment, or humiliation in an online setting. This includes expressions of discriminatory attitudes and beliefs—such as sexism, racism, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia or ableist prejudices. It also includes online sexual harassment, cyberstalking, and image based sexual abuse or other unwanted online conduct of a sexual nature (What Is Online Harassment? - Durham University, n.d.).

Prejudices

The word "prejudice" has origins in Latin for "before" and "judgment." It describes unfavourable feelings toward individuals or groups based on preconceived notions of their ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, age, disability, religion and other characteristics. While every individual is distinct, prejudice lumps all members of a group or classification together. Most prevalent examples of prejudices include: racial prejudice, gender prejudice, homophobia and transphobia, xenophobia, classism, religious prejudice, ageism (Soken-Huberty, 2023).

Proselytism

Proselytism is the practice of attempting to convert people to another opinion and, particularly, another religion. The word proselytism comes from the Greek language prefix 'pros' (towards) and the verb 'erchomai' (I come). Though the word proselytism was originally used in Christianity, it is also used to refer to other religions' attempts to convert people to their beliefs or even any attempt to convert people to another point of view, religious or not. Today, the connotations of the word proselytism are often negative (Hirsch, 1998).

Protected characteristics

Protected characteristic is one of nine personal characteristics or situations that cannot be used as a reason to discriminate against someone, according to discrimination law. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, and sexual orientation (Protected Characteristic, 2024).

Racism

Racism is the process by which systems and policies, actions and attitudes create inequitable opportunities and outcomes for people based on race. Racism is more than just prejudice in thought or action. It occurs when this prejudice – whether individual or institutional – is accompanied by the power to discriminate against, oppress or limit the rights of others. Racism includes all the laws, policies, ideologies and barriers that prevent people from experiencing justice, dignity, and equity because of their racial identity. It can come in the form of harassment, abuse or humiliation, violence or intimidating behaviour. However, racism also exists in systems and institutions that operate in ways that lead to inequity and injustice (What Is Racism, n.d.).

Religion

The concept of religion is intricate and diverse, encompassing a wide array of beliefs, practices, rituals, and moral values. Generally, it centres around the worship of a divine or supernatural being or power and serves as a foundation for comprehending the significance and objectives of life. Additionally, religion can provide individuals and communities with ethical guidance and spiritual satisfaction, offering a sense of direction and purpose in their lives (Smith, 2000). Religion frequently encompasses structured practices of worship, communal assemblies, revered scriptures, and prescribed rituals intended to promote a sense of unity with the divine and enhance comprehension of the human experience (Grung, 2011).

Religiously-motivated violence

Religious violence refers to violent acts committed by either state or non-state actors and motivated by religious convictions, ideologies or belief systems. Religious violence is closely associated with radicalism and religious extremism and refers to acts ranging from inciting violence against particular religious groups, discrimination or segregating certain religious groups, persecution, genocide, random physical aggression, gang or mob violence and defaming or injuring verbal abuse or violence (Clarke, 2011).

Religious literacy

Religious literacy can be understood, among other definitions, also as "the ability to understand and use the basic building blocks of religious traditions – their terms, symbols, doctrines, practices, sayings, characters, metaphors, and narratives. Religious literacy can also have sub-divisions which include ritual literacy, confessional literacy and denominational literacy" (Aldridge, Biesta, Whittle, 2020).

Religious pluralism

Religious pluralism, understood as a broad category of philosophical and theological responses to religious diversity, aims to account for this diversity as a positive phenomenon and to articulate ways that religious differences can be celebrated and conflicts mitigated, explained, or at least reasonably discussed (Norton, n.d.).

Religious tolerance

Religious tolerance refers to the capability of individuals to honor the convictions and faith of others without displaying bias or discrimination. It entails the harmonious coexistence of people from diverse religious, belief, and cultural backgrounds. This concept serves as a crucial factor in fostering peaceful cohabitation and facilitating economic prosperity within a nation. The presence of religious tolerance is fundamental for nurturing a tranquil society where individuals can freely practice their religion without encountering prejudice (Adaleke, 2018). Mensching (1995) defines tolerance as granting individuals the formal freedom to choose and practice their beliefs without interference, implying that everyone should have reasonable freedom to pursue their religious convictions within a given system.

Secularism

The British social reformer George Jacob Holyoake (1817–1906) coined the word 'secularism' to describe non-religious approach to personal morals, philosophy, society and politics. A modern definition, provided by scholar Jean Baubérot, sees secularism as made up of three parts: separation of religious institutions from the institutions of the state and no domination of the political sphere by religious institutions; freedom of thought, conscience, and religion for all; and no state discrimination against anyone on the grounds of their religion or non-religious worldview (Copson, 2019).

Stereotypes

Stereotypes are a form of categorization which helps to simplify and streamline information so the information is easier to be identified, recalled, predicted, and reacted to. The most widely accepted conceptualization of stereotypes is that they are a way in which people form biased perceptions of their social contexts. From this perspective, it can be understood that people use stereotypes as shortcuts to make sense of their social and cultural environment, and this makes comprehending one's world less cognitively demanding (Shih, et. al, 2012). Stereotypes can be categorized into several types, such as racial, gender, age, occupational, and cultural. Stereotypes simplify complex human attributes and can lead to prejudiced attitudes and discrimination (Mcleod, 2023).

Theist

A "theist" is someone who believes in the existence of at least one God or divine being. Theism is the belief in the existence of a transcendent power or powers, commonly referred to as gods or one God, who created and governs the universe. Theism refers to a wide range of religious beliefs, such as monotheism (belief in a single God), polytheism (belief in multiple gods), and pantheism (Theist, 2024). Theists typically claim that their belief in a deity is founded on faith, personal experience, revelation, or philosophical reasoning. They may follow organized religions' teachings, scriptures, and rituals or have their own interpretations of divine existence and attributes (Lewis, 1999).

Trolls

Trolling, in the context of the web, is the act of responding to online content or comments in a purposely disruptive fashion, deliberately provoking an argument or emotional reaction. The name arose as a reference to the way that online trolls try to lure victims with comments in the same way that fishers use bait and specially crafted lures to catch fish. Another reference is to the mythological troll, a hideous creature that lurks in dark places waiting for prey. In some cases, they say things they don't even believe, just to cause drama. In other cases, they may not agree with the views of another person or group online, so they try to discredit, humiliate or punish them. Trolls often post under a fake name or anonymously, so they can say things without being held responsible. This can make them feel more powerful and less cautious than they would be if they were talking to someone in person. This makes it difficult to identify who actually left the post or comment (Wigmore, 2018).

United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief

The Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief is an independent expert appointed by the UN Human Rights Council. The mandate holder has been invited to identify existing and emerging obstacles to the enjoyment of the right to freedom of religion or belief and present recommendations on ways and means to overcome such obstacles. The Special Rapporteur has been mandated through Human Rights Council resolution 6/37 (About the Mandate, n.d.)

Vulnerable groups

The term vulnerable groups is often used interchangeably with the term disadvantaged groups. Which groups are considered vulnerable can change depending on the context. Some common examples of vulnerable groups in society include: elderly people, people with low incomes, uninsured people, homeless people, racial or ethnic minorities, people in prison, migrant workers, pregnant women, people in the LGBTQIA community, and children (Vulnerable Groups, 2024).

Xenophobia

Xenophobia is the fear or hatred of people who are perceived as being different from oneself. This can be based on a person's race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, or other distinguishing characteristics. Xenophobia and racism are similar as both has roots in discrimination, however xenophobia usually refers to a person's nationality and culture rather than exclusively their race or ethnicity (What Is Xenophobia? - University of Edinburgh, n.d.). Examples of xenophobia include making fun of someone's nationality or accent, excluding someone due to their nationality, spreading hateful messages about a culture, physically attacking someone because of their nationality, and not employing someone because they are foreign, even if qualified.

