

Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice



Special Report
Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations'
2020 Webinar Series

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES (April 1, 2021)

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Introduction

The Coalition of Faith based Organizations for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice was established at the 28th session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. At a side event, UNODC welcomed FBOs as valuable stakeholders to prevent crime and improve the criminal justice system.

In October 2019, an entire day was dedicated to “Spirituality and Justice” at the Vienna International Centre and St. Stephan’s Cathedral, sponsored by Permanent Mission of Spain and the Bishop of Vienna. In November of the same year, the Coalition organized an inter-religious public event at the historic Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, at which a “Spirituality and Justice Declaration” was affirmed by those attending and subsequently endorsed by hundreds more religious leaders, criminologists, practitioners and activists.

Noting that all religious teachings promote honesty, fairness, care for others and justice, it was agreed that a constructive partnership be established between FBOs and UNODC. On the one hand, FBOs could spread greater knowledge about the documents of the UN programs on crime prevention, anti-corruption, treatment of prisoners, restorative justice, victim assistance and the sustainable goals. In return, UNODC should engage FBOs in the promotion of criminal justice reforms, alternatives to incarceration, protection of women and children from violence and in combating organized crime.

The response to this initiative to promote partnership between FBOs and UNODC has been overwhelmingly positive. FBOs are eager to listen, learn and support the work of the United Nations. Moreover, there is a growing awareness of the importance of FBOs and of the capacities they bring to the table as allies, colleagues and partners, ready to work with counterparts at UNODC.

In recent decades, it has become increasingly clear that not only does religion have a capacity to endure, prevail, and even flourish under many, if not most circumstances—but that it has capacities at its disposal that bring value to governments and international organizations, including the United Nations (UN), in their efforts to mitigate or solve social problems and secure peace, security, and sustainable development. This social fact stands out independently of one’s personal views about religion: believer, non-believer, atheist, disinterested observer, or advocate.

This is not to suggest that religion is incorruptible. On the contrary, like all individuals, groups, and human institutions, it can and has at times brought harm. There is no doubt about this point, evidenced in extremist ideologies

and practices, crimes committed in the name of religion, conflicts that arise in the name of religion, etc. At the same time, it is well documented that similar kinds of wrongdoing are committed in equal if not sometimes greater share by governments, ideologically driven social movements, organized criminal entities, and well-intentioned but wrongheaded political movements; wrongdoings accomplished without the assistance or alibi of religion. One does not need to be religious to be a fanatic, to do harm, or to refuse to allow feedback to temper your commitments.

Religion has been a major factor in the unfolding of human history for millennia. While secularization might have been anticipated as the logical outcome of the rationalization process associated with the rise of modernity, science, technology, democracy, and human development in general, this has not proven to be the case. Religion, on the contrary, enjoys twenty-first century resurgence. Like it or not, it seems here to stay.

Moreover, religion does not simply exist politely in the background or history, standing only in some quaint decorative role. On the contrary, religion has impact on other sectors of society—political, economic, cultural—as an outgrowth of the ways in which religion shapes human beings in their character, their moral perspectives, their priorities, their core values, and their actions. Moreover, the quietism associated with some religions is increasingly overstepped in most traditions by a call for believers to be socially and politically engaged for spiritual, moral, and humanitarian reasons.

It is therefore no wonder that religious NGOs, FBOs, and interfaith activists are increasingly engaged with many UN bodies, including the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly, the Alliance of Civilizations, and more recently the Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion and Development.

While religion had to some extent been marginalized during the latter half of the twentieth century, corresponding more or less with the Cold War era during which time other priorities seemed to be dominant, its energies, values, and of course its failings, have emerged more prominently in recent decades. Moreover, modernity's allergies vis à vis religion seems now to be fading as well.

On the one hand, the general affirmation of pluralism among educated classes, coupled with an increasing refinement of religious believers, through such practices as interreligious dialogue, results in there being less fear of religion as a social reality that is either too irrational or too dangerous and conflict-prone to engage with. These prejudices or taboos—in some cases phobias—are eroding and, with that, there is growing appreciation that religious or faith-based stakeholders are assets to be appreciated.

Numerous high-profile interfaith organizations are scattered on the landscape of international organizations, earning wide respect and appreciation; to name a few: Religions for Peace, Parliament of the World's Religions, United Religions Initiative, the King Abdullah International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, the Universal Peace Federation, and others.

This development is recognized widely at the United Nations, and contributed to the formation of the Alliance of Civilizations, perhaps to counter a potential “clash of civilizations” as predicted by Samuel Huntington in his often cited work article from 1993, *The Clash of Civilizations*

During a program at the United Nations called “The Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes”, convened on 14 July 2017, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stated, “I firmly believe in the power of faith leaders to shape our world for good.” He added that: “All religions teach respect for life, and recognize human beings as fundamentally equal. These principles summon us to show respect for all human beings, even those with whom we might profoundly disagree or whose cultures might seem alien. I urge the widest possible dissemination and implementation of this Plan of Action. It can help to save lives, reduce suffering, and realize our shared vision of peaceful, inclusive and just societies in which diversity is valued and the rights of all individuals are protected” (Guterres 2017).

The coalition encourages responsible collaboration with various UN agencies, most notably the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the KAICIID International Dialogue Centre. The Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations is working in partnership with the Universal Peace Federation (UPF), the Vienna-based Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and faith-based individuals, institutions and communities.

In 2020, the Coalition organized 10 Webinars with UNODC, UNEP, UNFPA, Habitat, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, judges, law enforcement officers, academics, activists and leaders of different faiths from around the world on a variety of topics.

We hope our readers will find this summation of the Webinar Series of the Coalition of FBOs informative and enriching. Even more, we hope you will join us in the important endeavor.

Michael Platzer & Thomas G. Walsh
Executive Editors

The webinars in which these statements are derived can be viewed at the following link.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zu2IzZJYTkA&list=PLpJHZMrW16TQku2I.xSml3Si3WutrlpNqr>

and at <https://coalitionfbo.org/webinars/>

Learn more about the Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and its webinar series at:

<https://coalitionfbo.org/>

Faith-Based Organizations, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice: Addressing the Urgent Challenges of Our Time

May 11, 2020

Moderator:

- Dr. Thomas Walsh, Co-Chair, Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations

Panelists:

- Amb. Alvaro Albacete, Deputy Secretary General, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID)
- Mr. Jean-Luc Lemahieu, Director, Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
- Dr. Azza Karam, Secretary General, Religions for Peace
- Ms. Saskia Schellekens, Senior Adviser, Culture, UN Population Fund (UNFPA); Coordinator, Executive Secretariat, UN Interagency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development
- Bishop Munib Younan, Lutheran Bishop, Jerusalem



Amb. Alvaro Albacete

Deputy Secretary General, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Inter-religious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID)

Today, dear friends, I would like to begin by thanking the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the leadership of Mr. Jean-Luc Lemahieu for their cooperation in the past month, which led to the organization of today's meeting. This is the first in a series of webinars on the role of faith-based organizations (FBOs) and religious actors in crime prevention and justice. I'm pleased to take part in today's dialogue and to see our dear friend and long-standing partner Dr. Azza Karam joining us in this endeavor.

Today's meeting, as has been highlighted already, was organized as a follow-up to a series of meetings that took place in Vienna and San Francisco that provided a platform for representatives of faith-based organizations to bring their voices to the policy table and complement the work of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The Commission is the principal policymaking body of the United Nations in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice as an intergovernmental organization that promotes interreligious and intercultural dialogue, as well as cooperation between policymakers and religious actors in achieving peace and social cohesion. With our headquarters in Vienna, we are thrilled to be partnering with the UNODC and the Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations on this initiative for crime prevention and justice.

We hope that this meeting opens a new avenue for cooperation during these challenging times. I would like to present this new context, when many of us are working remotely from home, as an enabling force rather than a disruptive one. Too often religious and cultural differences are reduced to simplistic narratives of conflict. This assumption must be challenged through building and

maintaining partnerships between policymakers and faith-based organizations. In a world where more than 80% of the population identifies itself as religious, the potential of religious leaders and faith-based organization to play a constructive role remains great and often not fully utilized.

The pandemic and the common struggle that we face have pointed out the common values of compassion and solidarity that all religions sustain. In this spirit I am convinced that a series of webinars in the next weeks will allow us to address some of the most pressing issues and reinforce the broader partnership between religious actors and policymakers. This represents the beginning of a fruitful exchange that could manifest in a strong partnership, in particular with regard to important topics such as ethics, anti-corruption, good governance, and social, environmental and gender justice.

We at KAICIID believe that any approach to social cohesion and peacebuilding, in order to be effective, must respect difference and support inclusive and sustained dialogue through multi-stakeholder partnerships. KAICIID sees considerable potential in dialogue platforms composed of representatives of different religious traditions. They can be a mechanism of coordination in response to emerging issues of local communities. KAICIID has established and supports the functioning of interreligious platforms in the Arab region, the Central African Republic, Myanmar and Nigeria. Those platforms serve to combat growing intolerance and foster cooperation through the establishment of dialogue. We work on capacity building and support local initiatives in addition to our work in the field.

KAICIID has also worked to strengthen the links between research policy and practice in order to enhance the process of interreligious learning, educating and networking for peace and reconciliation, thus contributing to the Sustainable Development Goal agenda, especially as we also offer online courses on interreligious dialogue and its relevance in the context of agenda 2030. We invite you to visit our website, should you be interested, to follow the online content we offer.

KAICIID works with esteemed partner organizations, including faith-based organizations, NGOs, and government and intergovernmental organizations, many of which are entities of the United Nations such as the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, UNESCO, the United Nations Foundation, the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, and others. We are proud to have served as co-chair of the Advisory Council to the UN Interagency Task Force on Religion and Development composed of UN entities, including UNODC, and now to be a lead member of the Advisory Council, focusing on providing

input and spaces for dialogue on the role of faith-based organizations in supporting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 and specifically on SDG 16, fostering peace and inclusive societies for sustainable development in the context of crime prevention.

Faith-based organizations and religious leaders active on a grassroots level have shown their commitment and motivation to go the extra mile due to their commitment to a day-to-day presence in the community, which enables a trusted and frank dialogue with juveniles, substance abusers and inmates returning to their communities. The ability to be a bridge from the neighborhood to the larger community and state institutions position faith-based organizations as a key resource for crime prevention and restorative justice.

Good governance dialogue is at the heart of KAICIID's work, and I look forward to hearing from policymakers and religious actors about their experiences from the field.

I firmly believe that meetings like the one today can help us increase knowledge about the great work being done by faith-based organizations around the world and identify opportunities for working together for a common cause towards just and peaceful societies. I hope that today's exchange will enable us to progress in our journey of collaboration, which could result in concrete recommendations to be presented to the United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Injustice.

I would like to conclude by saying through our multireligious and cross-sectoral partnerships we can have a sustainable impact, and we can help amplify the voices of religious actors and bring them to the center of the global stage.

Thank you very much.



Mr. Jean-Luc Lemahieu

*Director, Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs,
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)*

Evidently these are very unusual times in which we live today. It is a world under strain. Businesses and employees are struggling. It is also a time when we see an interesting discussion popping up that is very relevant to what we stand for in this Coalition for Faith-Based Organizations: a discussion about the value of human lives and the value of economic prosperity. How do we protect humanity, health systems, and our societies? But also, how do we protect the economy? How can we prevent both the worst-case health scenario and the worst economic scenario?

This is a situation that is, in many ways, unprecedented. Then again, this exposure of the fragility of the current globalized order gives us opportunities to assess where we are as the human species.

We have spoken about the excellent work being done by the coalition so far, with the event in San Francisco commemorating 75 years of the United Nations Charter, which, especially today in this moment of crisis, is more relevant than ever before. Indeed, multilateralism as we have known it for many decades is under strain. One of the lessons that we have to learn from this current crisis is that we need to be careful not to circle the wagons again and become exclusionary of all those who do not fit our in-group. We need to be careful that we don't close borders, as is already happening. We must understand that to defeat this virus, it cannot exist anywhere on the globe. If we fail to cooperate, the virus will control our lives into the future. We need to rise as one community against the egoism of an in-group and against the cruelty of nature.

In this context, I think that the work of this coalition and the webinars that it is putting forward will be very helpful in bringing us together. Now I have ten points to share with you.

First: The pandemic has led to a shift in focus from street crime to domestic crime. Stay-at-home restrictions in place in many countries have curtailed opportunities for crime in public spaces, but, in the domestic sphere, those in unstable situations find themselves in even greater danger. Although at a global level, 81% of homicide victims are male, when it comes to intimate-partner homicide, women and girls represent 82% of the victims. With the home being the most dangerous place for women, the lockdown measures put women at a higher risk of violence.

Second: Law enforcement has new priorities and challenges. Enforcing the lockdown conditions and attending to emergencies put law enforcement at greater risk of exposure to the virus. Proactive enforcement is also more challenging, as every face-to-face interaction carries new dangers.

Third: Unemployment and economic strain will be factors in the changing criminal landscape. Economic difficulties for legitimate businesses and a sharp spike in unemployment might precipitate a rise in acquisitive and profit-oriented crime in countries where economic and social safety nets are insufficient. Additionally, the demand for new products as well as tightening controls on movement and markets will produce new opportunities for organized crime. Falsification of medical products has increased dramatically, even in countries where that problem was never so pronounced. In other countries, wildlife crime has risen. In the past, hordes of tourists and guides provided a presence in game reserves much larger than what the official wildlife protection forces and local governments could muster.

Fifth: As border controls have increased, the risks associated with circumventing them have increased, but the profitability has increased as well. As criminal organizations have grown accustomed to risk, shipments of drugs have become much bigger.

Sixth: With people spending much more time at home, opportunities for cybercrime may rise. This is another form of crime that disproportionately affects women, children, and the elderly.

Seventh: As public resources are directed towards health, corruption and misallocation of those resources becomes a concern. Can we guarantee that those resources will indeed be directed towards those with the greatest need?

Eighth: There is a particular risk for spread of the virus in prisons and detention centers. Even before COVID, prisons in over half of countries worldwide were working well above their official capacities. Of the world's prisons, 28%

are running above 150% of their capacity. The situation puts prisoners at great health risk. In addition, stay-at-home orders deprive prisoners of contact with their families and the outside world.

Ninth: We must be vigilant about loss of liberty. The limitations and restrictions to civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights posed by the emergency measures may have a long-term impact if governments abuse them.

Tenth: The crisis will only elevate the battle for legitimacy between governments and non-state actors. In highly stressed areas, there is competition for scarce resources, and third parties, such as criminal and radical groups, make use of public discontent with local and national governments for recruitment and support.

In conclusion, I congratulate the Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations for this series of webinars, and I hope that the above assessments of the evolving crime situation will help guide the coming discussions.



Dr. Azza Karam

Secretary General, Religions for Peace

Religions for Peace is honored to have a voice in this discussion. For those who may not know, we are celebrating our 50th anniversary this year, and it's an interesting coincidence that it comes at this time of global crisis.

We like to describe ourselves as the United Nations of religions. Whereas the United Nations represents all the governments of the world, we gather religious institutions from around the world and also maintain presences in many countries. We have 90 interreligious councils, each of which is a legally registered platform that has the religious institutions and communities of that particular country represented. Additionally, we have six regional councils that form the main structure of Religions for Peace.

We were able to convene about 250 religious leaders from around the world to come up with a new strategic plan for the organization from 2020 to 2025. The strategic plan is fully in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals agenda, so peace and security education, environmental stewardship, and gender equality are all priorities. This is the first time, to my knowledge, in our history that the leadership of the various institutions has actually come together around a common agenda that includes gender equality as one of its main tenets. That itself is historic.

What we've learned is that COVID is challenging the social contract, the religious communities, and even the very nature of worship. Worship, which is a basic function of religious institutions, is being redefined because to stay safe and literally save lives requires that the worship practice itself be redefined and reimagined. The re-envisioning of the worship upon which religious institutions are based is a re-envisioning of the social contract as well.

That challenge has prompted Religions for Peace to set up a multireligious humanitarian support fund because we realized that even though four out of the top ten humanitarian responder NGOs in the world are actually faith based, they don't necessarily work together. In fact, what very often happens during crises is that every single institution goes into full gear to respond, but usually primarily focusing aid on their own community. We feel that outcomes could be improved if these institutions were to work together.

The intentionality of our fund is absolutely unique, with a focus on getting religious institutions to collaborate during moments of humanitarian crisis. The vast majority of that work is about social services rather than dialogue. We are bringing the communities together to facilitate everything from spiritual counseling all the way to actual delivery of medicines, food, and water.

Even in New York City, one of the financial centers of the world, a faith-based organization has set up a major public health facility in Central Park. In Geneva, another faith-based organization is feeding thousands of people. Even in cosmopolitan cities, religious institutions are not talking with one another; rather, they're actually serving communities. That's why it's absolutely critical for us to be deliberate and intentional about supporting them in collaborating in those acts of service they undertake.

Given the increasing levels of domestic violence during the lockdowns, our International Women's Network and the international youth networks are very busy. Right now, they are collecting basic data about how many households have women who are endangered, they're providing spiritual care for some of these women, and they're also organizing alternative places to house some of these women. This level of service goes way beyond; it is about serving communities in the moment of greatest need.

In terms of crime prevention, we have two simultaneous events that we're seeing unfold. Religious extremist groups are engaging in social services, delivering medicine, health, and food, in order to build local support. Many such groups are not just in the business of laundering money and building bombs but are also actually delivering services. There is a deep irony and a very serious issue here because they get to present themselves as saviors in this space as they continue perpetuating atrocities.

What's better is for religious communities and institutions who are well established to be able to mediate that space, to be able to also address and assess the impact of that issue in the long run. Obviously, the opposite phenomenon also occurs, where extremist groups ramp up the violence in their communities to take advantage of their vulnerable state. Therefore, it is even more important that not only governments, not only security services, but also religious organizations step in and serve together across religious denominations.

It's not good enough to have the Catholics work with the Catholics, the Protestants with the Protestants, and the Muslims with the Muslims. All have to work together. This is why we have set up our multireligious humanitarian support fund. We invite your contributions, and we very much hope that we'll be able to provide support on a systematic basis.

If these religious institutions and organizations can come together and serve all in moments of crisis like this, then they are also the most capable and best able to deliver on the peace writ large when the height of the crisis ends. If you can serve well now, together, as religious institutions in a multireligious capacity with your civic enterprise and your government, you can serve afterwards as genuine agents of peace. That is the philosophy of Religions for Peace.



Ms. Saskia Schellekens

Senior Adviser, Culture, UN Population Fund (UNFPA); Coordinator, Executive Secretariat, UN Interagency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development

At the UN Interagency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development, and in my capacity as the culture adviser at the UN Population Fund, we greatly welcome opportunities like these for us at the United Nations to connect with multi-faith initiatives. I would like to share a little bit about what the UN Interagency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development does and also share about the UN Population Fund's mandate. This work is directly relevant to the current COVID crisis as well as to crime prevention, criminal justice and the work of the Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations.

Twenty-five UN agencies currently comprise the Interagency Task Force. They come together to share information on their engagement with faith-based actors and the intersection between religion and their agencies' particular mandates. We also engage in capacity-building activities and the development of guidance and oversight regarding our engagement with faith-based actors. Collectively, the members cover the full spectrum of the UN's agenda: sustainable development, peace and security, human rights, and humanitarian assistance. The task force was established in 2010 as part of the UN Development Group (now the UN Sustainable Development Group). Over time, the Task Force has expanded to include the office of the Secretary General Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide as well as the UN Alliance of Civilizations.

The steady expansion of the task force speaks to the growing awareness of the importance of engaging with faith-based organizations and religious leaders in our work to achieve just, inclusive, and sustainable societies for all people. This recognition has led to an increasing number of joint activities by the task force,

including policy roundtables and joint initiatives with key UN intergovernmental events, as well as the establishment of the Multi-Faith Advisory Council, which consists of a collection of UN systems and faith-based partners. This council provides strategic advice, supports the task force's human rights outreach as well as the UN's engagement with faith-based entities, with a particular focus on religious literacy, representing, and dynamics. The council also supports work relating to the environment, migration, gender justice, peace, security, and health.

Now, let me speak briefly on the UN Population Fund. The UN Population Fund works to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, and every young person can achieve their full potential. Its programs support sexual and reproductive health, gender equality, and women's empowerment, as well as addressing gender-based violence and ending harmful practices like female genital mutilation and child marriage. It also supports governments in data collection, particularly population data. It works closely with civil society organizations, including faith-based organizations, as well as with religious leaders and traditional leaders. Our effectiveness and ability to understand the cultural dynamics at play require listening, engaging in dialogue, and sharing knowledge with community groups and influential individuals. Once this is accomplished, we can jointly plan activities on the ground. Challenging cultural values and harmful power structures benefits greatly from the UN Population Fund's experience with the faith-based sector.

Now I have a few reflections on the theme at hand and the Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations. We cannot avoid talking about the global COVID pandemic. Faith-based organizations play a major role in saving lives and reducing suffering, and religious leaders are a primary source of support, comfort, and guidance. They are also key to the delivery of direct social and health services, and we believe that religious leaders are very critical in sharing evidence-based information to protect their communities, as they are likely to be accepted by communities otherwise distrustful of governments and other stakeholders.

The Interagency Task Force put out a joint statement on COVID-19 that received the endorsement of the entire Multi-Faith Advisory Council. I also would like to point to the World Health Organization's guidance on engaging with faith-based organizations in addressing the pandemic. There are many initiatives involving other UN entities and faith-based partners, all of which are extremely valuable. Additionally, the UN Sustainable Development Group recently put out a guiding framework for all our teams specifically focusing on economic impact and recovery. In that particular context, faith-based organizations and religious leaders play a key part in resilience building, social protection, and social cohesion. It is impossible to do justice to all the efforts that so many entities are engaged in.

I'd like to end with a few suggestions. I encourage you to look into the potential of working with young people in their communities of faith, engaging them in education about human rights, civic participation, and the rule of law, in particular, starting dialogues about juvenile justice and support. Integrating young people is particularly relevant given that they really bear the brunt of the socio-economic consequences of the pandemic, in addition to the fact that one in four young people worldwide is affected by either armed conflict or organized crime.

I also welcome the focus on domestic violence. It is critical to ensure that there is a sufficient response in communities by offering services, setting up hotlines, and so forth. I think faith-based organizations and religious communities have a key role to play in supporting these efforts.

I thank you for the opportunity to connect with the Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations.



Bishop Munib Younan

Lutheran Bishop, Jerusalem

I am elated that the world is starting to understand the significance of religion and religious leaders. At times, it feels that we are speaking, but the world is not hearing us. I have prepared three theological points, from which I will draw some ideas that can be presented to faith-based organizations, the United Nations, and others.

My first point comes from the prophet Micah: “What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” Micah is intertwining justice with the idea of righteous acts. The Old Testament considers justice as the central concept of the Bible, for justice is not only political but also religious. God wants the good for every human being, and, as the Swiss theologian Karl Barth wrote, “God always takes his stand unconditionally and passionately on this side and this side only: against the lofty and on behalf of the lowly. Against those who already enjoy right and privilege and on behalf of those who are denied it and deprived of it.”

This is God’s message to Moses at the burning bush: God hears the cry of the oppressed. This is the message of all the prophets. The Latin American liberation theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez has articulated God’s preferential option for the poor. He refers to the trend throughout the Bible of preference given to the well-being of the poor and powerless of society in the teachings and commands of God and of the prophets and other righteous people. This calls us to look to the world from the perspective of the marginalized, the oppressed, and to work in solidarity for justice. Religion must be involved in the social, economic, and political spheres for renewal and the establishment of just principles and values.

My second point comes from Genesis: "So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., explained that the individual, as the child of God, created by God, and saved by the precious blood of the Savior Jesus Christ on the cross, is equally valued inasmuch as he or she is birthed with an inherent dignity that ultimately respects the requisites for the bestowal of just and fair treatment. So, from that point of view, Christian theology understands that universal peace must be established on four pillars: truth, justice, charity, and liberty as the basis for human rights. Any concept of justice and human rights will therefore include, first, democratic relationships among humans, cooperation and fellowship with other humans, cooperation with the environment, and responsibility for future generations of humans created in God's image.

Feminist theologians have drawn our attention to the alienation of the female experience in religious thought. This is the reason that the image of God gives the source and power of liberation and equality. I call on religious leaders, faith-based organizations, and all communities to present gender justice policies for their communities. In the Lutheran federation, we have given our people gender justice policies that today are very crucial in our world. Religion is only for justice and equality.

My third point draws on the story of King David. He committed adultery with Bathsheba and sent her husband to the front line of the war to be killed. The prophet Nathan visited King David and told him of a poor man living happily with his sheep. A powerful man stole the sheep from him. King David was enraged and wanted to punish that man, and the prophet told him "you are the one." This teaches us that religious leaders should be prophetic today, in our world. They should be creative and speak prophetically. They should never be complicit in the violation of human rights or justice. They should dare to speak truth to power. They must challenge any crime against humanity. They must challenge corruption, even in religious institutions. Religious leaders must address equal opportunity in our world, in our society, and work to eradicate poverty. Religious leaders, civil society, and politicians must cooperate to stop war. They must speak against extremism, hatred, and racism, be it white supremacy, antisemitism, Islamophobia, Christian phobia, or any other bigotry. Religious leaders must speak for every human being, not only for their followers. They must address domestic violence and any kind of discrimination, including the discriminatory structures within their own societies, their own institutions, churches, mosques, or temples. They must boldly speak on peace, based on justice, in all conflict areas, including (as I come from Jerusalem) the Palestinian–Israeli conflict.

History will never remember religious leaders who seek their own benefit. History will never remember warmongers. It remembers creative peacemakers, not

talkers. This is the reason I will never stop working for justice until I find that peace based on justice, reconciliation, forgiveness is a reality in our world. We are ready to cooperate with Religions for Peace and KAICIID and other initiatives. We are ready to cooperate on all these principles because these principles are not good for only one religion; they are good for all of us, and we need today to collaborate for the sake of humanity. This is God's call for us.

May God bless you.

Faith for Earth: Climate Change and Environmental Justice

June 4, 2020

Ahead of United Nations World Environment Day, leading environmental experts commended faith-based organizations (FBOs) on their efforts to combat climate change, offering recommendations for better collaboration such as increased technological “interchange” and the establishment of platforms which would enable faith and science to better support each other.

The discussion took place during KAICIID’s latest webinar on June 4, titled Faith for Earth: Climate Change and Environmental Justice, which was held in cooperation with the Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Participants addressed pressing environmental issues related to the United Nations Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development.

Moderator:

- Dr. Michael Platzer, Co-Chair, Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations

Panelists:

- Dr. Harald Egerer, Head of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Office in Vienna, Austria
- Prof. Dr. Jeffrey Sachs, Renowned Economist and Director of the Earth Institute, Columbia University
- Ms. Kiran Bali, Global Chairperson, United Religions Initiative
- Mr. Jorge Eduardo Rios, Chief of the Global Programme for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime at UNODC
- Prof. Dr. Roberto Manuel Carlés, President of the Society of Social Defense



Dr. Harald Egerer

Head of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) Office in Vienna, Austria

Thank you very much and to everybody it's a big pleasure and honor for me to be here on behalf of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). Tomorrow is World Environment Day, which celebrates in fact the foundation of the global environmental movement that started in the early 1970s. This year's World Environment Day is about nature: how we deal with nature, how we should go back to nature, and what nature gives us in return. All of this is, of course, very important as we are facing a global biodiversity crisis. We are now also facing another crisis—the health crisis. We saw that they have managed to flatten the curve of infections in Austria. But we know that we have a lot of other curves to flatten that probably will be not that easy to flatten. We cannot do a lockdown against climate change or against the biodiversity crisis. We will need to change our way and views. In fact, we will have to change how we deal with the earth and how we look at reality.

I'm not a specialist on the topic of faith and environment. I am going to deliver a little presentation on behalf of Iyad Abumoghli, who is the director of the 'Faith for Earth' strategy in UNEP. We are working in Eastern Europe mainly and also on the global mountain ecosystems. We believe that mountains and rivers and ecosystems need to function. We have an initiative called the Carpathian Convention from the beautiful Carpathian mountain range that extends over seven countries in Central and Eastern Europe. We are managing basically an environmental convention—a regional environmental treaty to keep and to sustainably develop that area. It is a beautiful exercise of all different stakeholders working together. We have a lot of activities on environmental education but also a very strong collaboration with science and a lot of cooperation with civil society organizations of all types.

I was lucky that I joined these interreligious symposia on the Aegean Sea, on the Black Sea, on the Danube and then later even on the Arctic and on the Amazon River that brought together people. I believe that today when I go to Romania, for example, and we do our work as UNEP, there are many people committed to the cause. I believe that this is the result of work from ten or fifteen years ago that was also engaging with faith-based organizations because faith is a very good way to bring important subjects to people.

I will now move to the presentation to tell you what UNEP is doing on the global scale on this topic. I'm going to speak on "Faith for Earth," which is UNEP's strategic engagement with faith-based organizations that started in 2017—two years after the adoption of the SDGs. This is a global strategy for engagement with faith-based organizations promoted by UNEP.

When we talk about implementation of the SDGs, we talk about the five Ps, which are the key principles to make this attitude a reality. We have to deal with the people to ensure more prosperity to protect our planets and to engage in partnerships in a peaceful way.

Sustainable Development

- People – End poverty and hunger in all forms and ensure dignity and equality
- Prosperity – Ensure prosperity and fulfilling lives in harmony with nature
- Peace – Foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies
- Partnership – Implement the agenda through a solid global partnership
- Planet – Protect our planet's natural resources and climate for future generations

The full picture: UN Environment Strategy for Engaging with Faith-Based Organizations

- Partnerships SDG 17
- Cultural Diversity – 4th SD pillar
- Innovation
- Like-minded
- Means of Implementation
- Stakeholders

How can we implement the SDGs? The governments cannot do it alone. To achieve the 2030 agenda, all the stakeholders have to work together. The private sector is contributing; the civil society organizations are contributing. In the beginning the faith-based organizations were not an integral part of the implementation mechanism of this Agenda 2030. Even so, they have a big role to play, and they have played a big role in achieving sustainable development.

Why Faith-Based Organizations (FBO)

- 80% of people associate themselves with a religion.
- Dynamism to operate on the ground.
- More than 250 environmental FBOs.
- Promote Lifestyles informed by faith values.
- Respect traditional knowledge and cultural diversity.
- Exercise environmental stewardship.

The focus of the initiative and of the strategy is to integrate the faith-based organizations as an implementing partner. Our rationale is because the vast majority of people of this planet associate themselves with a religion. There are many religious organizations around the world. They are operational; they are on the ground. They influence the lifestyles of the people.



Also, the faith-based organizations are holding enormous assets. Just to demonstrate their role, we say that they own 8% of habitable lands, they are involved in 50% of the schools worldwide, they own 5% of all commercial forests worldwide, and they are involved in 65% of the schools in sub-Saharan Africa. These impressive figures show us why they are such an important player also in economic terms.

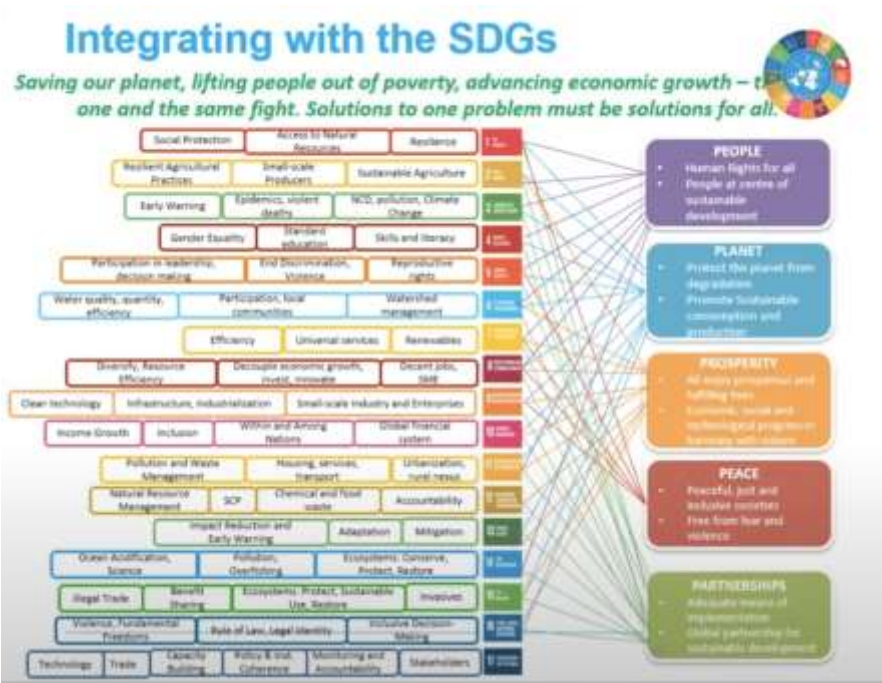
Mission Statement: “To Inspire, Empower and Engage with Faith-Based Organizations to innovatively deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030, at all levels.”

Vision Statement: “A world where all creations live in balance”

Our mission is to engage the faith-based organizations in action for the 2030 Agenda. We want to provide an interface platform for them to contribute and maximize the impact—also within the UN systems—with the vision that there is a world where all creations can live in balance, and not only humans subordinating and controlling the resources of the earth.

There are different strategic goals: The first goal is dialogue with faith leaders on policy, again to bring faith leaders into discussions and in decision making also in the UN system. Faith-based organizations are the fourth largest economic power on earth. Last but not least, to bridge the gap between the scientific evidence, for example what international organizations are saying, with what theology and religious scripts are saying. This would also empower faith leaders to underpin their faith messages with scientific evidence.

One example of this is the work that UNEP has been doing to basically marry, to bring together, the Sustainable Development Goals and *Laudato Si'* of Pope Francis. That was already mentioned in the introduction of this webinar. I'm not going to go into the details here; I'm just mentioning it.



We have 17 SDGs; we have 169 targets; we have 202 indicators. The question is how to integrate these with environmental matters and in the framework of engaging also with faith-based organizations.

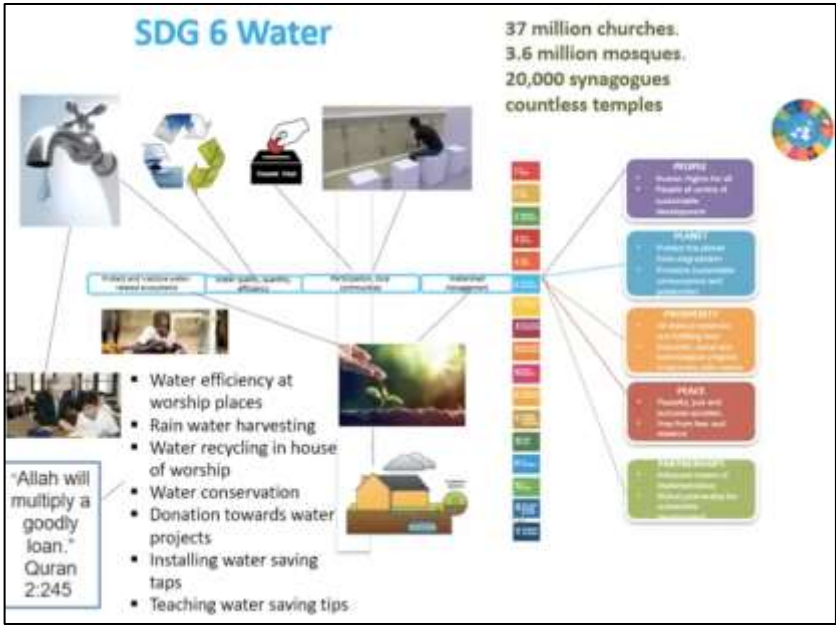
We focus on the green SDGs, that is, the six to seven SDGs that contribute directly to the health of the planet.

One of them, for example, is natural resource management. Of course, all of these not only contribute to the health of the planet but also to the other important principles of sustainable development and of the SDGs.