OBSERVANCES

National Religious Freedom Day (16th January)

National Religious Freedom Day is observed on January 16 to promote the message of peace and acceptance. The day is to highlight the fact that everyone has a right to their own religious beliefs (National Religious Freedom Day | Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, n.d.). The National Religious Freedom Day marks the anniversary of the signing of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom in 1786. Under the Virginia Statute authored by Thomas Jefferson, legislators for the first time endorsed the principles of freedom of conscience and separation of church and state. Several years later, the Virginia Statute became the template for the First Amendment to the United States Constitution (Honoring and Promoting Respect for Freedom of Religion or Belief Globally - United States Department of State, 2023). Since 1993, every U.S President has issued a proclamation on January 16 to commemorate National Religious Freedom and celebrate America's first freedom.

International Day of Human Fraternity (4th February)

The International Day of Human Fraternity observed on 4 February, is a way to promote harmony between all people regardless of their faith. It further recognized the imperative need for dialogue among different faiths and religions to enhance mutual understanding, harmony and cooperation among people. The resolution calls on making every effort so that interreligious dialogue and intercultural dialogue are promoted, as advocated in the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together signed in 2019 in Abu Dhabi by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad al-Tayyeb. The International Day of Human Fraternity highlights the principles and values of the Document on Human Fraternity, while exploring good practices towards its implementation as a pathway to building a more peaceful world (International Day of Human Fraternity, 2022).

International Day of Conscience (5th April)

The General Assembly of the United Nations adopted resolution 73/329 by which it proclaimed April 5th as the International Day of Conscience, as a means of mobilizing, on a regular basis, the efforts of the international community in favour of peace, tolerance, inclusion, understanding and solidarity, with a view to building a lasting world of peace, solidarity and harmony. This Resolution recognizes the need to create conditions of stability and well-being and peaceful and friendly relations based on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion. (International Day Of Conscience — International Days, n.d.)

International Day of Living Together in Peace (16th May)

The UN General-Assembly, in its resolution 72/130, declared 16 May the International Day of Living Together in Peace, as a means of regularly mobilizing the efforts of the international community to promote peace, tolerance, inclusion, understanding and solidarity. The Day aims to uphold the desire to live and act together, united in differences and diversity, in order to build a sustainable world of peace, solidarity and harmony. The Day invites countries to further promote reconciliation to help to ensure peace and sustainable development, including by working with communities, faith leaders and other relevant actors, through reconciliatory measures and acts of service and by encouraging forgiveness and compassion among individuals (United Nations, n.d.).

International Day for Countering Hate Speech (18th June)

In July 2021, the UN General Assembly highlighted global concerns over "the exponential spread and proliferation of hate speech" around the world and adopted a resolution on "promoting inter-religious and intercultural dialogue and tolerance in countering hate speech". The resolution recognizes the need to counter discrimination, xenophobia and hate speech and calls on all relevant actors, including States, to increase their efforts to address this phenomenon, in line with international human rights law. The resolution proclaimed 18 June as the International Day for Countering Hate Speech, building on the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech launched on 18 June 2019 (United Nations, n.d.).

International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief (22nd August)

On May 28, 2019, and on its seventy-third session, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted resolution A/RES/73/296 designating August 22 as an International Day commemorating the victim of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief (United Nations, n.d.). The resolution was adopted as a response to the increasing and uninterrupted acts of violence and acts of terror based on religions or belief against individuals belonging to religious communities and religious minorities. The resolution passed shortly after the attacks on mosques in New Zealand and churches in Sri Lanka. It passed with support from a handful of countries including the United States, Canada, Brazil, Iraq, Jordan, and Pakistan (National Day Calendar, 2024).

International Day of Peace (21st September)

The global observance of the International Day of Peace, commonly referred to as "Peace Day," occurs annually on September 21. Established in 1981 by a unanimous resolution of the United Nations, Peace Day serves as a collective opportunity for humanity to prioritize peace amidst diversity and strive towards cultivating a Culture of Peace. Initially celebrated on September 21, 1982, the first International Day of Peace represented a significant milestone in promoting peace and raising awareness about global peacekeeping efforts. However, it wasn't until 2001 that September 21 was officially designated as the date for Peace Day. Prior to that, it was observed on the opening day of the annual General Assembly, which typically fell on the third Tuesday of September (United Nations, n.d.).

International Religious Freedom Day (27th October)

In 1998, the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives passed the International Religious Freedom Act, which established the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. The Commission's task was to monitor the state of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief worldwide. The Commission's reports led the Senate, in 2003, to adopt a resolution declaring October 27, 2003, the fifth anniversary of the signing of the International Religious Freedom Act, as International Religious Freedom Day. The resolution cites several documents that proclaim religious freedom as a right for all people, including the " Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief," adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1981, and Article 18(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Melton, 2011).

International Day for Tolerance (16th November)

The United Nations observes the International Day for Tolerance annually on November 16, aiming to foster understanding and acceptance among individuals from diverse backgrounds and beliefs. It advocates for education about various cultures and perspectives to combat intolerance globally. Numerous organizations arrange events and discussions on this day, inviting activists and educators to impart knowledge about tolerance and the importance of embracing cultural diversity (UNESCO, n.d.).

International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime (9th December)

Every 9 December, the Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide marks the adoption of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide – a crucial global commitment that was made at the founding of the United Nations, immediately preceding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. By General Assembly Resolution A/RES/69/323 of 29 September 2015, that day also became the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime. The 1948 Genocide Convention codified for the first time the crime of genocide in international law. Its preamble recognizes that "at all periods of history genocide has inflicted great losses on humanity" and that international cooperation is required to "liberate humankind from such an odious scourge" (International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of This Crime | United Nations, n.d.)

Human Rights Day (10th December)

Human Rights Day is observed by the international community every year on 10 December. It commemorates the day in 1948 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The formal inception of Human Rights Day dates from 1950, after the Assembly passed resolution 423 (V) inviting all States and interested organizations to adopt 10 December of each year as Human Rights Day. When the General Assembly adopted the Declaration, it was proclaimed as a "common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations", towards which individuals and societies should "strive by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance". Although the Declaration is not a binding document, it inspired more than 60 human rights instruments which together constitute an international standard of human rights (Human Rights Day, n.d.).

IMPORTANT (HISTORICAL) FIGURES

Al-Tayyeb, Ahmed (Grand Imam of Al-Azhar)

Sheikh Dr. Ahmed Muhammad Al-Tayyeb is the Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar University. Sheikh Ahmed Muhammad Al-Tayyeb was appointed as Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar in March 2010, after the passing of his predecessor. His scholarly influence as a leading intellectual of Sunni Islam spans the globe. Al-Tayyeb has been active in trying to diffuse the influence of Da'ish (ISIS), organizing many initiatives and conferences. He has also tried to improve foreign relations and met with many foreign religious leaders and heads of states (including the Pope and the late Queen Elizabeth). Moreover, he is one of the signatories to the Declaration on Human Fraternity, alongside Pope Francis (Ahmed Muhammad Al-Tayyeb, 2024).

Ashoka (Emperor)

Emperor Ashoka, a much-celebrated ruler from the third century BCE who is often held up as an exemplar of Buddhist kingship. Toward the beginning of his reign, he waged a war of conquest, but was subsequently overcome by remorse for the destruction and death inflicted by this war. After witnessing the suffering that occurred during his invasion of the kingdom of Kalinga, Ashoka turned toward Buddhism and nonviolence. King Ashoka, after the Kalinga War (261 B.C.), proclaimed universal peace and respect for the rights of others in the following words: "His Sacred Majesty Ashoka desires that all living beings should have security of existence for which men should exercise self-control and not to take by force what others possess. All should enjoy peace of mind by co-existence and not by mutual interference and recrimination" (Vyas & Murarka, 2020). Ashoka had an interfaith agenda he pursued as seriously as Buddhism. He called for mutual respect among all, regardless of religion. He observed that harming someone else's religion harms your own (Singhal & Chaffee, 2016).