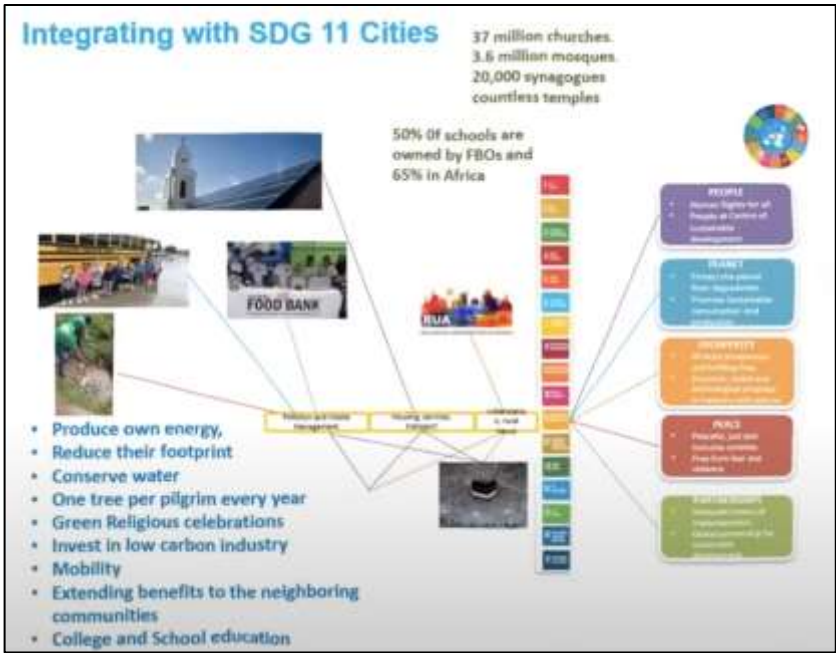
We have come up with a set of guiding principles for leaders and faith-based organizations. Then we try to connect them to the existing programs and initiatives that are existing within UNEP.



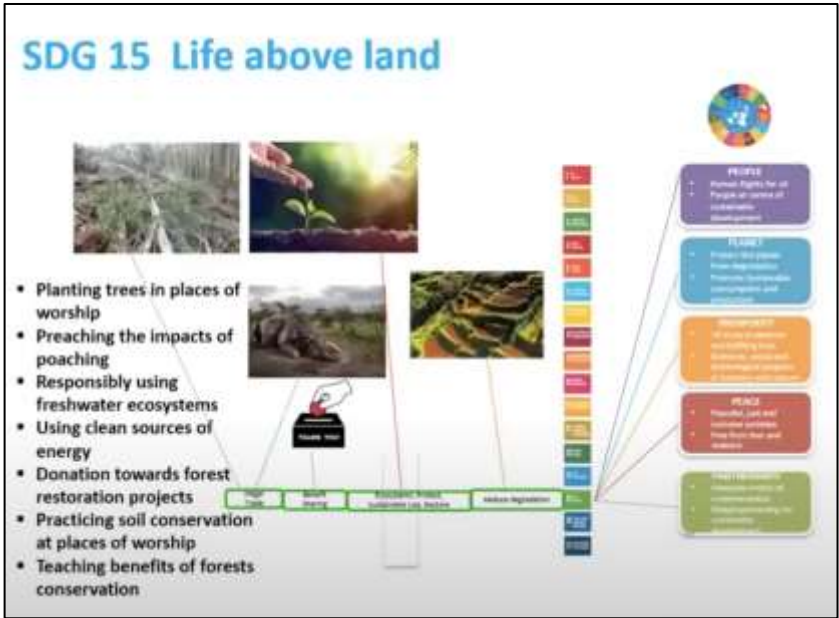
One example is the SDG 12 on sustainable production and consumption that I have been showing. Religions, some people say, very strongly dictate what people can eat, what they can drink or how they can dress. They influenced a whole lifestyle system. This is also basically closely tied to how human beings behave and therefore to the sustainable production and consumption and goals. That's the global picture. But also, there are 36 million churches around the world, which is important to engage to make the ecological footprint of churches better. An example of how is by installing solar panels. Also, the idea of pilgrimage is very important in all religions. Hundreds of millions of people each year go on spiritual journeys or visits. There are important concerns on how to make this activity contribute to a better environmental performance.



We could say the same about water.



About cities.



About life above land. All of these cooperations are very important.

Post Covid-19 Response

- First: Behavioral and attitude change from consumerism to sustainability.
- Second: We need to build back better.
- Third: We need to be cognizant of the science of Zoonotic – 75% of new and infectious diseases and cause around 1 billion cases of illness.
- Fourth: We need to deal with the emerging medical waste.
- Fifth: We need a Different Economy. An economy that is inclusive and green.

I want to finish by saying that we will now be living in the post COVID world. We say as an organization that this should be a moment to reflect on what nature wants to tell us and to show us its limits. I want to conclude by saying that nature is giving us a very important message. Thank you very much for your attention. I hope this discussion will help us together find a different way to look at reality.



Prof. Dr. Jeffrey Sachs

Renowned Economist and Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University

I just want to make a couple of points about the religious engagement that I have found to be important and I hope useful. The first is that I think the major religions, many of them, need help to understand the nature of this crisis. The will is there. The understanding of climate change, loss of biodiversity and the other challenges we're facing requires technical knowledge, and many leaders of many faiths are asking for help in that. I've had nothing but a wonderful and inspiring experience over the last decade with the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and Social Sciences at the Vatican.

It is a unique institution in the world—an institution of leading scientists from many faiths that come together to help advise the Catholic Church and the pope on the detailed science that underpins many of our challenges. I find it an absolutely extraordinary and remarkable undertaking and have participated in dozens of conferences at this point over the course of the decade. *Laudato Si'*, which is an astoundingly important, eloquent, knowledgeable and persuasive encyclical, draws upon the scientific knowledge that has been brought together by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences.

The point I want to make is that other major faiths generally do not have such an instrument at their benefit. One thing I hope that we could think about doing is providing such assistance or providing avenues for such technical interchange at the Pontifical Academy of Sciences. Many theological and religious leaders from Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, the various Christian denominations, Judaism and others have come together as part of these gatherings, and I have discussed with these leaders the idea of these various world-leading faiths making similar efforts to gather the systematic scientific knowledge that is extremely useful and important in their religious faith and

social work. This is the first point that I want to put on the table. I've spoken to Patriarch Bartholomew about the opportunities for the Orthodox faiths to engage the scientists. The Orthodox religions have spoken to the leaders in many Asian countries about similar opportunities, and I believe that this would be a big help. Watching the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences working is a profound inspiration for me and a demonstration of how the worlds of faith and science can be brought together in such an incredibly fruitful and powerful way. I think *Laudato Si'* is an exemplar of that.

The second quick point that I want to make is along the same lines. My hope is that while the various world religions and faiths, of course, have their own deep and very different commitments, there is an underpinning of common ethics that can be drawn upon to find a common language across all the faiths. I've been helping an initiative called Ethics in Action with the Vatican and the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network that aimed specifically to bring together religious leaders to discern their commonalities—of course as well as the differences—it's not to smooth over or to be glib or to be naive about all agreements. But it is to say that there is a common underpinning of ethics, of dignity as a fundamental part of humanity, that is common to all the faiths. My belief is that if we can find that common language, we will be doing the world a great favor right now. I live in a country tearing itself apart these days because we have a leader whose power is through division and fear, and he's creating a vast crisis in our country and in the world. He also tries to pit the faiths against each other—the evangelical Christian faiths against other faiths. It's ugly. It's dangerous. It's not the first time in history, and it's something that we need to resist.

In addition to the scientific knowledge, we make special increased efforts to find a commonality of human dignity and human rights that underpin the SDGs and underpin our common agenda. It is plain to say but important to indicate that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a core document that has been adopted by all countries of the world. It was actually created by a group of scholar-diplomats from many different faiths and geographies, and so it reflects a very ecumenical perspective. We really need this now also.

I would point to at least three such initiatives that I know of that I think we should support. One is the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, led by Miguel Moratinos, which aims precisely to avoid the conflict of civilizations and all of these stereotypes and ugliness that go along with this. Second is the great global NGO Religions for Peace which is another ecumenical gathering of religious leaders specifically to find those commonalities. The third wonderful group that I have been lucky to be part of on many occasions in the last 10 years is the Community of Sant'Egidio, which is a faith-based group in Rome

closely affiliated with the Vatican but whose core mission is peace and cross-religion dialogue and understanding.

These are the two main points that I would like to add to help religious leaders and leaders in the community to understand the challenges substantively, deeply, scientifically, with the knowledge that can really empower them to empower their congregants. Second, to find stronger ways to work across the faiths so that all of humanity can be reassured that there is a common vision. This is not faith against faith. That is the last thing that we want, need, or is the truth. There is a common core based on human dignity and on virtue that is common to all of the world's major religions that we can draw upon to have the religions play the vital role that they need to play at this time.



Ms. Kiran Bali

Global Chairperson, United Religions Initiative

All of our religions, all of our spiritual expressions, and our indigenous traditions highlight the importance of environmental stewardship. And they highlight the importance of protecting Mother Earth; Earth is referred to as the Divine Mother. So, in a world with between eight and 10 people identifying with a particular faith tradition, we can understand the power that this has.

I'd like to talk a little bit about how the faith and the interfaith communities have transformed their commitment towards environmental justice. The work is happening; we have converted dialogue to action. From an interfaith perspective, over the many years that I've been involved, I've seen communities coming together to work for peace. Now, that was usually peace meaning an absence of violence, peace between human beings. That was it—there was very little reference to peace being about the environment, peace being about all living beings, not just humans.

I'm pleased to say that things are changing for the better. Faith communities and the interfaith community have taken the bull by the horns and have really embedded the idea of peace for the environment into this overall concept of peace in our world. That's because we've had some really good awareness raising. We have seen changes physically in our environment that affect our day-to-day life. And the potential of the faith community is just huge. There are so many communities on the ground, who have resources, who are united by a set of values. Indeed, they listen to each other. They are seen as the change-makers in the community.

I'm going to give you a little bit of an example. The United Religions Initiative, the world's largest interfaith network in the world, is operating in 108 countries. One of the important things about this interfaith-based network is the ability

to change behaviors. Why should we change behaviors? Because climate change and the issues that we are experiencing today are about people's behavior; our behavior has created a problem. But at the same time, our behavior can help to reverse the issues. Number one, seeing the Divinity in our environment, that's what all of our faith traditions, indigenous traditions, talk about: They talk about caring. The power of faith is helping us to create a better behavior and to embrace this message of creating a sustainable environment, especially for the next generation. Climate change is not just about using our cars, or using less water. There are other things connected to our livelihood, such as the agriculture, our eating habits.

Look at the environment during lockdown. We've seen less air pollution, clearer waters, plants are growing better. Wildlife is more liberated. It's so important that we reflect on this and allow our natural world the chance to adapt and thrive in the absence of all of this human interaction that goes on, which is very much destroying the world. I want to stress that all of our teachings talk about caring, compassion, and that we must extend that to all living beings. Look at our wildlife, how they've been affected by climate change. Because we can't hear their voice, we need to be their voice. In United Religions Initiative, we are doing so much for change at the community level, at the grassroots level, around compassion for animals, planting trees, education and awareness. Indeed, the role of faith leaders is so important in that because they hold a lot of respect. They can encourage us to stay at home, work from home, to connect and think about our moral compass. Education is important for everyone so that we understand what it is that we can do.

How do we then translate all this listening into dialogue and specific actions? An example would be tying it in with a particular festival. How can we utilize a special festival such as Christmas to talk about climate change? Just recently, there was a nice gathering going on, and somebody dressed up as Santa. For the children especially, the message was, "You know what? Santa may not have a home to go back to because the ice is melting." Now that will touch the children. But for us as adults, Christmas really needs to be about consumerism: Think of all the waste that goes on! There are a number of creative ways that we can utilize to help people understand what it is they can do.

I'm going to conclude with just one example of how faith communities have worked with the wider bodies. Here in the United Kingdom, as an interfaith cooperation circle as part of United Religions Initiative, we have worked with many different bodies, Friends of the Earth, for example, and other community bodies to lobby the local council, those decision makers, those policymakers to take urgent action to improve and protect our environment. We all know about greenhouse gases and the carbon dioxide trapping the heat, which is

warming the globe. But what are we going to do about it? After immense lobbying, we worked to ensure that a climate emergency was passed. The local civic body passed a declaration of a climate emergency. That was a really huge milestone in the whole partnership that we had. But that didn't mean anything on its own. It created publicity. But what did that actually mean?

The good thing is that we have worked together to create a vision. The vision is to ensure that our area is completely carbon neutral by 2038. Carbon emissions from human activities will need to be dramatically reduced to zero. How will we do this? First of all, set a carbon budget and then to ensure that we achieve our net zero ambition, we increase the amount of vehicle charging points for electric vehicles, encourage the use of electric cars, ensure that low-emission cars park for free, add more electric vehicles to the fleet of the council, give more young people a voice organizing a youth Climate Summit where we hear the passionate voices of the young people, and ensure that for all decisions, when they are made, we will look at the environmental impact. So we look at planting more trees. We have a climate commission to create a green charter, and we increase our recycling rates. All these are important things that are happening now with milestones. They are measurable. And we can make sure that we are making progress. That's the important thing. We learned so much.

The important thing now is action. How do we transform, dialogue, interact? I would just like to say that the work is happening around the world. Our faith communities, our cooperation circles, are bringing people together to make that change on the ground. That's something that we can all learn from, and we can all be inspired from. As we mark World Environment Day tomorrow, it's so important. Indeed, we must live World Environment Day each day and every day.



Mr. Jorge Eduardo Rios

Chief of the Global Programme for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime, UNODC

I'm very excited to talk about environmental justice because ultimately the lack of environmental justice is something that affects all of us. The juxtaposition of faith and environment for me in the webinar today is a very interesting topic. In fact, everybody in UNODC's Global Programme for Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime (GPWLFC) has faith: faith that we're going to do the right thing by saving what ultimately sustains us all.

I'm going to talk a little bit about what UNODC does to address wildlife, forest and fisheries crime. Biodiversity loss clearly is one of the most serious environmental threats alongside climate change. These are huge issues because, without sustaining the health of both the oceans and the terrestrial ecosystems, we're basically not going to be able to meet the goals and targets of the sustainable development agenda. That is something we're all very anxious to work on and start achieving.

A bit of background is first needed, at least about the work of GPWLFC as part of UNODC. Our program covers the ways in which organized and transnational organized crime make massive profits from the natural resources that should be benefiting populations and communities. There have been very interesting reports over the last few years. For example, the World Wildlife Foundation report that recognizes that we've lost 52% of the wildlife on over the last 40 years—and that's just what we can measure. An alarming report from Global Forest Watch says that the tropics lost 11.9 million hectares of tree cover in 2019. Nearly a third of that loss, 3.8 million hectares, occurred within tropical primary forests, "the lungs of the Earth." This is the equivalent of losing a football pitch of primary forest every 6 seconds for the entire year.

Also worthy of note is illegal logging, the scale of which is massive and affects local livelihoods and national economies. One-third of our global fish catch comes from illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, with many people dependent on fisheries for livelihoods and nutrition. We are not, however, even addressing the criminal aspects of the loss of biodiversity: the trafficking, poaching, corruption, economic crimes.

One of the first takeaways of my presentation is that unless the global community, political community, and Member States mainstream criminal justice systems, biodiversity protection, and climate change into policy and programs to protect biodiversity and climate change, everybody's efforts are going to fail.

We have to include criminal justice considerations when we talk about conservation management. Corruption is such a huge facilitator, a huge issue, that unfortunately we are failing to tackle appropriately. I'm going to share my presentation here on the screen with you. Just quickly, I want to emphasize some of the impacts that we know from wildlife and fisheries crime. Thank goodness, the international community is now starting to recognize the importance of addressing all of these issues as being interlinked. Corruption undermines social and economic development by robbing communities of their natural resources, and it clearly undermines the rule of law. In some cases, empowering criminals destabilizes governments. As we know, it also fuels other crimes. These are just some of the main issues, but they are important enough for us to recognize.

What does UNODC do? We're the guardians of the two conventions, the Palermo Convention, otherwise known as the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime, and the Convention Against Corruption. And this includes serious crime types alongside drug trafficking, arms trafficking, and trafficking in persons. We take it very seriously. Over the years, we've managed to consolidate our work, and we now feel we have a mandate, as well as the tools and instruments for much of our work.

We start with prevention. If we can't work directly with member states, then we work via the internet, clearly following up on investigations, working with the prosecution and the judiciary, all the way through to the court system. This is a flowchart of a lot of the work that we do with member states. You'll see some of our publications that represent other instruments, their tool kits, their guides; they're very much substance-oriented instruments that member states can use to improve the way they address GPWLFC issues and enforce measures against crimes.

The second takeaway from this slide is that member states really need to start considering making wildlife crimes serious crimes under the conventions, and these need to be made serious crimes within their internal legislation. Member

states may fail to do this and simply relying on their current forestry, hunting and management legislation. Legislation that used to cover all these issues is insufficient. Today, the modalities of trafficking, the involvement of transnational, organized criminal syndicates is such that these older laws are just unable to address the intricacies of how these issues *currently* operate.

My next slide focuses on partnerships. We are very much aware that we cannot work in isolation. Our approach should not just be enforcement oriented: We need to also include the issues of management and conservation. All these things need to work together, just like in other types of crime. We need to look at livelihoods. We need to look at supply and demand for products of our natural environment. We work very closely with our member states. The United Nations does not just go in and do what it wants—it works at the request of member states. We have very good working relationships with almost all member states. Our work is global. Very importantly, we also work very closely with UN agencies, other international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, the conservation community, academics, and the private sector. We ourselves have tried to build a coalition, or at least to complement all the work that most of these agencies or institutions or groups do.

We also work very closely with our partners in the international consortium to combat wildlife crime. This is a very important group of agencies: The World Bank, Interpol, the World Customs Organization (WCO), and the Society Secretariat. We are working together to leverage our best practices and to try to bring all of them to bear in the fight against organized crime. Very important, and following on from what our secretary-general has asked all of the UN agencies to do, is to work together, to avoid duplication, to leverage best practices, to complement our work and to really better utilize the scarce resources allocated to tackling these environmental crimes. In that vein, work very closely with society and the environment. We also work closely with FAO, with UNESCO, with UNICEF with UNDP, to name a few. Indeed, all agencies are coming to understand that together we can really make a difference.

When you asked us to join a faith-based coalition program, we were scratching our heads, how best can we support this? We are very much aware that faith-based organizations have a big role to play in sustainably addressing environmental crimes. And we know that a large number of faith-based organizations work globally, regionally, and locally. That is clearly an advantage for all of us. I think Professor Sachs summed up well just how important they are and just how cross-cutting the issue is. Regardless of our faith or religion, we need to address the issues to ensure a healthy natural world and understand that we also need to be virtuous in the way that we relate to our environment.