Cyrus the Great (King)

Cyrus II, also known as Cyrus the Great, was the fourth king of Anshan and the first king of the Achaemenid Empire. In 539 B.C., the armies of Cyrus the Great, the first king of ancient Persia, conquered the city of Babylon. But it was his next actions that marked a major advance for Man. He freed the slaves, declared that all people had the right to choose their own religion, and established racial equality (History of Natural Law & Basic Freedoms, Cyrus the Great: United for Human Rights, n.d.). The benevolent nature of Cyrus's reign took many forms. He placated the formerly powerful Medes by involving them in government. He adopted habits of dress and ornamentation from the Elamites. Across his conquered lands, he returned images of gods that had been seized in battle and hoarded in Babylon. Cyrus's most renowned act of mercy was to free the captive Jews, whom Nebuchadrezzar II had forced into exile in Babylon. Cyrus allowed them to return to their promised land (Rattini, 2019).

Dalai Lama (14th)

The 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, is a revered spiritual leader and a symbol of peace and compassion worldwide. Recognized at the age of two as the reincarnation of his predecessor, he assumed leadership as both the spiritual and political leader of Tibet. His early life was marked by the invasion of Tibet by Chinese forces in 1950, leading to his exile to India in 1959 following a failed uprising against Chinese rule. A fundamental aspect of the Dalai Lama's teachings is his advocacy for peace, tolerance, and the prevention of hate speech. The Dalai Lama firmly believes that hate speech not only causes harm and division but also goes against the fundamental principles of compassion and human dignity. He advocates for dialogue and reconciliation as essential tools for resolving conflicts and fostering harmony in society. The Dalai Lama's influence extends beyond the Tibetan community, earning him global recognition as a leading voice for peace and human rights. He has travelled extensively, delivering lectures and teachings on compassion, mindfulness, and ethical living to audiences around the world. In 1989, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of his non-violent struggle for the liberation of Tibet and his efforts to promote global peace and understanding (Lama, 2017).

Francis (Pope)

Pope Francis became the first pope from South America, and the first from the Jesuit order in 2013. During his tenure, he has implemented various reforms in the Roman Catholic Church, and has gained a reputation for being humble. Additionally, he has made efforts to promote unity among Catholics, non-Catholics, and non-Christians, and has issued apologies to survivors of clergy sexual abuse. Pope Francis is well-regarded for his efforts to promote unity among people of all religions through interfaith dialogue. He has engaged in conversations with leaders of different faiths, working towards finding common ground on issues of mutual interest. He is one of the signatories to the Declaration on Human Fraternity, alongside Sheikh Ahmed At-Tayyeb (Stefon, 2024).

Jefferson, Thomas (US president)

Thomas Jefferson was the draftsman of the Declaration of Independence of the United States and the nation's first secretary of state, second vice president, the third US president. An early advocate of total separation of church and state, he also was the founder and architect of the University of Virginia and the most eloquent American proponent of individual freedom as the core meaning of the American Revolution (Ellis, 2024). He is known as one of the founders of American religious freedom, and his phrase "a wall of separation between Church & State" has been viewed as emblematic by historians and by the modern United States Supreme Court. He was one of the main architects of Bill No. 82, "A Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom", now commonly known as the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom (Ragosta 2020).

Roosevelt, Eleanor (First lady)

Eleanor Roosevelt was a pioneering figure in American history, known for her advocacy of civil rights, human rights, and social justice. A central focus of Roosevelt's advocacy was the promotion of tolerance, understanding and empowerment of women and human rights. Throughout her tenure as First Lady and beyond, she spoke out against bigotry, discrimination, and prejudice, emphasizing the importance of empathy and compassion in fostering a more inclusive society. Roosevelt believed that hate speech not only perpetuated social divisions but also undermined fundamental human rights and dignity, making it imperative to combat such rhetoric through education, dialogue, and legislation. As the driving force behind the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), she played a pivotal role in shaping international human rights standards. Her leadership as chair of the UN Commission on Human Rights was instrumental in drafting and adopting the UDHR in 1948, laying the foundation for global efforts to protect human rights. (Biography: Eleanor Roosevelt, n.d.).

Tutu, Desmond (Bishop)

Desmond Mpilo Tutu was a prominent religious leader and anti-apartheid activist from South Africa. He initially pursued a career in education before turning to the Anglican priesthood in 1958. His deep involvement in the Anglican Church and his commitment to social justice made him a vocal critic of racial segregation and a proponent of universal human dignity and equality. A cornerstone of Tutu's activism was his promotion of non-violence and dialogue, as well as prevention of hate speech. Tutu believed that hate speech could exacerbate violence and societal divisions, so he encouraged respectful and constructive discourse. His advocacy for freedom of religion or belief extended beyond Christianity, as he supported religious freedom for all faiths, recognizing that religious diversity was vital for a just society. Tutu's global influence was cemented with his receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984. Post-apartheid, he chaired the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), focusing on healing the nation through truth-telling and forgiveness (Desmond Tutu | Biography, Facts, & Nobel Peace Prize, 2024).

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

African Charter on Human and People's Rights (Banjul Charter)

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Charter), also called the Banjul Charter, was adopted by the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments of the OAU (Organization of African Unity) in 1981 and entered into force five years later. The African Charter is a regional human rights instrument designed to reflect the history, values, traditions, and development of Africa. The Charter combines African values with international norms by not only promoting internationally recognized individual rights, but also by proclaiming collective rights and individual duties (Minority Rights Under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, n.d.). Article 8 of this Charter states that "freedom of conscience, the profession and free practice of religion shall be guaranteed", while article 9 states that "every individual shall have the right to express and disseminate his opinions within the law". The existence of these two articles is crucial to protect persons from hate speech and discrimination based on religion or belief.

American Convention on Human Rights (Pact of San José)

The American Convention on Human Rights, also known as the Pact of San José, is an international human rights instrument. It was adopted on 22 November 1969 and entered into force on July 18, 1978. The bodies responsible for overseeing compliance with the Convention are the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, both of which are organs of the Organization of American States (OAS). The Convention embodies the rights and freedoms that must be respected and promoted by the signatory States (WHO, World Health Organization, n.d.). Article 12 refers to freedom of conscience and religion, while Article 13 refers to freedom of thought and expression. These two articles are critical to uphold the freedom of religion or belief, but also to protect persons from hate speech and discrimination.

Arab Charter on Human Rights

The Arab Charter on Human Rights (ACHR), adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States on 22 May 2004, affirms the principles contained in the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Human Rights and the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam. The first version of the Charter was created on 15 September 1994, but no state ratified it. The updated (2004) version of the Charter came into force in 2008 after seven of the members of the League of Arab States had ratified it. Article 30 of this Charter states that "every person shall have the right to freedom of thought, belief and religion, which may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law", while Article 32 refers to freedom of opinion and freedom of expression. The mentioned two articles are vital in protecting persons from hateful rhetoric and discrimination on the basis of religion or belief (Arab Charter on Human Rights, 2004).

Ashoka's Edicts

The Edicts of Ashoka are a collection of more than thirty inscriptions on pillars, boulders, and cave walls, made by Emperor Ashoka of the Mauryan Empire during his reign, from 268 BCE to 232 BCE. (The Edicts of Ashoka | World Heritage Journeys Buddha, n.d.). A number of his stone pillars declared his support for tolerance for those of all faiths. One of his "rock edicts" is worth quoting in full: "One should not honour only one's own religion and condemn the religions of others, but one should honour others' religions too. So doing, one helps one's own religion to grow and render service to the religions of others too. In acting otherwise, one depraves one's own religion and also does harm to other religions. Whosoever honours his own religion and condemns other religions does so indeed through devotion to his own religion, thinking, 'I will glorify my own religion.' But on the contrary, in so doing he injures his own religion more gravely. So, concord is good. Let all listen, and be willing to listen to the doctrines professed by others" (Walton & Hayward, 2014).

ASEAN Human Rights Declaration (AHRD)

In 2009, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) established the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights to promote human rights in the ten ASEAN countries. By mid-2012, the Commission had drafted the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration. The Declaration was adopted unanimously by ASEAN members at its 18 November 2012 meeting in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The Declaration details ASEAN nations' commitment to human rights for its 600 million people. The Declaration includes 40 paragraphs under 6 headings. It outlines the human rights principles and commitments of its member states. Articles 22 and 23 refer to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and freedom of opinion and expression respectively. These articles are important in protecting persons from hateful rhetoric and discrimination on the basis of religion or belief (Asean Human Rights Declaration, n.d.).

Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union

The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (the Charter) brings together the fundamental rights of everyone living in the European Union (EU). It was introduced to bring consistency and clarity to the rights established at different times and in different ways in individual EU Member States. The Charter became legally binding on EU Member States when the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force in December 2009 (What Is the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union? | EHRC, n.d.). It encompasses six main categories: dignity, freedom, equality, solidarity, citizens' rights and justice. The Charter is a key document for ensuring that EU institutions and member states uphold these rights when implementing EU law. Articles 10 and 11 refer to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and freedom of expression and information respectively. The existence of these two articles is crucial to protect persons from hate speech and discrimination based on religion or belief (The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights - ENNHRI, 2024).

Constitution of Medina

In 622 CE, Prophet Muhammad established the Constitution of Medina in the city of Medina (then known as Yathrib) in Saudi Arabia. It established laws and regulations to govern the interactions between Muslims, Jews, and other residents of Medina, providing a legal framework for resolving disputes and ensuring justice. It provided protection for all inhabitants of Medina, regardless of their religious or tribal affiliations, against external threats and internal conflicts. The Constitution of Medina guaranteed religious freedom and autonomy for the Jewish tribes of Medina, allowing them to practice their faith without interference. It exemplifies principles of tolerance, pluralism, and cooperation, which are still relevant in contemporary discussions of governance and religious coexistence (Constitution of Medina 622 CE - Woven Teaching, 2024).

Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen

The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (French: Déclaration des droits de l'Homme et du citoyen de 1789), set by France's National Constituent Assembly in 1789, is a human civil rights document from the French Revolution. Inspired by Enlightenment philosophers, the Declaration was a core statement of the values of the French Revolution and had a significant impact on the development of popular conceptions of individual liberty and democracy in Europe and worldwide. The Declaration was initially drafted by Marquis de Lafayette, with assistance from Thomas Jefferson, but the majority of the final draft came from Abbé Sieyès. Influenced by the doctrine of natural right, human rights are held to be universal: valid at all times and in every place. It asserts that all men are born and remain free and equal in rights, including liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression. The Declaration emphasizes the principles of popular sovereignty, stating that political power resides in the people. It guarantees freedom of speech, press, and religion, and outlines the necessity of law being an expression of the general will (Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen | Summary, 1998).

Dignitatis Humanae

Dignitatis Humanae (Latin: On dignity of the human person or On religious freedom), was, as well as Nostra Aetate promulgated after the II Vatican Council, on December 7, 1965. This declaration, among other important topics, dedicates one of its sections to the general principal of freedom of religion. Therefore, the Vatican Council declared that the human person has a right to religious freedom, and it means that all men are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such way that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits (Dignitatis Humanae, n.d.).

Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together (Abu Dhabi Declaration)

The Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together is a significant declaration signed by Pope Francis of the Catholic Church and Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayyeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, in Abu Dhabi in February 2019. The document highlights the importance of promoting peace, tolerance, and coexistence among people of diverse faiths and cultures. It advocates for a collaborative effort between Muslims and Christians, as well as people of other faiths, to work together towards common goals of peace and harmony. It underscores the need for education and upbringing that promote tolerance and understanding among future generations, highlighting the role of religious leaders in promoting interfaith dialogue and cooperation. The document serves as a call to action for Muslims, Christians, and people of all faiths to unite in the spirit of fraternity and cooperation, laying the foundation for a world where diversity is celebrated and conflicts are resolved through peaceful means (Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together, 2019).

European Convention on Human Rights

The European Convention on Human Rights is the first Council of Europe's convention and the cornerstone of all its activities. It was adopted in 1950 and entered into force in 1953. Its ratification is a prerequisite for joining the Organisation. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the 46 Council of Europe member states. Individuals can bring complaints of human rights violations to the Strasbourg Court once all possibilities of appeal have been exhausted in the member state concerned (European Convention on Human Rights - the European Convention on Human Rights, n.d.). Article 9 of ECHR refers to freedom of religion or belief, while Article 10 refers to freedom of expression. These articles are essential in protecting persons from hateful rhetoric and discrimination on the basis of religion or belief.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) is a key international treaty adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1966, which came into force in 1976. The ICCPR commits its parties to respect the civil and political rights of individuals, including the right to life, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, electoral rights, and rights to due process and a fair trial. It is a foundational document for the protection of human rights globally. The ICCPR contains 53 articles divided into six parts. The ICCPR is supplemented by two optional protocols: one allowing for individual complaints to the Human Rights Committee and another aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 2024). This covenant is instrumental in shaping international human rights standards and mechanisms, ensuring that governments are held accountable for violations of civil and political rights.

Marrakesh Declaration

The Marrakesh Declaration, adopted on January 27, 2016, by Muslim scholars, leaders, and intellectuals, aims to reaffirm the principles of religious tolerance, human rights, and protection of religious minorities within Muslim-majority countries. This declaration commemorates the Charter of Medina, which the Prophet Muhammad established in 622 CE to ensure peaceful coexistence among diverse religious and ethnic communities in Medina. Key points of the Marrakesh Declaration include protection of minorities, human rights and dignity, reaffirmation of the Charter of Medina, interfaith dialogue, role of scholars and leaders. The Marrakesh Declaration serves as a contemporary framework for addressing issues of religious freedom, minority rights, and peaceful coexistence in the Muslim world, promoting a message of inclusivity and respect for diversity (Understanding and Extending the Marrakesh Declaration in Policy and Practice, n.d.).

The Cyrus Cylinder

The Cyrus Cylinder is a small barrel-shaped artifact of baked clay. It is inscribed with a text that records the acts of the Persian king Cyrus the Great who conquered the Babylonian Empire. The Cylinder provides a valuable insight - in Cyrus's own words - how, on taking control of Babylon, he restored religious traditions, and permitted those who had been deported to return to their settlements in and around Babylonia (The Cyrus Cylinder and Ancient Persia: A New Beginning (Getty Villa Exhibitions), n.d.). By promoting religious tolerance and freedom, King Cyrus was able to found one of the first great world empires, the Achaemenid Empire (550 - 330 BCE), which, at its peak, encompassed all of the present-day Middle East. He believed that different faiths should co-exist, although the government was to not endorse any of them (The Earliest Declaration of Human Rights, 2022). Even though the Cylinder is known as the oldest charter of universal human rights and a symbol of humanitarian rule, some scholars and historians consider it as ancient propaganda.

UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief

The UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on November 25, 1981. This declaration is a key document in promoting and protecting the rights of individuals to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, and belief. It outlines measures to eliminate intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief and emphasizes the five key points: freedom of religion or belief, protection against discrimination, rights of minorities, promotion of tolerance and understanding as well as legal and practical measures. The declaration emphasizes that freedom of religion or belief and non-discrimination are fundamental human rights and essential for the development of a pluralistic and inclusive society (Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, 2024).

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is a milestone document in the history of human rights. Drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, the Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 (General Assembly resolution 217 A) as a common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations. It sets out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected and it has been translated into over 500 languages (United Nations, n.d.). Article 18 of UDHR proclaims that "everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion", while article 19 proclaims that "everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression". Both these articles are very important to uphold the freedom of religion or belief, but also to protect persons from hate speech and discrimination.

ACTIVITIES

VISITS TO RELIGIOUS SITES

Duration: 120 to 240 minutes (depending on the number and distance of the religious sites)

Human Resources: 1-2 facilitators

Objectives: The goal of this activity is to experience other sources of spirituality and learn about other religions through visits to various religious sites, such as temples, mosques, synagogues, churches, etc. After visiting the religious sites, participants will expand their understanding and knowledge of the beliefs and rituals of other religions.

Methodology: Learning based on introspection, group discussion

Materials: Provide informative brochures containing information about the religions and religious sites to be visited, as well as a visit plan with details on the duration of each visit, transportation between sites, and basic rules for dressing and behaviour in religious sites. Additionally, give participants a few sheets of paper and a pen to take notes during the visits.

Instructions:

Religious sites can be visited anytime they are open to the public or during religious services. In both cases, the visit should be organized in cooperation with those who lead or are responsible for the site. It is important to contact this person/people before the visit to inform them of the interfaith aspect of the group, the purpose of the visit, and to request that the presentation of the religious site be more informative in nature, allowing space for questions and potential discussions with participants. Additionally, before the visit, it is important to inform the group about the visit plan, the religious sites to be visited, and the dynamics of the visit. Remind them of the importance of respecting all religious sites, adhering to dress and behaviour rules, and encourage them to ask questions and reflect on their own attitudes towards certain religious groups before and after visiting the sites. Each visit is unique and depends on the group and the host, but it can include various elements:

- A short speech by the host about the religious site and key beliefs of the religious group;
- Explanations of different rituals and their significance;
- An opportunity for the group to ask the host questions and engage in discussion;
- An opportunity to talk with members of the religious group who may be present at the site during the visit;
- If possible and appropriate, the visit may include attending a religious ceremony;
- If appropriate, you can ask the host to say a prayer or demonstrate a religious ritual, explaining its different elements and importance.

Take time to talk with participants after each visit, before continuing with the program. Encourage participants to discuss what they have learned, how it is similar or different from what they knew or thought before visiting the site. Additionally, encourage them to reflect and compare it with their own religion, and to consider what they experienced while at the religious site and how they felt.

Guidelines for preparing visits to religious sites:

1. Select religious sites considering the religious beliefs of the participants. After selection, discuss with the participants how they understand the purpose of visiting certain religious sites;
2. Create a list of places of worship and plan the most practical way to visit them. Ensure there is enough time to visit each site and plan the transitions from one place to another in advance;
3. Contact the responsible person for each place of worship you wish to visit. Explain the purpose of your visit and the importance of sharing information with participants in a respectful atmosphere;
4. Inform the host about the interfaith nature of the group and who comprises the group;
5. Agree with the host on the day and time of the visit, whether it will be during a service or not, dress code rules, and whether refreshments will be offered to participants during the visit;
6. Prepare a brochure for participants about the religious sites to be visited and the religions they will have the opportunity to learn about during the visits;
7. Inform participants about the appropriate way to dress;
8. Hold a preparatory meeting with participants before the visit. Ask them to prepare questions and be ready to observe the site both externally and internally. During this meeting, discuss the religions and ask some participants to explain their own religion to others. Remind participants of the importance of respecting other religions and being open to new experiences;
9. After the visit, take time for reflection and discussion with the participants.

ONE STEP FORWARD

Duration: **60 minutes**

Human Resources: **1-2 facilitators (depending on the size of the group)**

Objectives: **The objectives of this activity are to help participants appreciate the importance of human rights and freedom of religion or belief (FORB) for people of all faiths by encouraging them to empathize with individuals from different backgrounds. It aims to increase awareness of the daily challenges faced by people of various religions or beliefs and to illustrate how religion/belief intersects with other identities such as gender and class.**

Methodology: **Role play, group discussion**

Materials: **A space big enough for participants to stand next to each other in a line along one wall and take about 15 small steps forwards towards the other side of the room, photocopied character cards to hand out, a list of statements to read out. You need one character card per participant and 12-15 statements to read out. Select statements and characters to use based on relevance to your country context. You can find a list of characters in the Appendix 1 and list of statements in Appendix 2.**

N.B. **Be considerate of participants who may have difficulty walking or moving around the room. Some may have personal assistants accompanying them, or you can designate another participant to offer support as needed.**

Instructions:

In this role-play exercise, participants put themselves in the shoes of characters they are given and take a step forward if their character would agree with a statement read out by the facilitator. As the physical gap between participants widens, the advantages and disadvantages facing different groups in society become apparent.

Introduction (10 minutes)

- Explain that we are now going to think about who has advantages and disadvantages in our communities and how that impacts upon their lives;
- Explain that the group is going to do a simple role-play exercise in plenary. Everyone will be given a character. They need to line up with their backs to one side of the room. The only thing they have to do is to take a step forward if they think their character would agree with a statement that you are going to read out;
- Distribute characters randomly asking people to keep their character secret. It doesn't matter if a man gets a woman's character or vice versa;
- Spend a few minutes helping people to get into character by asking them to reflect briefly on the following questions:
  - What was your childhood like?
  - What is your everyday life like – what do you do in a typical day, who do you socialise with, what is your income and lifestyle?
  - What are you afraid of and what do you hope for?

Role play (20 minutes)
Ask the participants to stand next to one another in a straight line on one side of the room. Tell them that you will read out a number of statements. If they think their role/character would be able to agree with a statement, they should take one step forwards. If their character would disagree, then they should stand still. Emphasise that the point of the game is NOT to take steps forwards but to be as true to the reality of the life of your character as possible. Participants are not allowed to talk during the exercise. Read the statements out loud, one at a time. After each statement, pause to allow participants time to think about if their character can move forward. After you have read all statements, give participants a moment to note their positions in the room compared to other people, without saying who they were.

Discussion in plenary (25 minutes)
Ask the participants open questions such as the following. (Take one or two answers to each question, to ensure you have time for the final two questions.)

- What happened during the exercise?
- How did you feel stepping forwards or not being able to step forwards?
- How did it feel to see the growing gaps between people?
- Was it easy or difficult to play your role – to put yourself in that person's shoes?
- Were there moments when you felt your character's basic human rights were ignored, including their freedom of religion or belief? When?

Ask everybody to say what their character was.

- Do our respective positions in the room reflect the realities of inequality in our society in any ways? Who is being left behind – women, minorities, poor people?
- What consequences does this have for people's lives?

Conclusion (5 minutes)
Conclude by reflecting on and summarizing the plenary discussion and by saying that human rights conventions say that we are born equal in rights and dignity – that we start on the same line. But denials of our equality based, for example, on our religious or belief identity, our social status or if we are a man or a woman, have a huge impact on our lives from the moment we are born. Many people get left behind.

Adapted from FoRB Learning Platform https://www.forb-learning.org/exercises/one-step-forwards/

FoRB BAROMETER

Duration: **50 minutes**

Human Resources: **1-2 facilitators (depending on the size of the group)**

Objectives: **The workshop aims to enable the facilitator to assess participants' knowledge of freedom of religion or belief (FORB) and tailor subsequent input sessions accordingly. It also provides participants with an opportunity to explore their views and ideas about FORB in relation to their own values. Additionally, the workshop is designed to gradually ease participants into deeper discussions of FORB within their local context, fostering a more comprehensive and meaningful engagement with the topic.**

Methodology: **Barometer of attitudes, self-reflection, group discussion**

Materials: **Contextualized statements – choose from the statements below and/ or create your own., two A4 pieces of paper on which you will write "AGREE" and "DISAGREE", mark middle of the room or space, either by some object or with tape paper, an indoor or outdoor open space large enough for participants to walk around freely and position themselves along an imaginary or actual line on the floor between two corners of the room.**

N.B. **Be considerate of participants who may have difficulty walking or moving around the room. Some may have personal assistants accompanying them, or you can designate another participant to offer support as needed.**

Instructions:

Introduction (10 minutes)

Ask everyone to stand in the middle of the room. Explain that the group is going to do an exercise to explore what we know and think about FORB. Assign opposite corners of the room as 'agree' and 'disagree' corners with prepared signs and show marked middle of the room. Explain that you will make a statement and ask participants to stand in one of the corners, according to whether they agree or disagree with the statement. Use two or three of the following test examples to help participants grasp the idea of the game:

- I prefer cats than dogs;
- I love basketball;
- Material things are essential for life;
- Reading books is better than watching movies.

Barometer exercise (30 minutes)

Begin the game by introducing two simpler statements on FORB for participants to 'agree' or 'disagree' with and to position themselves in the room. Choose two of the following, or create your own:

- Freedom of religion or belief is a fundamental human right that should be universally upheld;
- Our community fully respects and upholds the right to freedom of religion or belief;
- There are circumstances where freedom of religion or belief may be subject to certain limitations;
- Freedom of religion or belief extends to individuals of all faiths, not just followers of major world religions.