Let me just close by saying that this is my first day back to the office because of COVID-19. The pandemic is just one example of our encroachment into natural frontiers—of humans encroaching on forests, poaching, taking wildlife. And that impacts all of us. Human–wildlife interactions are now happening on an unprecedented scale. That’s is what has enabled these pathogens, formerly exclusively found in wildlife, to now impact human health. Human health is clearly impacted; human health is linked to a safe and healthy environment. We all need to recognize that we really need to tread carefully here.

The last takeaway from my presentation is that this is another one of the crime types that we must tackle globally. We know how to deal with drug trafficking, arms trafficking, human trafficking; we have the instruments, we have the tools, we have the knowledge, and we have police enforcement. That is what the police do.

Unfortunately—and this is a question we need to ask ourselves—why isn’t all of this being used to address wildlife, timber and fisheries crime? This is just important for all of us to address. I think that we’re already using all of these tools, but member states need to know that we don’t need to reinvent anything. We have the conventions; we have the tools. Let’s use them to address this crime.

Lastly, we recognize we’re all in this together. Unless we work together and see this as a mutual challenge, I’m afraid that we’re not going to reach our objective, which, ultimately, is to ensure that we all live in harmony with nature.



Prof. Dr. Roberto Carlés

President of the Society of Social Defense

I have a short time to share with you some considerations regarding the possible inclusion of ecocide as an international crime and the position assumed recently by Pope Francis that is part of the magisterium and social doctrine of the Catholic Church in his encyclical *Laudato Si* that was quoted.

Today, the pope quotes Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew that to destroy the biological diversity of God's creation degrades the integrity of the herd by causing changes by stripping the earth of its natural forests and destroying its wetlands: its land, its air, and its life. He closes that statement by holding that to commit a crime against the natural world is a sin against ourselves and a sin against God.

On the occasion of the 20th Congress of the International Association of Penal Law, the pope stated that the church is studying the inclusion in the Catechism of ecological sin against the common home. He proposed to define ecological sin as action or omission against God, against one's neighbor, the community and environment. The pope stated that this is a sin against future generations and is manifested in acts and habits of pollution and destruction of the harmony of the environment, in transgressions against the principles of interdependence, and in the breaking of networks of solidarity between creatures. On that occasion, however, he went beyond theology.

He defended the importance of reconnection of the crime of ecocide at the international level. He argued that ecocide is to be understood as the loss or damage or destruction of the ecosystems of a given territory. He argued, according to what I propose, in that Congress, that ecocide should be considered the fifth category of crimes against peace, which should be recognized as such by the international community. The pope appealed to all the leaders and actors

in this area to contribute their force to ensure adequate legal protection for our common home.

What is the current situation from the point of view of the legal protection of the environment? In the pope's point of view, despite the different environmental conventions, a regime of international environmental criminal law does not yet exist. International treaties continue to rely on national institutions and courts for the enforcement, diluted by the differences in individual states' discretion. As we all know, environmental damage is a global threat. Greenhouse emissions in the north pollute the cells. The consequences of forest fires transcend borders, sea levels rise, and temperatures rise without distinguishing borders. This is reality, as well as the disparity of forces of the nations in the need to generate some response to these harmful offenses with punitive and deterrent capacity.

One possibility long discussed could be the incorporation of the crime of ecocide as a crime against peace prosecuted by the International Criminal Court, or the creation of an international environmental court more oriented to the prevention and reparation of damage where possible. The inclusion of ecocide as the fifth crime against peace has the difficulties of any legal definition. Liability is being discussed, as well as the lack of jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court over states and corporations, and even whether this court is an appropriate forum to preserve our planet. As was the case with genocide in its day, it will be a decision of world leaders how to define *ecocide*, and the jurists will then comment on it as we usually do. In my opinion, the mass destruction of the environment has enough entity to be considered a crime against peace.

However, I believe that a supranational structure should be created to respond to these facts under the heading of restorative justice, reparation for victims and prevention for the future. As part of this force, I would like to announce today here the creation of a foundation that was inspired by Pope Francis. We have, as its general objective to promote the magisterium of the pope and to preserve his legacy. In particular, the foundation will develop research and intervention projects for human sustainable and integral development, environmental preservation, and contrast to climate change. The pope supports this initiative and is interested for its realization to meet Bill Richardson, the former governor of New Mexico, whom he honors for his commitment to the universal abolition of the death penalty. Richardson, who has been a U.S. ambassador to the United Nations is well known in international forums for his work in the pursuit of peace and dialogue among nations, particularly for his negotiations for the release of prisoners on hostage in different countries. The foundation, which will be based in Madrid, will be operational before the end of the year. I'm happy to announce this news here with you.

We believe that peace is not the mere absence of conflict, but harmony between people and species. Based on relations of solidarity and justice, we'll continue to work to get these international bodies on board as soon as possible, as Pope Francis already claimed in his encyclical five years ago. We are still on time, but not for much longer. Thank you.

Faith-Based Organizations, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice: Violence Against Women in the Time of COVID-19

June 29, 2020

The June 29 webinar focused on understanding the consequences of the pandemic, the lockdowns, social distancing, work from home, and distance education on violence against women. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted not only the many challenges we face in the fight against violence against women but has also uncovered several hidden problems of violence against women that need to be urgently addressed.

Moderator:

- Dr. Michael Platzer, Co-Chair, Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations

Panelists:

- Dr. Dubravka Šimonovic, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women
- Dr. Sakena Yacoobi, Director, Afghan Institute of Learning
- Ms. Shahin Ashraf, Head, Global Advocacy for Islamic Relief Worldwide
- Dr. Ugoji Eze, International Human Rights Lawyer, UN High Commissioner for Refugees; Founder, Eng Aja Eze Foundation
- Dr. Fatma Ismetova Usheva, Researcher, UN Office on Drugs and Crime
- Dr. Prof. Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović, Belgrade University; Director, Victimology Society of Serbia
- Dr. Anna Alvazzi del Frate, Chair, Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice



Dr. Dubravka Šimonovic

UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women

As the UN Special Rapporteur on the subject of violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences, I will address issues related to gender-based violence against women during this COVID-19 pandemic.

You may be aware that my mandate is usually visiting countries and producing country reports. Due to the pandemic, I was not able to attend the Commission on the Status of Women in New York or conduct country visits to Mongolia and Papua New Guinea. I am using the opportunities presented by different webinars to send important messages related to the prevention of violence against women and girls, protection of victims, and prosecution of perpetrators in these challenging times.

Just as COVID-19 is a pandemic without borders, so too, is violence against women. It started before the COVID-19 pandemic and now coexists with it. Lockdowns are exacerbating violence against women. Even if in the future we are somehow able to suppress COVID-19, violence against women will still remain. What can and should we do now during this pandemic?

As a UN special rapporteur, I first issued a call to all the UN member states on March 27, 2020, to send clear messages about the international treaties regarding prevention of violence against women and especially domestic violence. During the lockdowns, women, children, and families are locked in their homes. Although homes are safe places for the majority, for those facing domestic and other forms of violence, home can be a very dangerous place. We know with respect to data collected before COVID-19 that eight out of ten people killed in a context of intimate partner killings are women. During COVID lockdowns and lockdowns at home, we are seeing increased risks for women and children.

Now we have to see what needs to be done and what the responsibilities of states and all other stakeholders should be. They all have a role to play.

It will be very interesting to see in this webinar how faith-based organizations are sending those same messages focusing on prevention of violence against women and protection of victims. I have also issued a call for all states and stakeholders to send me information. I am collecting data related to the COVID-19 pandemic and violence against women, with a focus on domestic violence. Basically, I'm asking these questions: Are shelters available? Are protection orders available? Is access to court secured during this time? In spite of the restrictions, are women being allowed to escape violent home situations? I am seeking examples of good practices and bad practices.

I am planning to produce a report on violence against women that focuses on domestic violence during the COVID pandemic. I'm now receiving inputs. I have received 74 inputs to date, and I plan to produce a report for the October session of the General Assembly on this topic.

Let me also say that yesterday I was invited by the Executive Committee of the UN Secretary-General to participate in a meeting organized by the secretary-general and different UN agencies to discuss what the United Nations as a whole is doing with respect to violence against women and girls during the COVID pandemic. The secretary-general has played an extremely important role by launching the appeal for "Peace at Home."

We really need "Peace at Home." The United Nations has a good agenda for women, peace, and security. If we look at the domestic violence area and what is happening in homes, we must carefully examine the following: 1) what gaps were there in measures to protect women and girls from violence before the COVID pandemic? 2) what new challenges were imposed by the COVID pandemic? and 3) what can we do in the future to implement the measures needed?

Basically, the COVID pandemic has only served to highlight the preexisting gaps, inequalities, and shortcomings. For example, in some states there are no shelters, so the women have no access to shelters. We are also seeing some good practices. Some states have given women an opportunity to go to hotels instead of shelters. Also, shelters are having problems related to isolation, and some are unable to take in new people due to the possibility of infection. As far as protection orders are concerned, in some states, protection orders did not exist before COVID, so they cannot be used. In those states that can issue protection orders, how efficient are they, if courts, for example, are in lockdown? If women cannot access courts, they cannot get restraining orders.

Another good practice is that some states have made it possible for e-protection orders to be applied for online. Some states have 24/7 help lines for victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence. In some states, help lines are run by NGOs, in others by the government. States with helplines are reporting a 30% increase in calls. Many states, however, do not have such help lines so have no official data reflecting an increase in gender-based violence. We are seeing that women in lockdown at home are, in many situations, afraid to use regular channels to call help lines. Other possibilities should be open to them, like SMS messaging, or going to the pharmacy and giving a specific COVID-linked code relating to the help they need. We are seeing many challenges related to preexisting gaps.

Next, we need to look at the new challenges imposed by COVID and how to implement a framework for prevention of violence against women, protection of victims, and prosecution of perpetrators in coordination with all those responsible for this and in cooperation, too, with NGOs, independent institutions, and, let me say also, faith-based organizations.

Faith-based organizations are sending extremely important messages to their constituencies, enabling them to work on issues related to prevention and protection of victims of gender-based violence.



Dr. Sakena Yacoobi

Director, Afghan Institute of Learning

I would like to share what's happening right now in my country specifically—Afghanistan. I am involved with a lot of other organizations, and I also sit on the board of many organizations. The pandemic is creating many problems, and we are discussing issues from different countries. What I would like to talk about today is specifically Afghanistan.

Because of the pandemic I cannot be in Afghanistan; otherwise, I would be there right now. Every day and every night, I am working with my people in Afghanistan, and I see many really troubling issues just like in any other part of the world. Afghanistan has been through war for 40 years. Poverty is widespread. One of the most important issues is that violence against women is increasing. Since the pandemic began, violence against women has skyrocketed. Also because of the lockdown, the home environment is not safe. In previous years, people were able to get out of the house, women especially, and they came to our different programs.

We have about 300 women involved in the Afghan Institute of Learning Center. They come and go, and they are involved in many activities. They are the heads of their household. They provide economic stability for their family. They support their family. They are really in charge of their family. Since this pandemic, they have been at home, the children are at home, the husbands are at home. The husbands don't have jobs because of the poverty in Afghanistan. Men can have a job if they stand in line, and if there is a job, they can take money home. If there is no job available, they have nothing to take home. As a result, the men are really frustrated, and this frustration is causing a lot of problems. They go home, where they are beating their children and they are

beating their wife. Children are being abused at home and are also missing from school.

We saw so many barriers and challenges before us as an organization. We have been working constantly around the clock. We double-shift in our health clinic because right now we not only provide health and hygiene education to the people but also counseling. Many of the women are abused, and there are no shelters to go to; when they finally go to clinics, the doctors and the nurses cannot help. As an entrepreneur, I am constantly thinking about what we can do next and how we can reach more people. We requested our trainers to come to the health clinic, and we provide counseling for the women who come. We have provided counseling for women on how to be strong, how to really negotiate with their husbands, talk to their husbands, and take care of their children. This is especially because the children are at home and we are afraid that those children, the girls especially, will miss school and become victims of early child marriage. There are so many issues pouring in on us. As a person from a faith-based organization and also as a spiritual person, I feel that this is the time that we really need to look deep inside our hearts at what we are doing and what we should do.

We need a change in this world very badly. Human beings have become so selfish and so greedy that values have been completely destroyed. People are not respecting each other. Women's rights are completely forgotten. Gender equality is something that nobody is thinking about at all during the pandemic. We have to create an environment where women and their children feel safe and peaceful. It is challenging. How do you provide education for these children when they have no internet, no smartphone, no computer? How are you going to reach out to these children that they are missing from the world? How are you going to protect girls who have been in a school for five or six years and now, all of a sudden, are sitting at home and the parents, the father especially, wants to marry them off?

We are trying to see how we can provide distance education through packages delivered to the parents, to the houses. We are going from village to village to provide these packages. But then again, you face a situation where the parents are not interested. Or the parents cannot help the children because they cannot read and write themselves. We are facing many issues like these. In our country the government is so involved with their own business that they are not thinking about what's happening with the pandemic, what's happening with the people who are dying and the people who are starving.

We are not a humanitarian organization as such, but we know there are about 50,000 Afghan refugees in Iran who are not getting health care services from Iran. There are Afghan refugees in Iran and Pakistan who are all of a sudden

coming back into Afghanistan. The border is not closed to them because this is their country. But there is no preparation for this sudden influx of a large number of people. We have the pandemic, we have violence against women, we have children staying locked down and not going to school, we have refugees coming without shelter, without food, without any means of economic stability. We said, okay, we must provide some kind of assistance to the refugees, so we are providing dry resources like lentil, beans, rice, flour, sugar, and tea to the people for the whole month of Ramadan.

We are shifting our Women's Learning Center: one group is counseling, another group is shifting to working in a sort of factory since people need protective gowns, gloves, and masks. People don't have money to buy masks because the prices have greatly increased. We decided to do mass production of masks and are producing thousands of masks. Also, through the radio we have started broadcasting messages on hygiene, how to do social distancing, how to be calm, how to take care of your family during this hard time, and also how to help your children with homework and work together. The Afghan Institute of Learning is working around the clock. Some of our centers are closed, but we have brought people from different centers to help and provide services to the people.

It is a very hard time, but as a spiritual person I really believe that faith and faith-based organizations have a great deal to do in helping people appreciate gender equality, appreciate what they have and to share with others, and be wise and lovable and not be mean to each other. It doesn't matter what color we are, what ethnic group we are from. We are all human beings. We are all created by God. God is providing for all of us. What we have we should share. I think that this message should constantly go to the world. The countries that are able to use the internet, to use media and distance education should share with others. They should prepare material resources and share them with the countries that don't have them: especially those countries that have no internet, no telephones, no laptops.

I was just other day talking about distance education with the UN task force, and I told them that God has helped spread education. For 30 years we have worked in this, and we were just about to see the fruit of the children loving school and wanting to be in school. But now, all of sudden, they are sitting at home and they are facing early child marriage. We need to do something about that, and we need to do something very fast. We need to really reach out to those villages and those developing countries that don't have resources. If the developed country has them, let's share the resources. We all need to share whatever we have so more people will also find an easier way to deal with this pandemic. That is my request.



Ms. Shahin Ashraf

Head, Global Advocacy for Islamic Relief Worldwide

Social justice advocacy, which is my profession, and the emergence of spirituality are both important elements of social work practice. What we've noticed during this pandemic is the relationship between spiritual connectedness within humanity and the tendency toward social justice advocacy. Our research has shown that spirituality and commitment to social justice advocacy, including the willingness to take individual action to combat injustice, have been more needed and more prevalent than ever during this COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, as an Islamic faith-based organization, we have noticed the numerous, and very severe, gender dimensions of this COVID-19 pandemic. But that is not new or surprising. If we've seen anything during COVID-19, it is that the invisible coronavirus has made visible the many existing fault lines in our largely "corporate" world with its social injustice, persistent gender inequalities, sexism, racism, and xenophobia.

What we have noticed within our work is that everything in our world is gendered, and the COVID-19 pandemic and the responses to it are also not generally neutral in that sense. What we're envisioning is—hopefully—comprehensive, post-pandemic, systematic change toward gender equality. When so few women are able to contribute to the decision-making processes that structure their lives—and I'll go on to speak about that—we've noticed that viruses do not discriminate but societies and systems do. It is thus no coincidence that the stereotypes that exist of women and girls have contributed to sustaining the current power relations: for example, making care work undervalued, underpaid, and often invisible. What is needed now more than ever is a systemic transformation that makes institutions better equipped to handle a crisis and thereby address unequal distribution and reorientate the common

perspective. When I speak about institutions, I'm also talking about faith institutions as well as governments. This may be a historic opportunity to rethink the economic model, and we must look to strengthen and transform that in favor of the people.

We've noticed that these times of cataclysmic crisis are revealing failed and true leadership. We need to revisit what true leadership qualities are—whether that's in our mosques, our temples, our churches, and our gurudwaras—and to determine what true leadership means in the context of the current societal experience. The policies that we have are far removed from such issues as the role of migrant women and undocumented workers and the gender dimension of supply chains and economic recovery measures. Faith-based organizations and religious institutions have been working on the front line of those issues. We've been helping to mitigate the consequences of COVID-19 and providing much-needed guidance. For example, as a faith-based organization, we've asked Muslim clerics to issue *fatwas* to emphasize government regulations regarding, for example, halting religious ceremonies. This has led to Islamic relief organizations developing guidelines on safe and just practices during the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of Pope Francis's calls was for all Christians to respond to the coronavirus pandemic with the universality of prayer, compassion, and tenderness: "Let us remain united. Let us make our closeness toward those people who are most lonely and most tried." This crisis has shown that women leaders are vital in our preparedness efforts, particularly in the areas where our organization works. We work in 43 different countries around the world, and, in analyzing the recent emergencies, it has become clear that too little has been done to ensure that women are involved in decision-making processes in restorative justice, criminal justice issues, and program design and delivery. Gender inequalities are not addressed in too many policy responses.

At Islamic Relief Worldwide, we've noticed that the pandemic has changed our world and our worldview. It has been deepening preexisting inequalities and exposing vulnerabilities in the social, political, and economic systems across every sphere, from health and economic security to social protection. We believe that the statistics have not lied about the adverse effects of gender bias on women and girls. When the global pandemic broke out in March 2020, women and girls were the "forgotten" ones. Here in the United Kingdom, for example, as everyone self-isolated, women and young girls remained hidden in the shadows. The negative impacts of COVID-19 are exacerbated for women and girls, particularly those who are stateless, impoverished, displaced, or abused. In lower- and middle-income countries, younger girls are missing out at school. Women living in poverty and who are engaging in informal domestic

work or in cash-in-hand jobs are seeing their incomes crumble. The dynamics that create an environment of abuse need to be more fully understood.

Those hardest hit by a crisis are always the most vulnerable. During the pandemic, we saw that women and girls were particularly vulnerable to violence. Women were already undertaking three times as much unpaid care work as men, looking after children and elderly relatives. They had a lot to contend with when key services were scaled back or suspended. Health access plummeted, particularly for women and girls, and other disease outbreaks were emerging. More women in the areas that we work with were facing food insecurity as the economies tumbled. Moreover, 70% of all health care workers operating on the front line delivering essential services are women.

According to anecdotal evidence, in many countries, health workers were assaulted by community members who feared the spread of the virus. Such attacks occurred at health workers' homes, on their way to and from work as they were being accused of disrespecting the lockdown, and even during funerals of health workers' colleagues who had died from the virus. Anti-lockdown protesters attacked health care facilities dedicated to COVID-19 response measures. In other incidents health workers were attacked as part of resistance to COVID-19-related health measures imposed by the government, such as testing or quarantining. Grief over loss of family members resulted in violence against health workers, too. Personal protective equipment was below standard in terms of quality and quantity.

All these incidents and issues affected health workers and the facilities they work in, impacting their ability to deliver health care and deeply affecting the services available. In Somalia, for example, several health workers in a village were attacked and killed. In Mexico two women in Santiago de Querétaro were accused of infecting the communities that they lived in.

Let's talk closer to home. Women who are facing greater economic insecurity and greater responsibilities have seen a spike in domestic abuse. That is yet another stain on their lives. Sadly, the mandatory lockdown to curb the spread of COVID-19 will affect victims of domestic abuse in ways we can't imagine. For them, self-isolation doesn't mean living in the confines of a safe haven we call home. As you know, domestic violence is steeped in power and control and, while many of us look to our families and homes as a place of solace, many women instead find themselves in a self-contained prison of abuse. We know in our situation and as an organization that violence is not confined to the battlefield. For many women and girls the threat looms largest when they should be at their safest in their homes.

We are asking for public investment and fiscal stimulus—for a design of national policy responses to COVID-19. We're also asking specifically for provisions to be made for increase in assistance, multiagency referral packages, and in this we should not forget children as well. We want to be able to highlight a criminal justice system that challenges and often fails to bring offenders to justice. It is critical now more than ever that we work together on COVID-19 response and recovery to be able to create a just space for women and girls and those people who have been affected by violence.

What we must not forget is that the right to life, the right to health and well-being are all universal human rights, and all are within our faiths' doctrines. The virus did not discriminate in terms of wealth, status, nationality, age, or ability, and neither must we in our responses to it.

Thank you very much.



Dr. Ugoji Eze

*International Human Rights Lawyer, UN High Commissioner for Refugees; Founder,
Eng Aja Eze Foundation*

Globally, we are witnessing a shadow pandemic emerging, as we shelter in our homes from COVID19. The shadow pandemic is of violence against women and girls, and it is on the rise.

The secretary-general of the United Nations, in calling for “Peace in homes around the world,” said, “We have seen a horrifying global surge in domestic violence. I urge all governments to make the prevention and redress of violence against woman a key part of their national response plans for COVID-19.”

As a result of the lockdowns and restricted movements of people, normal coping strategies for both survivors and their perpetrators have crumbled; hence the increase in violence.

Lockdown-related stressors include loss of jobs, economic uncertainty, alcohol abuse, and health anxiety—all, indeed, triggers for violence. Globally governments have had to respond to this shadow pandemic and considered the prevention of domestic violence to be integral to health.

The COVID-19 pandemic is an opportunity for governments to think things differently going forward. It is also a threat as preexisting conditions exist; hence it is an opportunity to build forward better. A good policy would mean one that would entail robust multi-sectoral responses that link health systems to legal and judicial services, and police, as well as livelihood and psychosocial support services.

As countries eventually open up sometime in 2021, governments have to use this time now to think through and respond with robust infrastructure and indeed consider it part of its disaster risk reduction as we build forward better.

In building forward better, there is a need to consider the cost of gender-based violence—namely, the immediate harm to victims, which manifests in absenteeism and loss of productivity in the workplace; loss of family income; and health costs to the family. There is a need to consider the often-forgotten “intergenerational” costs, which inevitably include children who witness violence and grow up to perpetuate the cycle themselves

Prior to COVID-19, violence against women and girls was a human rights violation, as globally, women and girls were subjected to physical and sexual violence by intimate partners. If not dealt with, this shadow pandemic will indeed add to the economic impact of COVID-19, the cost of which is already having a tremendous impact on the GDP of a country and must be embedded in economic support and stimulus packages.

The violence that is emerging on an alarming rate is indeed both a mirror and a challenge to our values, our resilience and our shared humanity. We must make a concerted effort to end this scourge that is lurking in the shadow of a global pandemic.

Grassroots and women’s organizations indeed have a critical role to play in both preventing and responding to this shadow pandemic. Police and justice services must ensure that perpetrators are prosecuted and that there is not a climate of impunity for perpetrators.

Our world has indeed been transformed by the COVID-19 global pandemic. This transformation is deepening already preexisting inequalities, exposing vulnerabilities in political, social and economic systems. Women and girls are bearing the brunt of the negative impacts of COVID-19. It is imperative to ensure that the issue of gender equality concerns is very much at the forefront in the short-term responses, and also in the long-term recovery to build forward better more equal and resilient communities as we emerge from the COVID-19 era.

In the post-COVID world, we must ensure that in the world we want, there is indeed equality in power and presence. Women should be at the center of disaster preparedness and recovery plans and at the center of decision-making and critical transformations. We must ensure that women not only lead, but also actively participate in decision making on COVID-19 recovery and response, part of the national plans for disaster risk reduction.

In short, women should be at the center of national recovery plans.

There is a pandemic of violence spreading globally against women and girls during lockdown. The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a huge toll on human life, public health and economies globally.

Indeed, violence against women and girls is a human rights violation, and more importantly a health violation. Addressing it must be a priority. With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, there are indeed challenges in data collection. It really begs the question, how do we collect data in this era of lockdown? Conventional forms of data collection are not feasible; remote data collection methods can indeed entail security risks to the victims. What can data tell us or not tell us? For example, during this time of lockdown, there is a need to examine patterns from pre-, during and post COVID-19 to hotlines, police, shelters, and faith-based organizations. At this particular point in time, women find it difficult to access their phones whilst being in confined spaces with their perpetrators.

While on the one hand there are indeed immense challenges, all the existing data collected need to be triangulated with data coming from service providers. It is indeed imperative that it should not be interpreted as reflecting the prevalence of violence against women during the pandemic. I strongly recommend that as regards the collection of data during the ongoing pandemic that data should not be collected if there is a risk of harm; do not include questions about women respondents' experiences of violence as part of population-based rapid assessments; and advocate for the needs of marginalized women and girls.

I ask you all today in this virtual meeting to start up your own campaign or, indeed, join an existing one to raise awareness of the tremendous global surge in domestic violence due to COVID-19; ignite action amongst the public to augment support of those suffering domestic abuse; ignite a public pressure awareness on governments, private–public corporations, safe houses, support groups, and charities. The target audience should include domestic violence survivors in the same community and also bystanders who have access to social media, in addition to those with a voice in diverse communities.

If I may conclude by quoting an African saying. I am a woman from the African continent, as my name Ugoji testifies to. One of the sayings in our country is *ubuntu* and is the essence of being a human being. Ubuntu speaks particularly about the fact that you can't exist as a human being in isolation. It speaks about our interconnectedness. According to Archbishop Desmond Tutu, "You can't be a human being all by yourself, and when you have all this quality—ubuntu—you are known for your generosity."



Dr. Fatma Ismetova Usheva

Researcher, UN Office on Drugs and Crime

I am part of the research and trend analysis branch at the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and I'm working on data collection and trend analysis from data statistics. Thank you to the panelists for the great contributions you have made. You have all been referring to statistics, mentioning how crime and how domestic violence have increased. We've heard about it, and we've seen a lot of news reports about it. I am going to share with you a brief presentation on the numbers we are actually seeing from countries. I will briefly talk about what exactly UNODC, and in particular the research and trends analysis branch, is doing in relation to data for violence against women.

Without actually collecting data, we are not able to measure progress or understand whether before, during, and after the pandemic we are able to successfully address the problem of violence against women. Let me start with the project on assessing COVID's impact on violence against women. UNODC initiated a large ad hoc data collection from member states. We contacted all member states around the world and asked them to share data with us related to violence against women in order to understand what has happened. We asked them to share such data for the months before the pandemic, during the pandemic, and we'll be collecting a lot of statistics post pandemic to see whether governments were able to successfully address the problems of violence against women. Whenever data was available, countries provided monthly statistics. This is how we are able to measure the changes in violence against women for intentional homicide, that is, the number of killings by sex. We can see how many men and women were killed in different countries in the last couple of months. We also collected data by perpetrator. During the present discussion we have already spoken about how home is a dangerous place for women. Numerous reports also show that many of the killings of women

are carried out by an intimate partner or even a family member. We collected statistics on that as well and on sexual violence—which is another big form of violence against women—in particular, rape and sexual assault.

I’m going to show you very briefly data from two countries—Italy and Denmark. These examples are quite interesting because they show very different results. So far, we have collected data from 21 countries, which is impressive if you think about it. The data covers the period October 2019 to April 2020. But we’re continuously working on extending our data coverage, so we will be sharing the statistics as more become available. Data comes from countries’ official records. Helpline data usually come from the NGO or institution responsible for running the helpline or hotline. Most of the countries are in Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean. More and more countries from Africa and Asia and the Middle East are starting to report crime statistics in order to measure progress towards reducing violence against women or to understand what happened in this period. The first chart I’d like to show you is on intentional homicide, where we look at what happened to the number of men and women killed in the last couple of months.



*Figure 1. Intentional Homicide:
Number of men and women killed between October and April in the year 2020.
Data from 17 countries.

The yellow line here represents the number of men killed, and the red line represents the number of women killed in 17 countries around the world. You can see that the number of men killed did not really change—especially in

March and April, when the pandemic already hit many countries around the world. The number of women killed went down quite significantly. I'm not giving you an interpretation of why it happened at this point. I'm just showing you the statistics that in 17 countries we see a decrease in the number of women killed.

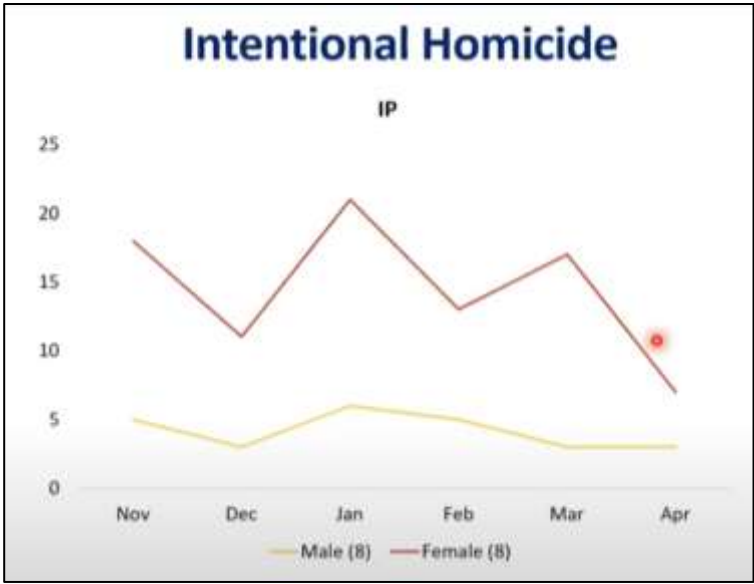


Figure 2. *Intentional Homicide between Intimate Partners*
*Intimate Partner (IP): 8 countries

Here I am going to focus only on intimate partner perpetrators, that is, leaving family members aside. The red line here represents the number of women killed by an intimate partner, and the yellow line represents the number of men. For those who are not aware, most of the victims of intimate partners are women, and very few are men. Interestingly, this data reported by eight different countries does not really show any decrease or any pattern in the number of women killed by intimate partners in this period. You can see in fact that in March the numbers actually increased compared to February and in April went down. We are currently collecting more statistics from different countries. So far, we are not really seeing any decrease in intentional homicide or killings of women by their intimate partners.

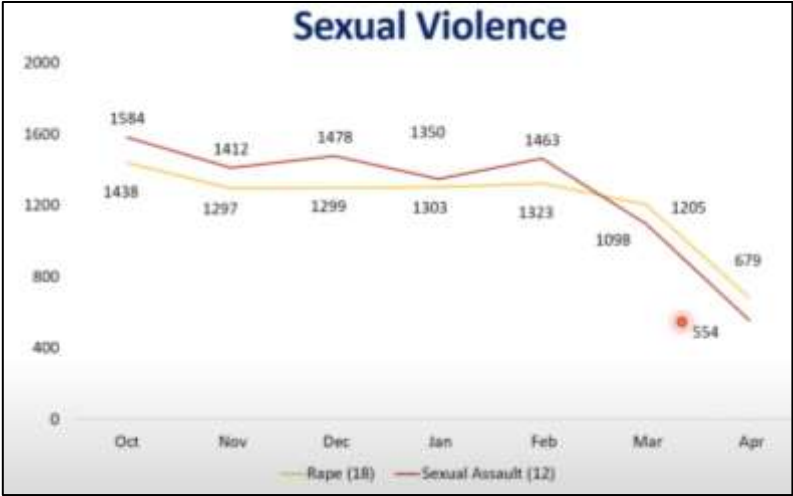


Figure 3. Sexual Violence
*Sexual Violence: Rape – 18 countries, Sexual Assault – 12 countries

Let’s see what happens with sexual violence. For sexual violence, we collected rape and sexual assault statistics, as I said, and we have rape statistics from 18 countries and sexual assault statistics from 12 countries. What you see is that a pretty stable number of cases of sexual assault and rape was reported in every country and that a significant drop is seen in March and April for those two indicators. This means that countries, for one reason or another, and police in particular (because this data comes from police records)—noticed a significant drop in the number of reports related to sexual violence and for both rape and sexual assault. This is a part of the data that comes from police records.

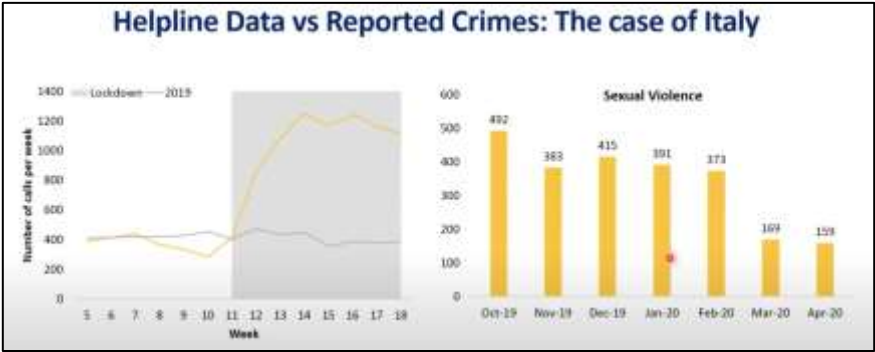


Figure 4 and 5. Help Data vs Reported Crimes: The case of Italy

Let's switch to hotline data and see what this actually reports. What is the case in Italy? Here on the left-hand side, the chart shows you the number of calls made to helpline numbers in Italy. The gray area represents the lockdown period in Italy. It started in Week 11, March 9, and it continues throughout Week 18. The yellow line you see is the number of calls in 2020. You can see that after the lockdown was introduced in Week 11, for the first 3-4 weeks we have a huge increase in the number of calls, and those calls were related to experience of violence. Victims of violence were calling those helpline numbers to seek help. The gray line is the numbers for 2019, and you can see that the numbers are pretty stable in 2019. These increases here (yellow line in gray area) must have been driven by COVID and the lockdown measures that were imposed in Italy. Italy experienced extremely strict lockdown measures because people were not allowed to leave home. They were under a very strict quarantine compared to other countries. On the right-hand side, however, what we report is official statistics on sexual violence. Why do we have a very large increase in helpline data, that is, in the number of people calling who were subject to violence, yet we see a big decrease in the reports of sexual violence reported to the police (bar graph)?

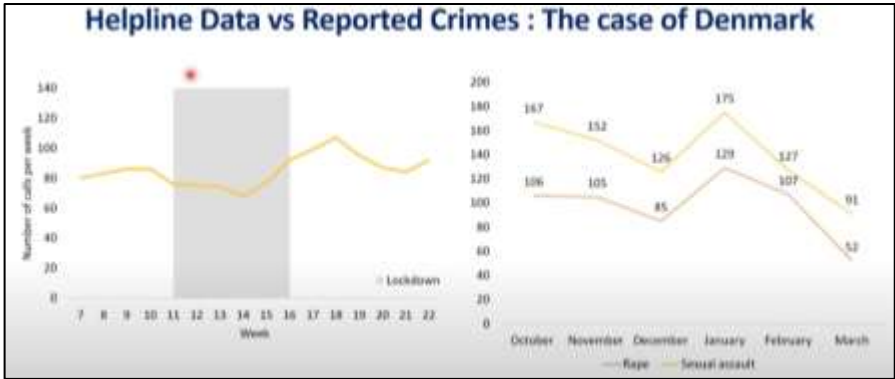


Figure 5 and 6. Help Data vs Reported Crimes: The case of Denmark

Another example I would like to give you here, and it's quite interesting to compare these two countries, is Denmark. What happened in Denmark? Again, you have the gray area, which is the lockdown period in Denmark. Denmark introduced lockdown measures in Week 11, almost the same period as in Italy. This yellow line represents the number of calls made to the national helpline. What you see instead in Denmark is, if anything, that there was a slight decrease in the number of calls that the helpline organization received. The number of calls started to increase only towards the end of the quarantine period, and the peak was reached in Week 18, when the country was already a couple of weeks out of the strict measures. Denmark actually never had very strict measures

imposed—they recommended quarantine, people stayed at home, but they were free to go out for recreation, jogging, sports and so on. In contrast to Italy, Denmark experienced a decrease in the number of calls. This does not necessarily mean that Denmark experienced a decrease in the violence against women or domestic violence, which usually helpline data represents. This is just an example that we have to dig a little bit more into the data to get a bit of a better understanding of the background situation in the country. Similarly, on the right-hand side, we report official statistics related to sexual violence. As is in the case in Italy, sexual violence reported to the police decreased in March. We're still waiting for data for April in order to understand what happened with officially recorded statistics.