Tell participants that for the next set of statements, they can position themselves anywhere along an imaginary line between the two corners. This is a 'barometer' scale ranging from totally agree in one corner, through partly agree to undecided or indifferent in the middle, followed by partly disagree to totally disagree in the opposite corner.

Choose a few of the following statements to read out or create your own.

- Freedom of religion or belief enables individuals from various religions to share their faith and

advocate for their beliefs;

- Freedom of religion or belief doesn't work in our context, since it is mostly Western concept tailored to Western societies;
- Individuals should have the right to leave their religion without needing permission or facing any negative consequences;
- Freedom of religion or belief doesn't include children, just adults;
- Freedom of religion or belief entails respecting different religions and not criticizing them;
- FoRB allows religious leaders the right to control the beliefs of their congregation;
- All religious groups should have the right to build places of worship, with consistent regulations applied to all construction projects;
- Religion should not be indicated on ID cards;
- Interreligious marriages should be permitted;
- Religious education in schools should provide equal attention to all religions;
- Governments should have the authority to restrict the religious freedom of groups based on their preferences or biases;
- It is natural for the majority religious group to have privileges that are denied to religious minorities in our community;
- Atheists should not have the same freedom to share their views as individuals of other belief systems.

After each statement has been read, ask one or two participants to explain why they positioned themselves where they did on the scale. Then you can ask if some of other participants would like to change their position as a result of hearing other persons argument shared with the group. Remember, your role as facilitator is to enable participants to freely share their own thoughts and reflections without fear or guilt about making a mistake. Refrain from making judgements on the opinions and ideas participants express and limit discussions of what is right or wrong between different participants during this exercise. Note any serious misconceptions about FORB to address when you conclude the exercise.

Conclusion (10 minutes)

Invite some of the participant to share their views about the exercise, how they feel watching colleagues position themselves and if they change their ideas on some aspects of FoRB after the exercise. Use rest of the time to address any serious misconceptions about FORB. Conclude the exercise by thanking participants for exploring their own views and ideas about FORB.

Adapted from FoRB Learning Platform: https://www.forb-learning.org/exercises/the-barometer/

QUIZ ON FoRB

Duration: **50 minutes**

Human resources: **1 facilitator**

Objectives: **The activity is designed to enhance participants' knowledge and comprehension of Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB). By the conclusion of the workshop, participants will be equipped to define FoRB, identify where it is enshrined—such as in declarations, conventions, and national laws—understand its various dimensions, and recognize how it is applied in practice.**

Methodology: **Brainstorming, quiz and guided discussion**

Materials: **Laptop, projector, strong internet connection, Mentimeter app.**

N.B. **This activity can be done both online and offline by using Mentimeter for the whole activity.**

Instructions:

Brainstorming (15 minutes)
Begin by greeting the participants and explaining that the session will feature two activities designed to deepen their understanding of Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB). The first activity will involve brainstorming. Ask participants to write down the first three things that come to mind when they hear the phrase "Freedom of Religion or Belief" (excluding the words "freedom," "religion," and "belief"). This activity can be conducted in one of three ways:

- Using sticky notes: Participants will write their responses on sticky notes and place them on a flipchart;
- Using the Mentimeter app (Wordcloud option): Participants' responses will appear on the screen in real time;
- Writing on the flipchart: You can record their responses on the flipchart yourself.

Quiz (30 minutes)
Once the brainstorming activity is complete, briefly discuss the participants' responses. Explain that instead of providing them with a formal definition of FoRB, they will uncover its meaning through a quiz. You can either use pre-prepared questions from Appendix 3 or design your own quiz. We recommend including 2-3 contextually relevant questions. The quiz can be conducted traditionally by asking questions and collecting verbal responses, or you can use the Mentimeter app (Select answer option) to allow participants to submit their answers in real time. Take your time going through the questions. After each one, pause to discuss the answers, clarify any concepts, and invite participants to share their opinions on how they interpret certain FoRB principles.

Conclusion (5 minutes)
Thank the participants for their active involvement and announce the quiz winner. However, emphasize that everyone is a winner because they have gained valuable knowledge that will benefit not only themselves but also those around them. Conclude by stressing the importance of protecting and promoting FoRB for everyone in their personal lives and communities.

N.B. You can use the same activity to discuss the topic of hate speech. You can find the questions for hate speech exercise in the Appendix 4 or you can design your own. Again, we recommend putting 2-3 contextual questions.

PANTO FoRB AND HATE SPEECH

Duration: 90 minutes

Human resources: 2 facilitators

Objectives: This activity is designed to enhance participants' understanding of key concepts related to Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) and hate speech in an engaging and educational manner. By the end of the activity, participants will be equipped to define and comprehend hate speech, FoRB, and other related concepts, thereby deepening their grasp of these critical issues.

Methodology: Game-based learning, guided discussion, oral presentation method

Materials: Projector, laptop, concept cards

Instructions:

Introduction (10 minutes)
Begin by informing participants that they will engage in a modified pantomime game. Divide them into several teams, ideally consisting of 3 to 4 members each. Prepare concept cards using the terminology provided in this publication, selecting terms and concepts that are relatively straightforward to guess. You may also incorporate additional concepts from outside this publication. Each card features a term or concept on one side and a definition on the reverse to aid participants in understanding it.

Game (50 minutes)
Round 1: Participants will describe the concepts or terms using short sentences. They must avoid using the actual words or root forms of the terms they are describing. Round 2: Participants will convey the concepts or terms using only one word, again without using any part of the term or concept itself. Round 3: Participants will use pantomime to represent the concepts or terms. In each team, one member will explain or act out the term while the other two team members attempt to guess it. Other teams will observe but not participate. Participants will rotate roles between explaining and guessing. Each concept will be used in all three rounds. Emphasize the importance of listening carefully during each round to facilitate understanding and guessing in subsequent rounds.

Follow-Up and Conclusion (30 minutes)
Invite participants to reconvene in a group. Use a projector to display the concepts and terms used during the game. Provide a brief explanation of each concept. Encourage participants to discuss what they found unfamiliar or surprising, what they learned from the game, and which aspects were particularly challenging. Conclude the session by thanking the participants and congratulating them on their engagement and new insights.

FoRB CASE STUDIES

Duration: **60 minutes**

Human resources: **1-2 facilitators**

Objectives: **This activity aims to increase participants understanding of FoRB through different case examples. After the activity participants will be able to understand the complexity of FoRB and different forms in which FoRB appears, as well as different breaches that can range from minor to major ones.**

Methodology: **Case studies, guided discussion, work in small groups, oral presentation method**

Materials: **Cards with examples of cases, laptop, projector.**

N.B. **This activity can be conducted both online and offline. For an online format, you can use the Zoom platform and utilize the Breakout Rooms feature to organize participants into groups. Prepare examples of FoRB cases in separate Google Docs or Google Slides, and distribute the links to each group. This approach facilitates effective group work and ensures that all participants have access to the necessary materials.**

Instructions:

Introduction and group work (25 minutes)
Welcome participants and inform them that they will be divided into smaller groups of up to four people. Each group will receive up to three different examples of Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) cases (examples of cases can be found in the Appendix 5, but we also recommend to find cases that are relevant to your context) to review, discuss, and determine whether a breach of FoRB has occurred. Groups will have 20 minutes to read and analyse the cases, discuss their findings, and reach a consensus. Participants can choose to work in the designated area or move to a quieter space outside for their discussions. They may also use the internet to research further information on FoRB if desired. Each group will then present their cases and a summary of their discussions to the rest of the participants. Inform the groups that they can decide how they would like to present their findings and inform them how much time they will have.

Presentation and discussion (35 minutes)
Invite participants to return to the main group. Ask for volunteers to begin their presentations; if no volunteers step forward, appoint groups in turn to present. Each group will have 5 to 7 minutes to present their analysis, depending on the number of groups; ensure all groups are allotted an equal amount of time. Allow time for questions after each presentation. Once all presentations are complete, project the cases on the screen for review and facilitate a discussion. Ask participants if anything surprised them, if they encountered difficulties in understanding or making decisions, and any other observations they may have. Conclude by thanking the participants and emphasizing the importance of protecting and promoting FoRB in their personal lives and communities.