What is the conclusion of this brief data presentation? It is challenging to assess the impact of COVID on violence against women. As I showed you, some data pointed towards a decrease, for example, in reported cases of sexual violence. Some data point to an increase—that was the helpline data from Italy. Some data point instead to stability, that is, in the intentional homicide by an intimate partner. But why do we have these differences? One important thing to notice is that the different data sources could measure different types of violence. We cannot generalize just by taking the case of Denmark, for example, that the helpline calls decrease: We cannot say that overall in Denmark there was a decrease in violence against women. We have to be very careful in making such conclusions. Violence against women is a complex and multifaceted problem, so we have to approach it as such. It is indeed likely that violence against women originating in public spaces was reduced due to restrictions to mobility and social life.

On the one side, women could have been protected by these restrictions and protected from the sexual violence or violence they experience outside their house: That could have happened. On the other hand, domestic violence possibly increases, as we see from helpline statistics from Italy. One very important takeaway message from this is that we have to be very careful in the conclusions we make and aware of the specificities of the data that we receive and see because there are many challenges for reporting crimes during the pandemic for both help lines and police-recorded statistics. I really believe that faith-based organizations have a huge role to play in creating relevant statistics in order to create better informed decision making and better informed policies. Such organizations could help us collect data and work with governments and other NGOs in order to enhance and improve the data collection that will help us measure progress towards reducing violence against women.



Dr. Vesna Nikolić-Ristanović

Belgrade University; Director, Victimology Society of Serbia

During the state of emergency and lockdown in Serbia (March 17–May 6, 2020), cases of violence against women reported to the police decreased by about 50% compared to the same period last year. During that time, one woman was killed, while during 2019 during the same period five women were killed. In sum, fewer women asked for help from SOS hotlines and shelters as well, while some SOS hotlines and shelters recorded a significant increase in calls for help over time.

A decrease in reported cases may mirror a real decrease in violence against women during lockdown, but it is also due to the difficulties that women faced regarding reporting. In Serbia lockdown was only during the night. Bars were closed throughout the day; all shops, including those selling alcohol, were open much shorter hours than normally (until 3 PM or shorter). Serbian authorities did not introduce any alternative possibility for reporting, such as online or via SMS, WhatsApp or Viber. From time to time, authorities used TV to invite women to report violence, promising them full protection. Near the end of lockdown, they announced that the possibility of online reporting might be introduced, but this did not happen. Also, although women were allowed to go out during curfew hours to report violence, this information was not communicated to them properly, so most women mostly weren't aware of that possibility. Moreover, there were cases of women who were punished for going out during curfew hours, although the reason was reporting violence from their partners.

NGOs offering support to women victims continued their activities, but their contact details, modus operandi, and working hours were changed. This prevented women from reaching them for help. Most NGOs stopped using their

offices and office phone numbers, and switched to mobile (sometimes with a new number), staff were decreased, working hours changed, and so forth. Most NGOs offered support online and through social media, Viber, and WhatsApp. New working hours, channels of support, and contact details of NGOs were put on the website of the Ministry of Justice but were not easy for victims to find. Most NGOs also updated all the info about their work on their own websites and social media. They also offered COVID-19- related information and support. Unfortunately, they also had to cancel some victim support services, such as financial support, direct counseling, court support, and legal aid.

Although NGOs continued with other activities as well, offering information and support became their priority during the COVID-19 crisis. None of the organizations stopped offering support. It is also important to mention that UN Women secured some rather symbolic but important funds that enabled NGOs to provide 24-hour support and cover urgent needs and other unexpected expenses of victims. This funding started near the middle of the lockdown period.

Most of the challenges were related to the problems in implementing some activities, such as monitoring of court trials, as well as general communication with state services/institutions and referrals of victims to them. Volunteer work increased, along with the use of private resources, such as computers and (smart) mobile phones, and also private premises, which often were not suitable for well-focused and confidential communication about sensitive issues. Some NGOs offered financial support to cover urgent needs of victims from private resources. One of the major problems was how to reach those women who were not using digital technologies and who obviously stayed out of new channels of information and support. Some of the activities had to be either canceled or modified. In sum, NGOs in Serbia are not funded by the state and on an institutional basis, so the crises made their financial situation even more fragile than it was before.

The Victimology Society of Serbia (VDS) continued its work on victim support, research, advocacy and awareness raising, and with the publication of *Temida*, an academic journal on victimization, human rights, and gender. Special focus was on supporting women victims of violence and other crime victims as well as on advocacy and awareness raising about gender-based discrimination in the workplace, which became more widespread during COVID-19 crises. Also, during this period, VDS started preparations for its policy-oriented research *Sexual Violence at the Universities in Serbia: Raising Awareness and Developing Innovative Mechanisms of Victim Support*, financed through an award from the World Bank and Sexual Violence Research Initiative. VDS also started collecting data

from Serbia for the European Observatory on Femicide. However, VDS had to cancel the training for new volunteers and student internship programs. The 11th Annual Conference of VDS scheduled for 2020 had to be canceled, but it was later replaced with an online conference “COVID-19 in the Balkans: Patterns of Victimization and Victims’ Rights,” held on November 26 and 27, 2020. Moreover, the COVID-19 crisis created a serious obstacle to the support VDS offered to Marina Minic, a 31-year-old survivor of femicide who became wheelchair-bound as a consequence and was expected to undergo expensive intervention scheduled in Thailand for May 2020. In January VDS organized a campaign and joined humanitarian action for collection of money for her surgery, but all that was stopped because of COVID-19 crises. Fortunately, in spite of the pandemic, Marina eventually managed to collect enough money and to travel to Thailand. She was successfully operated on in November 2020.



Dr. Anna Alvazzi del Frate

Chair, Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

I am now the chair of the Alliance of NGOs and Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which is an umbrella organization that brings together many different organizations dealing with these various topics related to the mandate of the Commission of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice of the United Nations. Many of our members deal with issues related to violence against women, trafficking in persons, imprisonment, the challenges of women in prison, and various other aspects that have been touched upon during our discussion today. Many of our members are also faith-based organizations, and they add a specific angle on the work that they are doing.

One thing that I want to focus on today was this issue of data, information, and the challenge of getting information during the pandemic. UN Women and the World Health Organization in April issued a very useful short document that highlighted the difficulties of getting information on violence against women during this period and the difficulty of interpreting whatever you could get. My colleagues and I have been looking at these surveys on violence against women, and we're looking to the faith-based organizations to help us provide safe spaces where women can be interviewed for data collection. This is one of the many aspects connecting the issue of faith-based organizations in the overall prevention of violence against women.

The most important issue is that pandemic has acted as a magnifying glass for issues that need to be addressed very, urgently. It has highlighted the fragility of certain communities and the difficulty of working on the "Leaving No One Behind" mandate of Agenda 2030. Not only has gender inequality come out of this but also an overall social inequality. The point is to make sure that our communities become stronger and that we work on a better integration of all

stakeholders; faith-based organizations and also non-faith-based organizations have a major role to play. All NGOs, civil society actors, and various players need to be involved in education, enforcement, and different areas.

I wanted to mention one very useful tool that a former colleague in South Africa used. It was called “How Does It Look When It’s Fixed?” and it was an exercise where people could indicate what a safe community looks like. Sometimes it is something that is so simple and so basic that would be of great help in preventing a lot of tensions and situations that we have seen now coming up at moments of the crisis when there is no safe space for many women. Overall, I think that a culturally informed clean strategy is needed that is effective for the prevention of all crimes. And, of course, it would also result in the prevention of violence against women.

Another thing that I want to mention is that, among our members, there is a group now working on the development of a program for a symposium on domestic violence and COVID, and I think the clergy is also involved in this. It is a very interesting initiative promoted by Yael Danieli, and it will take place in October. The focus of that particular exercise is on domestic violence. So when you get the message to stay home, and home is not a safe place for you, what does that mean? This is a broad gender-based violence and domestic violence issue.

In Search of Social Justice: Criminal Justice Reform and the Restoration of Solidarity and Trust in Our Communities

July 28, 2020

The recent killing of George Floyd by a police officer in the United States triggered widespread protests and demonstrations, both in the United States and globally. The demonstrations called for an end to racism and police brutality, demanding criminal justice reforms that include greater accountability for offending police officers, ending choke holds, defunding of police, as well as a broader range of reforms that cut across a wider spectrum of society. Emotions are raw, and polarization is at its peak. What can be done to support criminal justice reform, to restore or establish greater solidarity and trust in multiracial, multiethnic societies?

Moderator:

- Dr. Thomas Walsh, Co-chair, Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations

Panelists:

- Hon. Danny Davis, U.S. House of Representatives, D-Illinois, USA
- Rev. Amos C. Brown, Senior Pastor, Third Baptist Church, San Francisco, USA
- Dr. Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, Secretary-General, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance
- Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, Founder, Cordoba Institute
- Rev. Dr. Levi Bautista, Assistant General Secretary for United Nations Ministry, United Methodist Church
- Dr. Ibrahim Salama, Chief, Human Rights Treaties Branch Office, High Commissioner for Human Rights



Hon. Danny Davis

U.S. House of Representatives, D-Illinois, USA

The title of this discussion is one that I consider to be one of the great needs of our world—not just our country, not just our city, not just our state. Under mass incarceration, individuals are contained and locked up, and, in many places, denied of all their sense of humanity. My country, the United States of America, happens to be the most incarcerated nation in the world. Many people think of us as being one of the most sophisticated nations, being the wealthiest nation, being the most advanced nation, but we are indeed the most incarcerated nation in the entire world. No other country, no matter what its population, no matter what its composition, has as many of its people locked up.

We are predominantly a Christian nation. We mentioned spirituality, and I think many of the concepts in our country come from people's ideological and spiritual beliefs. If you violate a commandment—Adam and Eve got a little carried away in the garden, and they did something they were told not to do. And so, part of people's belief is that when individuals violate, they need to be punished. They have to be checkmated. On the other side of that is also the notion of forgiveness, that you can be redeemed. We look at the songs that we sometimes sing: "If you don't believe I've been redeemed / follow me down to Jordan's stream." Redemption is a part of our philosophy, yet many of our citizens and many of our institutions have not caught up with that ideal. We want a society where redemption is the norm, but people can't seem to bring themselves to do what must be done to bring that about.

We've got more than two million people in our jails and prisons every year. About seven or eight hundred thousand people are released each year, and yet many of those individuals, even though they come home supposedly having

served the time that they have been given, find themselves receiving the life-time punishment of never being accepted back into their communities. They can't find a job. They can't live in public housing. They can't access public benefits. They can't get Pell Grants to go to colleges and universities.

We have not brought about a redemptive society. Fortunately, however, we are beginning to move. Many people are beginning to understand that policing in our country has had more to do with containment than prevention; since 1619, a goal of the policing system has been containing those individuals who were enslaved. Therefore, of course, in many instances African American men have caught the brunt of the injustice of our justice system just because of their physical presence. These great, big, strong-looking guys were perceived as a threat, and so over-policing became the policy. I am so grateful to Black Lives Matter for helping to raise awareness of this issue to a level where there's the kind of response that we have seen. I've been engaged in raising these issues for so many years, only to be ignored much of the time.

As a result of the engagement of Black Lives Matter along with other activists, there is a light shining on the impact of systemic racism that has prevailed in our country and, I must admit, in many other places throughout the world. I haven't been any places where I didn't see racism in some form, and I've been to many places throughout the world. Change is on the way, and I'm pleased to be a part of this discussion.



Rev. Amos Brown

Senior Pastor, Third Baptist Church, San Francisco, USA

I'm from Mississippi, a state that has the terrible record of more lynchings than any other in the United States. I became aware, not just of the evils of mass incarceration, but of the fundamental disrespect for the dignity of our sons and daughters. At the age of 14, I looked at the cover of my *Jet Magazine* and saw the mutilated head of Emmett Till. We were the same age and, naturally, that horrified me. I ran to the newly appointed field director of the NAACP, Medgar Evers, and told him how angry I was. I'll never forget what Mr. Evers said to me: "Amos, I understand how you feel, but don't be just upset or angry. Let's be smart. Why not organize a youth council for the NAACP so that you and your young friends will be able to learn how to fight this evil?"

Following that, I organized Mississippi's first youth council in 1955, and since then I have sought to understand how it could be that two white men would take a 14-year-old boy out the banks of the Tallahatchie river, shoot him in the head, put a cotton gin wheel around his body, wrap him up with barbed wire and throw him in that river. Why did they do it? Because a lie was told. The widow of one of the assailants admitted to the world one year ago that she lied when she said that Till had made a pass at her. But the jury did not convict those two brothers. They even wrote a story bragging about what they did to Emmett Till.

Where did all this start? I would point to the 4th century BC, Aristotle's *Politics*, in which he said that the Ethiopian or the Black man is inferior, and the only way that he can become or she can become enlightened is to go up to the Nordic climate of Europe and become lighter. Aristotle said we would never be capable of self-governance. This world has never respected our humanity.

That's why I thank God for the opportunity to sit at the feet of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., my mentor. He taught social philosophy in 1962, while he studied for his doctorate at Boston University. Under Dr. John Brightman, he learned about personalism, the idea that every person is imbued with the stamp of the divine. We should respect every person, however different they may be, because they were made in the image of God. However, Americans have yet to get that idea, and I'm not sure they ever will.

The Psalmist said, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, and the people whom he has chosen for his own inheritance." We've seen God bless America, but I am afraid America has committed many sins. I'm not talking about individual sins, following the notion of rugged individualism that White Evangelicals embrace. What they fail to acknowledge is that this nation may miss out on its blessings from God in the future because of four evils that they have made into a false God: racism, materialism, militarism, and nationalism. If you just look at the social order today, you will see all of these isms alive and well.

What do we do? We need to have a true reckoning and reconciliation movement. We must tell the truth, from Aristotle down to the present. America and the world are built on racism. Even in the sacred writ of the Christian faith, in the book of Philemon, we find Onesimus, an enslaved person. His name, in Greek, means "utility." The Black man or woman has always been seen by this world order as a tool to be used. I've gone to Ghana and seen where my ancestors were stacked in dungeons like sardines in cans. They had to be contained for months, waiting on slave ships. We were tools to build the economies of Western Europe and the United States.

We need to get rid of this notion that America was founded as a Christian nation. Read *Fantasyland*, by Kurt Anderson. He documents 500 lies about Western Europe and America: the lies of racism, the lies of chauvinism, the lie that a woman should not have the right to vote. Those who came here during the 16th century weren't after religious freedom. Walter Raleigh and others were looking for gold to support the crown of England. We were used as tools for the same purpose. The lie of racism enslaved our ancestors for over 250 years, begetting the further lie of "separate but equal."

That's why Donald Trump cannot tell the truth. He learned it from his parents, and we ought to listen to his niece: She's told the truth. If America does not come to grips with these facts, then in this forthcoming election the racialized politics of this divided nation will cause us to lose. It's good to see everybody out there marching. It's not the first time we marched. Back in 1920s W.E.B. Du Bois, Ida B. Wells and others marched down Fifth Avenue, ten thousand

of them in New York with a banner that said, "A Black man was lynched last week. A Black woman was lynched last week."

This only covers the first evil, racism. Time does not permit me to deal with the other isms and lies, but, suffice to say, my hope and trust is that we will tell the truth and come to correctness. When you come to reflect, you will admit what was done that was wrong, like Zacchaeus, who said to Jesus "If I have wronged anybody, Master, I give back fourfold."

It's time for reconciliation, and I'm not just talking about monetary restitution. I'm talking about programs and initiatives that will deal with the fallout of racism that has caused black people to not have access to health care, to not have jobs, to not have respect for our own culture. America was reckoning with this. When we tell the truth and we have a reckoning program, then we can have reconciliation.



Dr. Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati

Secretary-General, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance

We know from history, psychology and spirituality that darkness can only last when we are afraid to look at it. What's happening now is that we're seeing people coming together to look at that darkness, to say, "Yes, there is injustice. Yes, there is discrimination."

Along with looking at that darkness, we have been able to see the light that is revealed because people have the courage to actually face that darkness. People are having the courage to be able to say, "I personally, directly—or people of my race or people of my color or people of my religion—have been the reasons behind this injustice, have been the reasons behind this violence." So along with the darkness that is there, that is so prevalent, we are also seeing the light of people coming together, saying, "Enough! No more!" This injustice and violence may have gone on for decades. It may have gone on for hundreds of years, but no more! Today, we have the courage to look at that darkness, and to look at the systems that contribute to that darkness, and to transform that darkness into light.

I'm speaking to you from India, where there is such an incredible dichotomy that we actually also see all over the world in different ways. Here in this beautiful nation, and in the Hindu tradition, we are taught and we remember and we emphasize *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*—the world is one family. So many beautiful mantras and prayers and teachings of that one-ness...and yet the best-selling product in any market is fairness cream, cream that makes brown skin white. India is a land mostly of brown-skinned people, but the most sought-after product takes this beautiful, dark skin and makes it look different. Why? Because there is a deep-seated belief that somehow that which is fair, that which is white, is inherently better than that which is dark.

It is a great tragedy to feel shame over one's color, and it's one of the things that we have worked so hard to correct. It's been, in many ways, a personal mission of mine. Just recently, in the wake of the Black Lives Matter protests in America, the multinational corporations that are putting fairness creams on the shelves of India have been forced to change their branding to stop brain-washing Indians into believing that there is something wrong with being dark. The ripple impact of what is happening on the streets of America is entering every home in India, where young girls have stopped buying creams that are called "Fair and Lovely." They are beginning to realize that it's okay to be "dark" and "beautiful." The impact of the movement in America is rippling out to people all over the world.

As we address issues in law enforcement, it is so essential for us all to re-evaluate what is our highest goal. Our highest goal, as the United Nations lays out in the Sustainable Development Goals, is peaceful and sustainable societies. Certainly, a peaceful and sustainable society cannot be based simply on "Beat them, handcuff them and throw them in jail." It has to be rooted in a total transformation of our idea of justice. Justice requires us to realize that everyone, black and white, rich and poor, law breaker and law abider, deserves justice.

I remember going with my guru, Pujya Swamiji, to speak to prisoners in California. I remember him telling this whole room of murderers, rapists, and violent criminals, "Your crime is tiny. It is only this little, little part of you. You are a vast, infinite being." In our societies, it's essential—from the world of religion and spirituality to our educational systems, to our homes—for us to raise our children understanding that mistakes happen. But, when a mistake happens, it is important that we recognize how we are more than the mistake.

When our value systems change, we should ask ourselves, "What can be done through me" rather than "what can be done for me." When our value systems become "we," rather than "I," when it becomes about a cohesive whole, rather than rugged individualism, then and only then will we actually be able to create peaceful and sustainable societies.



Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf

Founder, Cordoba Institute

We are all in agreement about the problem of racism and what has happened in this country, so I would like to focus my comments on how change can occur. There are three major power centers: political power, economic power and the power of religion.

Political power is very important, especially in a powerful country like the United States, which has a leadership role in international affairs. What we have seen with the coming of President Trump is that, through his racist divisiveness, he has influenced and enabled many other leaders to engage in politics like his. We see the same with what Prime Minister Modi has done to create greater division between Hindus and Muslims in India. We've seen these politics flourish in countries like Hungary and Brazil. When the United States gives up or even reshapes its values at the presidential level, we must understand the effect that this has.

Therefore, clearly, political leadership, especially at the highest levels, is very important. China has undertaken a campaign to suppress the Muslim Uyghur minority. Uyghurs find themselves confined, prisoners in their own homeland. It is very important to be able to influence our political discourse, but those living under authoritarian regimes are unable to do very much. On the other hand, in a country like the United States, one of the most mature democracies in the world, there is a strong civil society. We have greater leeway in expressing the sentiments of our population.

We need to continue applying this political pressure, but there are also other areas of pressure, including the business community. The role of business leaders is important and can be influential. To their credit, a large number of business leaders have taken action, as Dr. Saraswati has pointed out. Companies

that used to sell whitening creams in India have taken them off the shelves. This is a kind of racism that is not as blatant and is able to continue because most people are not even aware of the extent of their own racist conditioning. Influencing the business community, therefore, is also important.

Equally important is the third pillar, the ideological and religious component. This area happens to be my focus. As Muslims, we believe God sent prophets to all communities in the world. As Muslims we do not discriminate among these prophets; we accept each of them as our own. Thus, I accept Moses, I accept Jesus as my own prophet as well. We live in a Christian-majority country, so we should be able to persuade those who claim to be Christian to live up to what it really means. Jesus Christ said, "I was hungry, you didn't feed me. I was naked, you didn't clothe me. I was thirsty, you didn't give me anything to drink. I was naked, I was ill, you didn't come to visit me or attend to me." And then when they asked him, he said, "Whatever you do to those people, you do to me."

Taking care of the poor is critical. Jesus Christ could perform the miracle of feeding 6,000 people with one loaf of bread and a fish—we think of it as a miracle to feed the poor. So, when our Republican party wants to limit the amount of help given to people who need it, that is a very un-Christian thing. How can the Evangelical Christian leaders like Bob Jeffries and Franklin Graham claim to be walking the footsteps of Jesus when they are supporting an agenda that is the antithesis of his message? Jesus Christ provided the best free medical care in all of human history, and he institutionalized this by teaching his disciples to heal through the power of the Holy Spirit. They provided this service with no co-payment, curing preexisting conditions and pandemic conditions like leprosy. So how do we have members of Congress who claim to be Christian and who are willing to deprive people of health care?

Healing people is a very Christian thing to do. It's a very Muslim thing to do. It's a very Jewish thing to do. It's a very Hindu thing to do. This is the message of our faith traditions. Therefore, we have to deploy our faithful traditions more articulately and in a more focused manner in our debate within this country. Because what happens within America does not just remain within America. The whole world looks to America and takes its example from America. It is important for us here in America to recognize that what we're doing is not only for our own sake as Americans but for the sake of all of humanity.

The Qur'an says that we were created from one male and one female, that God made from us various tribes and nationalities. We should celebrate each other, our variety. It is human nature to desire that which is exotic, but that should not prevent us from recognizing universal values, ethical values, and even the specific values of things like health care and helping the poor.

The separation of families at our border brings to mind the escape of Jesus and Mary from King Herod, or how the mother of Moses put the infant Moses in the river to save him from the pharaoh. In both cases the ruler was worried because the astrologers said a baby was being born who would destroy the current regime. In a way, they were all concerned about national security. What this teaches us is that national security is not a justification for inhumanity. We must account for the security of our soul. Everything else will end, but our soul embodies the absolute, indestructible image of God.

As Jesus said, “Many will come to me on that day of judgment and say ‘Lord we believed in you, we evicted the devils in your name.’” He said, “Go away from me; you know there are many people who are wolves in sheep’s clothing,” and we have to identify them as such, starting with Donald Trump. Those so-called Christian religious leaders who are violating Jesus’ message are also wolves in sheep’s clothing. We have to call them out, and not just by saying this but by saying that this is what Jesus teaches and make sure we follow what we claim to believe as a Christian nation.



Rev. Dr. Levi Bautista

Assistant General Secretary for United Nations Ministry, United Methodist Church

Sacred and theological texts speak to issues related to social and criminal justice, but they do not always speak in a manner that is self-elucidating. Cornell West attempted to make the concept of justice accessible to public discourse, saying, “Justice is what love looks like in public. To nurture justice and love in public requires the empowerment of the moral agency of people and training their ethical lenses so that they “do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with their God.”

Religious NGOs continue to be advocates for religious, ethical and spiritual understandings that inform international law and ethics. Active participation of civil society, notably religious NGOs at the United Nations, allows mutual advancement of its charter mandates. The commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations this year provides for an auspicious time to revisit the role of religion in global governance and the prospering of values that make for human and planetary flourishing.

I represent the United Methodist Church at the United Nations. United Methodist social teachings emphasize that the system of justice God desires for us focuses on healing and restoration. It heals the wounds of the victims, addresses the wrongs of the perpetrator, restores society to wholeness, and stops rather than perpetuates cycles of systemic evil. The Biblical ideal of justice emphasizes right relationship with God, oneself, individuals and one’s community. The core of criminal justice reform, therefore, must be to address the harm that our actions have done to the person and to their relations in their community and righting those relations. The restoration of relations is what many sacred religious texts refer to in a variety of formulations. The junctions that bring together social justice, criminal justice reform and human solidarity are

clear. They point us to the urgent agenda of restoring right relations, with restorative justice that affirms human rights and dignity and with ecological justice as well.

Put differently, the struggles for social justice point both to human solidarity and planetary sustainability. Reverence for humanity and the planet and the restoration of relations between them is what reverence to God and the divine is ultimately about. The restoration of right relations necessarily deals with the intersections at which we encounter the many forms of the struggle for justice: racial justice, migrant justice, gender justice, ecological justice, health justice and more. The rise in acts of racism racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance today are an ominous testament not just to breaches in our relations, but to egregious assaults on human dignity. These acts tear into the very fabric that constitutes just and sustainable human flourishing.

These tears are manifest today in the racialized, gender sexualized, securitized, militarized, anatomized, and ethnicized relations that we find at the heart of the agenda for criminal justice reform. The restoration of solidarity and trust must issue from a fundamental affirmation of human dignity and the protection of human rights. Faith-based affirmations of a just, participatory and sustainable society and justice, peace and integrity of creation issue from larger formulations affirming the struggle for human rights and human dignity. That is what restorative justice in criminal justice reform must be about.

The Hebrew Bible points to how we must navigate these perilous times, fraught with messages of fear. "Everyone will sit under their own vine and fig tree, and no one will make them afraid for the almighty Lord has spoken." The conquering of fear, including abandoning the stoking of fear among peoples, will allow human dignity to blossom, for human rights to be enjoyed and for secure, peaceable and sustainable communities to prosper. Here religions and faith-based organizations may truly play a role—as they in fact do.

The reconstituted place of religion and ethics and civilizational discourse in multilateral discourse at the United Nations is not new, but the way the multi-stakeholder approach has worked from the UN side is fairly recent. Most remarkable is the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion and Development, which has partnered in the last six years with the annual Symposium on the role of Religion and Faith-Based Organizations in International Affairs. NGO groups like the Committee of Religious NGOs at the UN, as well as this Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations, are examples of the presence of religious values at the multilateral level. There is a strong affirmation among many faith-based NGOs that engage the United Nations that at the core of religious understandings and beliefs are precepts that enlarge freedoms, secure rights, promote development and sustain peace.

Religions, along with indigenous faith, ethical and cultural traditions, are a primary source of normative values that inspire peace, sustainability, human rights and development. They play important roles in shaping local, national, regional and international norms. Religions and other systems of belief offer fundamental understandings of human life and society. These NGO and faith-based organization representatives that engage the multilateral mechanisms, including those representing indigenous spiritualities, see themselves as a visible presence in the multilateral arena. Lastly, the engagement of religions and diverse faith and spiritual traditions by the United Nations, governments and civil society places them in a common setting for examining shared burdens, vulnerabilities and aspirations.

Fanaticism and adherence to exclusive ideologies, both religious and secular, have challenged religious communities, governments and international relations for centuries. Complicity and involvement in the historic evils of slavery, colonialism and racism have troubled the witness of religions and the relations of nations and societies throughout the world. The quest for sustainable peace and justice and the need to overcome violence bind religions, governments and the human together. Their partnerships in the religious, intergovernmental and multilateral spheres make them stakeholders in the achievement of a diverse world where there is a regime of rights and freedoms and economic sustainability. They promote politics of inclusion and empowerment, a civilization of tolerance and a culture of peace.



Dr. Ibrahim Salama

Chief, Human Rights Treaties Branch Office, High Commissioner for Human Rights

The “[Faith for Rights](#)” framework provides space for a cross-disciplinary reflection and action on the deep, and mutually enriching, connections between religions and human rights. The objective is to foster the development of peaceful societies that uphold human dignity and equality for all and where diversity is not just tolerated but fully respected and celebrated.

The 2012 [Rabat Plan of Action](#) on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence already laid out some of religious leaders’ core responsibilities against incitement to hatred. Expanding those responsibilities to the full spectrum of human rights, the faith-based and civil society actors participating at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) workshop in March 2017 adopted the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on “Faith for Rights”.

The [Beirut Declaration](#) considers that all believers—whether theistic, non-theistic, atheistic or other—should join hands and hearts in articulating ways in which “Faith” can stand up for “Rights” more effectively so that both enhance each other. Individual and communal expressions of religions or beliefs thrive and flourish in environments where human rights are protected. Similarly, human rights can benefit from deeply rooted ethical and spiritual foundations provided by religions or beliefs.

Rather than focusing on theological and doctrinal divides, the Beirut Declaration favors the identification of common ground among all religions and beliefs to uphold the dignity and equal worth of all human beings. It reaches out

to persons in all regions of the world, with a view to enhancing cohesive, peaceful and respectful societies on the basis of a common action-oriented platform that is open to all.

Linked to the Beirut Declaration are [18 commitments on “Faith for Rights”](#), with corresponding follow-up actions. These include the following commitments:

- to prevent the use of the notion of “State religion” to discriminate against any individual or group;
- to revisit religious interpretations that appear to perpetuate gender inequality and harmful stereotypes or even condone gender-based violence;
- to stand up for the rights of all persons belonging to minorities;
- to publicly denounce all instances of advocacy of hatred that incites to violence, discrimination or hostility;
- to monitor interpretations, determinations or other religious views that manifestly conflict with universal human rights norms and standards;
- to refrain from oppressing critical voices and to urge States to repeal any existing anti-blasphemy or anti-apostasy laws;
- to refine the curriculums, teaching materials and textbooks; and
- to engage with children and youth who are either victims of or vulnerable to incitement to violence in the name of religion.

The [#Faith4Rights toolkit](#) (PDF), launched [online](#) in January 2020, translates the “Faith for Rights” framework into practical peer-to-peer learning and capacity-building programs. It contains 18 learning modules, mirroring each of the commitments on “Faith for Rights.” These modules offer concrete ideas for learning exercises: for example, how to share personal stories, search for additional faith quotes or provide for inspiring examples of artistic expressions. The tool kit is open for adaptation by facilitators in order to tailor the modules to the specific context of the participants. This tool kit builds on a wealth of comparable tools by several UN agencies that have been integrated into the #Faith4Rights tool kit. It also proposes several cases to debate, which enhance the skills of faith actors to manage religious diversity in real-life situations towards the aims of “Faith for Rights.”

Many UN bodies, faith-based actors and civil society organizations have used the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments on “Faith for Rights.” The “Faith for Rights” framework has also been used by faith-based actors and civil

society organizations. For example, the [G20 Interfaith Forums in Buenos Aires](#) and [Osaka](#) yielded the policy recommendation to reduce incitement to hatred by supporting religious leaders and faith-based actors in fulfilling their human rights responsibilities as summarized in the Beirut Declaration and its 18 commitments.

Also referring to the Beirut Declaration, the [Global Forum on Faith Action for Children on the Move](#) called in its action plan for designing and implementing projects and initiatives aimed at promoting respect for and understanding of minority groups, including those with different beliefs, faiths and religions, to reduce violence, xenophobic narratives and nurture peaceful societies. The [religious track of the Cyprus Peace Process](#) organized in October 2019 a “Faith for Rights” seminar in Nicosia, discussing the role that faith communities can play in combatting human trafficking and supporting victims. In November 2019, [Arigatou International](#) published a multi-religious study titled “Faith and Children’s Rights,” which also draws upon the Beirut Declaration.

Furthermore, [OHCHR](#) has been piloting the #Faith4Rights tool kit together with Religions for Peace and the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in webinars on multifaith responses to COVID-19 with a human rights-based approach. At a [virtual global consultation with faith actors](#) in May 2020, the high commissioner noted that the challenges related to COVID-19 may be followed by other tests for humanity and for our universal values: “Joining diverse faith actors within a shared vision and framework, we hope to nourish a community of practice, learning from each other and stimulating promising initiative based on human rights and mutual collaboration and respect.”

In the context of the “[Global Pledge for Action by Religious Actors and Faith-Based Organizations to Address the COVID-19 Pandemic in Collaboration with the United Nations](#),” a series of peer-to-peer learning webinars is held together with the UN Alliance of Civilizations and the Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide.

Humane Treatment of Presently Incarcerated People

August 13, 2020

Many people who are incarcerated have not been convicted of a crime. Unsented incarcerated persons comprise about half the prison population in the countries with the most severe overcrowding. Conditions in many places of detention are unhygienic and inhumane. Rarely do the facilities provide opportunities for re-entry or even maintenance of family connections. Underlying issues of poverty, discrimination, unemployment, psychological stress, and substance abuse are rarely dealt with within prisons. Faith-based organizations can advocate for penal reforms and operate programs of introspection and restorative justice as well as post-release support projects. Their members should continually emphasize that a temporarily incarcerated person is a human being with inalienable rights.

Moderator:

- Dr. Michael Platzer, Co-chair, Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations

Panelists:

- Bishop Franz Scharl, Auxiliary Bishop of Vienna, Vicar for Prison Pastoral Care
- Dr. Karin Bruckmüller, University Professor at the Sigmund Freud University, Vienna, Austria
- Sister Alison McCrary, President of the Louisiana Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild
- Dr. Yitzchak Ben Yair, Researcher and Lecturer, Zefat Academic College, Safed, Israel
- Imam Sheikh Mohammad Ismail, Muslim Chaplain, Sheffield University, Sheffield Federation of Mosques, United Kingdom
- Rev. P. George Harrison, Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur/Prison Chaplaincy, Malaysia, Vatican Dicastery for Integral Human Development
- Mr. Aung Naing Win (Mr. Shine), Founder and President of the Interfaith Youth Coalition on Aid in Myanmar
- Rev. Father Brian Gowans, President of the International Commission of Prison Pastoral Care (ICPPC)



Bishop Franz Scharl

Auxiliary Bishop of Vienna, Vicar for Prison Pastoral Care

Welcome distinguished panelists and participants from all around the world. The cathedral behind us, St. Stephen's Cathedral, (*Stefansdom*) in Vienna, has been standing for about 500 years. And 500 years ago, it had the highest tower in the world.

I was pleased to participate in the founding session of the Coalition of Faith-based Organizations for justice and crime in 2020. The next step today is to understand the importance of chaplains and volunteers in taking care of individuals in detention and their reentry into society. I hope people understand the importance of faith when rethinking values and considering the most critical priorities in their lives. I appreciate the value of interfaith collaboration. We organize regular exchanges with the prison pastoral service of the Patriarch of Moscow.

My overall argument: There has to be a better way of working inside prison institutions. Mercy and forgiveness are prescribed in all religions. I would say that grace is better than severity and prevention is better than detention. This is the way to follow Jesus who took care of all people including people at the margins of our society.

The basic assumptions I make: Only humane treatment is fit for human beings. Inhumane treatment of human beings that attack their dignity is *un*worthy and may destroy them. Human dignity is not awarded by humanity, parents and ancestors, or through society or the state. It relates to the status of being a mortal human being. Nature can uphold human dignity. Human reason can look to Nature as the first and last horizon, and as long as human reason respects Nature, then human dignity is sustained.

Personally, I cannot address myself solely to Nature. I can address myself to God, to me the origin of everything and everyone. For me, God is the origin of the divine dignity of humanity because God's Word, the way God talks to us, enables us to address God. This is valid in all places and for all time.

Pope Francis spoke of one of the consequences of respect for human dignity like this: "Respect for human dignity must serve not only to limit arbitrariness and the excesses of the agents of the State, but act as a guiding criterion for the prosecution and punishment of those actions which represent the most serious attacks against the dignity and integrity of the human person." (Address to a delegation from the International Association of Penal Law Society (AIDP). Hall of the Popes [23 October 2014])

My conclusion: When people are in prison, the question always arises as to whether the basis for the judgment passed on that individual is a sound one.

In reaching a judgment, the corpus of law that has developed over the years plays an essential role. There is a tension here, between justice and mercy, domestic and international law, and the different resources available to each individual.

Furthermore: What is true during a regime and has become the constitution, is perhaps not valid under other regimes, or only partially. What does it mean to be in conformity with the law? Does conformity with the law primarily mean to be compliant with the regime, namely, with the currently most powerful entity? An overarching anthropology, ontology, and theology are unavoidable if we are to prevent disruptive arbitrariness and power, and interest-driven myths.

Moreover, human dignity that is not conferred by another human is necessary in order that it cannot be denied or revoked. All members of the human family are interrelated and are endowed with the same (God-given) dignity.