N.B. This activity can be adapted to focus on the discussion of hate speech. Instead of using FoRB cases, prepare examples of hate speech and instruct participants to analyse these examples, determining whether they classify them as hate speech and providing reasons for their conclusions. For reference, examples of hate speech are available in Appendix 6. We recommend selecting cases that are pertinent to the specific context in which the activity is conducted.

HATE SPEECH GALLERY WALK

Duration: **80 minutes**

Human resources: **1-2 facilitators**

Objectives: **This activity is designed to provide participants with the knowledge and skills needed to identify and understand hate speech. By the end of the activity, participants will be able to discern instances of hate speech and articulate the key indicators that qualify a statement or behaviour as hate speech.**

Methodology: **Gallery walk, guided discussion, oral presentation method**

Materials: **Laptop, projector, hate speech examples (printed or online on laptops/tablets)**

N.B. **This activity can also be conducted online. In a virtual setting, utilize the Zoom platform and its Breakout Rooms feature to organize participants into smaller groups. For the gallery component, consider using the Padlet platform to create digital galleries. Prior to the session, carefully plan the group rotations and prepare links to the different galleries. Every ten minutes, send the corresponding gallery link to each group, ensuring a smooth transition and rotation among the galleries. Advance preparation is key to ensuring the activity runs efficiently and participants remain engaged.**

Instructions:

Preparation
Before the session, set up four distinct gallery stations in different corners of the room. You can either print examples and display them on the walls or place them on tables (hate speech examples are available in the Appendix 6, but we recommend to also include examples relevant for your own context). If you have laptops or tablets available, you can create interactive galleries where participants can scroll through the examples. Arrange the stations so that all participants can easily access them, ensuring that the setup accommodates individuals with disabilities or neurodivergent participants. If necessary, assign assistants to support those who may have difficulty moving around the room.

Introduction (10 minutes)
Begin by welcoming participants and dividing them into small groups of up to four members. Introduce the activity, explaining that they will be visiting a "Gallery of Hate Speech." Each gallery will contain 3-4 examples for them to observe and discuss.

Gallery Walk (40 minutes)
Each group will spend 10 minutes at each gallery station, examining and discussing the examples. After 10 minutes, prompt the groups to rotate to the next gallery. You should establish a clear signal for switching stations prior to starting the activity, ensuring a smooth transition between galleries.

Discussion and Conclusion (30 minutes)
Once all groups have visited every gallery, gather the participants for a plenary discussion. Display all examples on a projector and lead an interactive analysis, encouraging participants to share insights from their group discussions. Following the analysis, thank the participants and stress the importance of recognizing and addressing hate speech in communities, highlighting the need to create environments where all groups are protected from harmful rhetoric.

N.B. Inform participants that they will be presented with some intense examples of hate speech, which may be distressing. Emphasize that these examples are intended solely for educational purposes and are not meant to promote or incite hatred towards any group.

APPENDIX 1
Character Cards

Ivan - A middle-aged Croat Catholic man who was in the army during the past war and now runs a small business

Hasan - An elderly Bosniak Muslim who survived the war and come back to live in a rural village

Ana - A young Croat Catholic woman studying abroad but returning home for holidays

Dragana - A Serb Orthodox woman who is a journalist in local newspaper in Srebrenica

Amina - A Bosniak Muslim student from Doboj, lost her father in previous war and is now studying at University in Sarajevo

Elvira - A young Bosniak Muslim woman whose family members survived genocide in Srebrenica and she is now a medical student in Tuzla.

Petar - A Serb Orthodox man who is a history high school teacher in Banja Luka

Marko - A Croat Catholic teenager attending high school in Mostar

Jasmin - A Bosnian Roma Muslim who works as a community organizer in Banja Luka

Nermina - A Bosniak Muslim single mother working in a textile factory in Visoko

Luka - A young Croat Catholic journalist covering social issues in Mostar

Nikola - A Serb Orthodox man who is a local government official in Prijedor

Mira - An atheist woman of mixed ethnic background working in an NGO.

Milena - A Serb Orthodox woman who is a university professor in Sarajevo

Adnan - A Bosniak Muslim man who owns a small grocery store in a mixed-ethnicity neighborhood

Zlatko - A Croat Catholic lawyer practicing in a predominantly Bosniak area

Rada - A Serb Orthodox elderly woman who lives alone in a rural village predominantly populated by Bosniak Muslims

Sina – A young man whose parents moved to Bosnia and Herzegovina 20 years ago, a member of the Baha'i community, which has fewer than 50 members

Mirzeta – A member of the Ahmadiyya community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, living and working in Sarajevo for a humanitarian Ahmadiyya organization

Sanja - A young woman who is practicing Hinduism and works in a tech company in Sarajevo

Vedran – A Bosnian Jew and member of an interfaith peacebuilding organization, recently moved to Bihać for his studies.

Damir – A former religious leader who became an atheist after a serious conflict within his religious community

Kemal – An imam in a returnee community in the Republika Srpska, predominantly inhabited by Serbs

Halim – A member of the Jehovah's Witnesses community, living in Zvornik

Darko – A member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, currently studying in Banja Luka

Azemina – A young Muslim activist from a rural area promoting interfaith dialogue

Miloš – A priest of the Serbian Orthodox Church in a returnee village in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Prita – A member of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (Hare Krishna Movement) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, living in Kakanj

Darko – A pastor in the Adventist Church in Banja Luka

Jihad – A refugee from Syria, a member of the Syrian Christian community, who has been living in Bosnia and Herzegovina for five years

Amira - A young Bosniak Muslim woman who wears a hijab and works in a public school in Trebinje

APPENDIX 2
List of statements

- I have the freedom to practice my religion without fear.
- I have attended religious ceremonies or events without being harassed.
- I can wear religious symbols or clothing without facing discrimination.
- My religious holidays are respected in my community.
- I have access to religious education according to my faith.
- I have been a target of hate speech because of my religion or ethnicity.
- I have witnessed hate speech against others in my community.
- I know someone who was physically attacked because of their religious beliefs or ethnicity.
- I have seen hate speech on social media or in the news.
- I have reported incidents of hate speech to the authorities or organizations.
- I have faced social exclusion because of my ethnic or religious background.
- I have seen or heard nationalist rhetoric in my community.
- I believe nationalist groups have too much influence in my area.
- I feel a sense of community with people from different ethnic or religious backgrounds.
- I have participated in interfaith or interethnic dialogues or events.
- I have friends from different ethnic or religious communities.
- I believe there is a genuine effort in my community to combat discrimination and hate speech.
- I have been involved in peace-building and reconciliation activities.

APPENDIX 3
Quiz questions (FoRB)

1. Freedom of religion or belief is mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights under:
   a) article 1
   b) article 10
   c) article 18
2. Freedom of religion or belief:
   a) It belongs to people as individuals or members of a group
   b) It protects religions and religious figures from criticism
   c) It belongs only to people who are members of organized religious communities
3. Freedom of religion or belief includes:
   a) Freedom to have and practice religion publicly and/or privately
   b) Freedom to change religion
   c) Freedom to teach and/or propagate religion
   d) Freedom to have no religion
   e) All of the above
4. The right to freedom of religion or belief is absolute.
   a) Yes
   b) No
   c) Partially yes, partially no
5. The expression of freedom of religion or belief may be limited only under the following conditions:
   a) The limitation is prescribed by law
   b) The purpose of the restrictions is to protect public safety and public order
   c) The purpose is to protect health or morals
   d) The purpose is to protect the basic human rights and freedoms of others
   e) The restriction is not introduced for discriminatory purposes
   f) All of the above
6. Which other document (besides UDHR) is important for the protection of FoRB?
   a) The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
   b) The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
   c) The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)
7. Which document is important for Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina for the protection of religion or belief?
   a) European Convention on Human Rights
   b) Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union

APPENDIX 4
Quiz questions (Hate speech)

1. Hate can be prohibited by law.
   a) Yes
   b) No

2. Hate speech is:
   a) Public speech that expresses hatred and incites violence
   b) Speech that hurts the feelings of a person or group of people
   c) Both of the above

3. Every instance of hate speech poses an equal level of danger:
   a) Yes
   b) No

4. Hate speech leads to hate crimes:
   a) Yes
   b) No
   c) Depends

5. Bosnia and Herzegovina has a "lex specialis" for hate speech.
   a) Yes
   b) No

APPENDIX 5
FoRB cases and examples*

1. Brief description of case #1 In an OSCE member state, members of a religious community are trying to import copies of their holy book. Government officials told them their holy book could not be imported, as it had not undergone an "examination" by a state-appointed religious expert. The books were confiscated. Does this constitute a violation of freedom of religion or belief?

2. Brief description of case #2 Parents of children who belong to a minority religious group ask the public school to organise classes on religion or beliefs for their children, in the same way as it is organised for other children. Parents believe that the failure of the school to organise these classes disturbs their children's right to freedom of religion or belief. The school's headmistress refuses, explaining that it is a small minority of 15 children in the school and that their faith or belief is not traditional. She refers to the state's policy on the matter, which sets a threshold of a minimum of 25 children to learn about any minority religion in school. Does this constitute a violation of freedom of religion or belief?

3. Brief description of case #3 A Catholic nun with all the necessary qualifications is applying for the high school history teacher position. She was rejected for the post because she wore her habit as a nun. The board cites the need for "neutrality" of the staff, who are civil servants, as the reason for the refusal. Does this constitute a violation of freedom of religion or belief?

4. Brief description of case #4 The local religious leader of the state's majority religious community does not allow the family to bury the dead member according to their faith because there is no designated burial plot. The local authorities did not respond to the requests of minority religious communities for the allocation of land. Instead, they must be buried in the cemetery of the majority religious group according to their rites. Does this constitute a violation of freedom of religion or belief?

5. **Brief description of case #5 The prisoner demands to be visited by a chaplain representing her religion. The authorities rejected the request because there is no accredited chaplain from her religion for the prison service. Is it a violation of the right to freedom of religion or belief?**

6. **Brief description of case #6 Imagine a country with dominant traditional religious communities. A small, non-traditional religious community made up of foreigners wants to be registered and operate in that country. The state does not allow religious activities unless the community is registered. The registration regulations state that a community can only be registered if it has more than 5,000 members and half of them are nationals of that country. Is it discrimination?**

7. **Brief description of case #7 In an OSCE member state, the law provides for alternative service for members of registered religious organizations whose doctrine does not allow the use of weapons and service in the armed forces, which is twice as long as military service. Is the state fulfilling its duty to respect freedom of religion and belief?**

8. **Brief description of case #8 A Muslim woman comes to a public pool in a swimsuit that covers her entire body, including her legs and arms. The manager of the facility asked her to leave the pool, citing the rules of the pool, which state that bathing is allowed only in bathing suits and that bathing in everyday clothes is prohibited for sanitary and hygienic reasons. Is this discriminatory?**

9. **Brief description of case #9 In a multi-religious country, the state is willing to intervene to facilitate the cooperation of religious groups and decides to establish a board of representatives for all groups. Representatives of one of the religious groups cannot agree on who will represent them. So, the state determines who it should be. Should the state have intervened in this case?**

10. **Brief description of case #10 Imagine a doctor working in a public hospital who was fired for refusing to perform certain medical procedures. Does this constitute an unjustified restriction of his/her freedom of religion or belief?**

11. **Brief description of case #11 In one elementary school in Canada, a school board prohibited a young Sikh boy from wearing a kirpan while at school, after he accidentally dropped the kirpan in the schoolyard. Kirpan is a small dagger which represents one of the 5 articles of faith in the Sikh religion. Was the Board violating the boy's freedom of religion or belief?**

12. **Brief description of case #12 After the terrorist attack on the US embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a Muslim man, a member of the Salafi group in BiH was summoned to court to testify. When he appeared in the court, he was wearing a skullcap called "bjelica". The judge ordered him to take the skullcap off, which the man refused stating that it is his religious obligation to wear a hat, such as the Prophet Muhammad was wearing one. The man was convicted of contempt of court and fined with 10.000 BAM (5.000 euros). Was the man's religious freedom violated and was he convicted unjustly?**

13. **Brief description of case #13 In 2012, the US Department of Health and Human Services issued the contraception mandate, which required that employer-provided health insurance plans offer their beneficiaries certain contraceptive methods free of charge. On 12 September 2012, Barbara and David Green filed a lawsuit in the US District Court for the Western District of Oklahoma in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, on behalf of their family-owned company, Hobby Lobby Stores Inc. According to Green, the founder and CEO of Hobby Lobby, all of the stores that he had founded, incorporated his Christian beliefs into their everyday functions. The Greens argued that under their religious beliefs, life begins when an egg is fertilized and that emergency contraceptive pills and intrauterine devices both have the potential to prevent a fertilized egg from implanting in the uterus. Were the religious beliefs of the family violated by the above-mentioned act?**

**part of the stories taken from the OSCE ODHIR activity "Training on the right to freedom of religion or beliefs for all, non-violent communication, mediation and dialogue"*

APPENDIX 6
Hate Speech Examples

Source: Twitter (X)

Source: Facebook

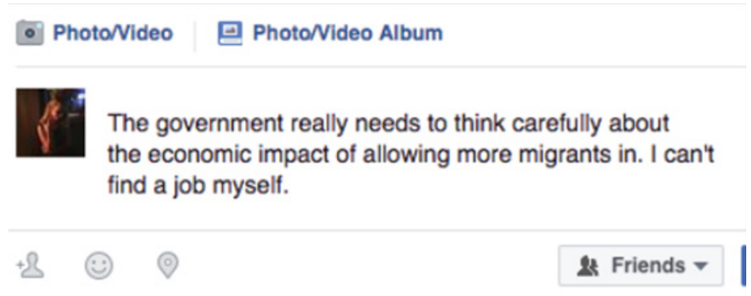
Source: Getty Images

Source: AKOS.ba

Source: Twitter (X)

Source: Facebook

Source: Facebook



Source: Facebook

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ABOUT EDITORS

Emina Frljak is a Project Coordinator within Youth for Peace (Bosnia and Herzegovina). She is a Deputy Coordinator of the International Youth Committee of Religions for Peace. Her academic background is in educational sciences, interreligious studies, and peacebuilding. Her areas of work and interest are peace education, interfaith dialogue, and religious literacy. Lately, her interest has also been focused on using social media for educational and campaigning purposes, particularly on countering hate speech. Emina has been a Board member of Religions for Peace Europe since January 2020. She is also a fellow with the KAICIID International Fellows Program, which is focused on equipping religious leaders, civil society actors, and academics in the field of interreligious and intercultural dialogue.
Email: emina.frljak90@gmail.com

Lejla Hasandedić - Đapo is a psychologist, psychotherapist, lecturer, activist and peacebuilder from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Currently, she is doing her Ph.D. in psychology at Ankara Yildirim Beyazit University, in Turkey. She is working as United Religions Initiative (URI) Europe CC Liaison Officer and Individual Membership Coordinator as part of the URI Global Staff team. Also, she is the co-founder of Youth for Peace, an organization that positioned itself as one of the most prominent youth-led organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, working in the field of peacebuilding. As she is very passionate about peacebuilding and interfaith work, she became a non-violent communication trainer, Learning to Live Together trainer, Peace Practice Alliance (PPA) and KAICIID fellow. She is also a Board member of Religions for Peace Europe.
Email: l.hasandedic@gmail.com

Azra Mustafić graduated with a Master's degree from the Department of Pedagogy, focusing on the topic "Specifics of Peace Education Methodology". She has always shown an interest in peacebuilding and peace education topics. During her studies, she actively volunteered with several non- governmental organizations. Currently, she volunteers with occasional project coordinator engagements at the Youth for Peace organization. Her main interests are learning, researching, and advancing peace education in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She participated in summer schools held in Iceland and the United States. She is currently an active member of the UNESCO Youth Network, where she holds the position of co-chair for advancing peace education on a global level.
Email: azra.hodzic98@gmail.com