What kind of place is prison anyway? What should happen there? Positive things toward and for the incarcerated people? If so, how should this be done? Is the execution of the sentence, in the currently applicable form, necessary and helpful at all? Do we still need prisons, or should they gradually become obsolete?

Pope Francis has a pretty firm opinion when it comes to corruption: "The penal system is selective. It is like a net that catches only the little fish and leaves the big fish free in the ocean." (Address, 23 October 2014; Section III. B) Is he only talking about the area of corruption?

Thankfully, now that the death penalty has already been abolished in many States, the deprivation of liberty has probably become the basic understanding of punishment. Pope Francis writes in the Encyclical “Fratelli tutti” [FT] of 3 October 2020: “A life sentence is a secret death penalty.” (FT 268) He views life imprisonment as analogous to the death penalty, and no longer as a deprivation of liberty!

Whosoever has learned to use freedom in the wrong way, must learn to exercise freedom responsibly. Who and what helps with this inside the prison? Who helps people to begin to practice responsible freedom after they have been released from prison?

When people who have been deprived of liberty for a period of time are isolated together in prison, a new social reality is created. It is a *concentrated* social isolation of people locked together involuntarily. We know that resistant, health-endangering germs (can) develop in hospitals—and in prisons. Prisons can also become factories of crime instead of serving a beneficial rehabilitation!

Prisoners are often “crushed.” Their talents are not encouraged or put to work in a healthy way. Humane, spiritual, cultural, financial, resources are lacking often. Prison officers, as well as chaplains and other professionals (psychologists, social workers, etc.) need appreciation and support on every level.

In my opinion, economizing in these areas increases the costs both in prison and outside the prison walls. It is better in several ways, to offer intelligent generosity over harshness and to prioritize long-term prevention of detention. Has society, with its understanding of punishment and its criminal law practice, developed such maturity? Electronic tagging and being allowed to work may in most cases be more effective than incarceration in prison. I am sure, that there are still better suggestions!

Wherever there is guilt, that guilt should be visible to oneself. An important question: What are the consequences of having an insight into guilt and a subsequent confession of guilt?

Collapse of self-identity that has grown or developed in a life without perspective?!

Loss of face with implications for suicide?

Sentence reduction?

And/or allowing yourself be carried by a gracious and compassionate God, who is incarnate in Jesus Christ, and who enables a positive new beginning?!

Calls for harsher punishments, reinforced by the media and politicians, make humane and individualized treatment of offenders and their rehabilitation more difficult. We, as the Catholic Church, should rethink this approach. We are far too self-centered in terms of marginalized groups. We need to become more practical and able to stand up for prisoners. Pilot schemes and cooperation, along with good case studies are more important here than being well-intentioned.

What is our task? First, opening up positive perspectives for prisoners while keeping a careful eye out for them, as appropriate. Second, investing in prisoners: 1) as part of God's creation of humans, animals, plants, the natural environment, such as caring for each other and for all living creatures; 2) as being a symbol of the wounded children of God, just as we would support and encourage others who are wounded.

As Christians who have themselves been redeemed, we can become proactively involved with prisoners and related issues, and we can ask for God's help in Jesus' name. Other religious traditions will formulate it differently. But they will also wish to support people in the context of a higher power that they can pray to for help.

God bless you all.



Dr. Karin Bruckmüller

University Professor at the Sigmund Freud University, Vienna, Austria

Humane Treatment of Presently Incarcerated People

1. Prevention of COVID-19 in Prisons ...

Prisoners and staff members of prisons must not be forgotten during this “COVID-19 crisis”!

The United Nations, especially the UNODC in a position paper, the High Commissioner of Human Rights, the World Health Organization, and other organizations and non-governmental organizations, rightly and consistently address the important issue of human treatment of incarcerated people in general and also during the pandemic time, always taking into account the overcrowding of prisons, lack of the necessary medical and hygienic standards and without an option of physical distancing.

2. ... different approaches

There are different approaches to prevent and/or avoid the spread of the COVID virus within prison walls.

On the one hand, with an emphasis on reducing overcrowding using different strategies:

- Most of the inmates can be (early) released from one day to the next; particularly, no more new convicted offenders being incarcerated (“All criminals out – no more in”).
- Inmates with lighter sentences are released, and only dangerous convicted criminals are incarcerated (“Minor criminals out and only dangerous criminals in”).

On the other hand, with an emphasis on protected admission to prison:

Inmates are (early) released as usual; those convicted go to prison but are pre-tested, and quarantine and hygienic measures are considered (no criminals out - only tested/quarantined criminals).

2.1. “All criminals out – no more in”

The first approach solves the problem of overcrowding but results in serious problems. Most of the inmates have a greatly reduced chance of resocialization, enough money, or even housing after a sudden release. These potentially homeless people belong to a high-risk group for COVID. Because of a lack of testing and medical treatment options for these groups, they obviously can become big spreaders of the virus. This approach is thus quite problematic. It endangers not only the offenders who are released but also public health. However, faith-based organizations can help to minimize problems, for example with housing solutions and/or with other resocialization support for people on early release.

2.2. “Minor criminals out and only dangerous criminals in”

The second approach is quite a balanced system to reduce overcrowding. Minor criminals especially and prisoners belonging to a group that is vulnerable to COVID, especially people with underlying health conditions or the elderly, should be released regardless of the crime they have committed. They should be released with adequate medical and especially housing support in the community.

To reduce the rate of people coming into the prison system, pre-trial detention and imprisonment should be measures of last resort. Accordingly, alternatives to imprisonment, such as mediation or electronic monitoring, should be applied in practice (implemented in the national legal framework). Offenders punished with a fine should not be incarcerated for non-payment.

In my opinion, this second approach should be recommended to national governments, for example, by the UN.

2.3. “No criminals out, only tested or quarantined criminals in”

Alongside the approaches mentioned above, there is a third approach, which might provide solid protection options for prisons that are not overcrowded. A few inmates, or only those whose sentence is completed, are released. Convicted people still go to the quarantine facility but are tested and stay in quarantine for about 14 days after entry (which is especially difficult for young offenders).

With every approach, but especially with the last one mentioned, where prisoners have to stay in the quarantine facilities, the protection of the health of inmates and staff members must be prioritized.

3. Prioritization of health protection inside the prison – high medical/hygiene standards and adequate information

To avoid infections and their spread, prison systems have to react promptly with respect to hygiene and medical measures.

Preconditions for achieving this goal are sufficient financial resources and adequate knowledge about COVID-19, especially with respect to standards of hygiene. As such knowledge cannot be assumed, staff members and inmates must be informed accordingly, so that special COVID preventive measures are understandable and transparent for both sides, both staff members and inmates. This can help avoid rioting, for example. During the pandemic there needs to be awareness raising and provision of detailed information. One source is webinars, for example, organized by UNODC or WHO. Faith-based organizations can cooperate with the organizers and bring in special religious or spiritual perspective(s). However, for this type of information access, digitalization is a necessity. Digitalization in prison in general is a topic that should be pursued by the UN and also national states.

4. No virus importation: reducing contacts

Further, extensive measures to reduce risks of “importing” the virus are indispensable. One of the most obvious strategies is to reduce to a minimum all or most contacts with the outside world.

Visits, in particular, are not allowed. This sort of isolation, of course, has extensive and very painful consequences for prisoners. Alternative contacts via telephone or, even better, via video conferencing are necessary and should be permitted and facilitated. Being able to keep in touch with an inmate is also very important for the families outside.

Families of prisoners and their worries about the relatives in detention must not be forgotten in this extraordinary situation, in which members of faith-based organizations are needed to support the families and the prisoners. With their positive encouragement, they can reduce fears on both sides during such lockdown situations. Additionally, churches or religious organizations (e.g., in cooperation with UN field workers) could provide technical support, such as computer stations, for family members without (adequate) digital access.

Apart from that, incoming staff members also can become a risk for inmates. Therefore, a high testing capacity is essential and should be made available for

all people concerned, even if it poses a major financial barrier. Such a financial investment would protect the health of prisoners, law enforcement officers and staff members at the facility.

In this regard, Austria offers, in my opinion, a best practice model, which might be of interest for an UNODC recommendation. Prison staff in each facility are organized into certain groups for defined working periods. The members of one group are not allowed to have direct contact with members of other groups, to avoid the spread of infection by a staff member and to ensure a basic functioning of the system in the prison if there is infection in one group. In addition, as also said previously, special testing and a 14-day quarantine for incoming prisoners are essential.

5. Infected Prisoners: Right to Medical Treatment

Infected prisoners have a right to medical treatment. Many detention centers do not or cannot offer appropriate and adequate medical treatment, or they may have insufficient isolation options to protect other prisoners. Therefore, close cooperation with hospitals (especially near the prisons) is recommended. Clinics run by a church or other faith-based organizations can be partners in such cooperation. (Staff) members of faith-based organizations, NGOs, and UN field workers could be the right people to connect prison and hospital management.

All the measures mentioned can help to reduce and avoid COVID in prisons and thereby support a humane treatment of presently incarcerated people during the pandemic.



Sister Alison McCrary

President of the Louisiana Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild

Imagine a world without prisons and jails. Imagine a world before European colonialization happened, when indigenous communities largely used restorative justice and transformative practices to respond to harm done in their communities. The modern-day prison is only 200 years old. There are still places where people rely on each other instead of on police, courts, and cages. Eleven million people are incarcerated worldwide, nearly 3 million in the United States.

Prisons and jails do not keep us safe. States and countries with more prisons and prisoners do not have lower crime rates than other states and countries.

We have a moral imperative to advocate for the release of presently incarcerated people, especially during a global pandemic, in which one night in jail could be a death sentence. People in prisons and jails do not have access to protective equipment and cannot socially distance.

The Gospels provide us with a moral imperative to set the captives free, to move toward forgiveness and understanding, and end poverty and other underlying conditions that lead to people committing harm to others.

When examining conditions of confinement, we must take into account mental health, physical and emotional abuse, LGBT populations and their safety needs, prison rape, access to health care, and the right of incarcerated people to vote or participate in democracy.

Alternatives to incarceration and crime prevention include: community-based conflict resolution and mediation practices, restorative justice, mental health facilities, homeless shelters and affordable housing, drug treatment programs, social service interventions, domestic violence intervention specialists, schools

without cops on campus, and ending the targeting of students of color with disciplinary policies and also the militarization of policing.

We must build an international movement to end the Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) by challenging the belief that caging and controlling people makes us safe. We believe that basic necessities such as food, shelter, and freedom are what really make our communities secure. As such, our work is part of global struggles against inequality and powerlessness. The success of the movement requires that it reflect communities most affected by the PIC. Because we seek to abolish the PIC, we cannot support any work that extends its life or scope.

A chain is only as long as its weakest link. We can cut the chains to end the system of mass incarceration. It is imperative that we revive and restore those who are weakest among us, including those with convictions.

The catalyst for our work and our efforts is love. We must want for our neighbor what we want for ourselves.



Dr. Yitzchak Ben Yair

Researcher and Lecturer at Zefat Academic College, Safed, Israel

The integration of religion and spiritual traditions into research in the social sciences, psychology, and, especially, criminology has grown significantly in the past two decades and seems to have become more common and accepted. In the field of criminology, religion and spirituality have been shown to contribute to the rehabilitation of offenders as well as to various crime prevention and desistance initiatives.

Despite focusing on religion and spirituality, some studies have ignored the religious–spiritual paradigm and the premises of common human behavior behind religion and spiritual traditions, thus undermining their ability to offer an independent explanation of human phenomena. It should be noted that this tendency in scholarship illustrates a certain disconnect of academia from the general population; a worldwide poll carried out in 2010 in over 230 countries and dependencies found that 84 percent of the world’s population live their lives according to a religious–spiritual paradigm; in other words, they belong to a religious group. These data also reflect the need for the establishment of faith-based organizations in response to a basic human need all around the world.

Modern criminology ignores the theoretical and applied knowledge found in religion and its ability to contribute to a better understanding of delinquency and how to cope with it. My study, outlined here, addresses the spiritual essence and knowledge found in religious texts which aim to unify humans and reduce human suffering. It is an example of the use of religious knowledge to create a faith-based theory that may serve as the foundation for shaping faith-based organizations.

The Spiritual Jewish criminology presented here explains criminology from a Jewish spiritual paradigm, without losing sight of faith as expressed in Judaism and with an emphasis on applicability. I propose a general and universal theory of criminology that applies knowledge derived from Judaism, as reflected in the statements of the study participants. This knowledge serves to describe and explain human purpose, nature, and inclinations and the causes of delinquency, as well as the desired social response, crime desistance, and rehabilitation. The study used a hermeneutic phenomenological approach in which 39 participants were interviewed and many of the religious scriptures selected at their recommendation were analyzed.

The findings reveal three central and unique themes that deal with the purpose of creation, human nature, and the question of free will. Through these premises, my study suggests that Spiritual Jewish criminology, a faith-based theory stemming from Judaism, offers a universal paradigm that explains a person's life as a spiritual journey, completed according to the Pyramid Model. The Pyramid Model is a theoretical depth model in which the human being moves on two axes simultaneously. On the first, the horizontal axis, the desirable movement ranges from egocentrism to altrocentrism. These two concepts are unique to this study and should be first clarified.

Egocentrism (self-centeredness) is conceptualized as an inability to see reality as it appears to others and refers to a cognitive bias associated with criminality. Altrocentrism (focus on others) represents the opposite of egocentrism and is defined as the ability of an individual to understand another person by seeing the facts as they appear to the other, which thus promotes pro-social behavior. On the second, the vertical axis, the movement goes from materialism to spirituality, as it emphasizes the turn toward spirituality (or toward God, depending on one's understanding), which is represented by supreme values from the material world.

It should be noted that a person's movement on the second axis depends largely on their movement on the horizontal axis: Insofar as one transcends egocentrism, one is able to turn to spirituality. This view coincides with parallel concepts of spirituality and constitutes a basic premise of spiritual criminology per se, as it expresses a person's movement from self-centeredness to God-centeredness. Following the premises concerning human nature and inclinations, it can be established that a person's journey starts at the bottom of the pyramid within a certain distance of its perimeter (innate deficits—egocentrism and materialism). Accordingly, human beings' main purpose is to aspire to the center and the summit of the pyramid, while a lack of progress or staying entrenched at the bottom of the pyramid are both linked to non-normative behavior.

The proposed paradigm of Spiritual Jewish criminology applies theory and practice to the field of criminology by virtue of the religious and spiritual knowledge that broadens the scope of scientific discourse and theoretical discussions. The Pyramid Model elucidates the basic premises of Spiritual Jewish criminology and portrays the desirable journey through life from altrocentrism to spirituality; it thus emphasizes the good core of human beings. Delinquency may occur as a result of an imbalance between the elements and a proclivity to egocentrism and materialism, which emphasize the propensity for bad deeds. According to this view, bad deeds are the result of a default choice and differ from people's good nature.

I hope that this study will validate the presentation of faith-based criminology that draws on other traditions, such as Christianity or Islam or Eastern religions, that it will enrich what is written here, and thus enable a theoretical rationale for the establishment of other faith-based organizations.



Imam Sheikh Mohammad Ismail

Muslim Chaplain, Sheffield University, Sheffield Federation of Mosques, United Kingdom

The Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations (CFBO) has undertaken a very important social task. Imprisonment, an aspect of the denigration of human life which has been mostly ignored, has a huge social impact on all of us in different ways. Faith-based organizations, by accepting this difficult challenge, have proven their important role in society.

The prison population is the most neglected and the least important area for our political institutions. This neglect results in the rise of crime, poverty, and abuse in society. It brings about inequality, discrimination, and corruption, which have negative socioeconomic impacts. Undemocratic countries are at the forefront in this neglect, but it is different from country to country. CFBO, with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), can play an important role in bringing attention to prisoners' rights, their rehabilitation and re-integration into society. Today we concentrate only on the situation of prisoners in this COVID-19 pandemic, on how much care is given to prisoners in this terrible time. There is still a desperate need for other areas related to prisoners to be addressed in the future.

The CFBO webinar of August 12, 2020, was delegated to look into "Humane Treatment of Presently Incarcerated People." I concentrated on prisoners during COVID-19 in the Middle Eastern and Asian countries. It was a huge task to investigate the whole region. Therefore, I decided to concentrate on Lebanon, which is a moderate and democratic country as well as having some prison welfare institutions and organizations. It also cooperates with UNODC and with Amnesty International regarding prisons by sharing information.

According to an Amnesty International report of April 21, 2020, [<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/04/lebanon-government-must-urgently-release-more-prisoners-to-prevent-spread-of-covid19/>]

The Lebanese authorities were holding prisoners in overcrowded cells despite the deadly risk from the COVID-19 virus. This was a situation in which some prisoners, having finished serving their sentences, were still kept in detention.

Lynn Maalouf, Amnesty International's Middle East research director, has said:

Lebanon's prisons are full of people who simply should not be there, including hundreds of individuals who remain behind bars because the judiciary isn't processing their cases in a timely manner or because they are unable to pay their fines or secure release warrants.

For those who remain in detention or prison, the Lebanese government must provide a standard of health that meets each person's individual needs and ensures the maximum possible protection against the spread of COVID-19.

On April 6, 2020, the Lebanese Ministry of Interior announced the release of more than 600 prisoners who had been in pre-trial detention, as part of the Government's measures to contain the spread of COVID-19. Relatives interviewed by Amnesty described how they feared for prisoners' health in light of COVID-19, especially as visits are becoming increasingly difficult due to restrictions imposed because of the pandemic.

According to Omar Nashabe, a former advisor to the Ministry of Interior, the administration of Roumieh Central Prison had provided a list of 700 prisoners with underlying medical conditions, many of whom suffer from respiratory issues and other conditions, thus putting them at higher risk from COVID-19.

On March 31, 2020, in response to the growing health concerns posed by COVID-19, the UNODC Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa launched an awareness-raising campaign for those detained in the juvenile wing in Roumieh Prison, the Moubadara facility for girls, and the Barbar Khazen Prison for women in Beirut.

<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2020/March/in-response-to-covid-19-unodc-in-lebanon-acts-to-protect-the-most-vulnerable-in-prisons.html>

"A major crisis is brewing in Asia's overcrowded prisons and jails," according to John Sifton (Human Rights Watch New York and Asia advocacy director). "Governments in Asia need to move quickly to reduce detention populations by releasing people who shouldn't be in custody in the first place, like political prisoners and those jailed for minor offenses."

Five of the 10 countries with the largest prison populations are in Asia. China's official prison population is the second largest in the world, even without counting the 1 million held in "political education" camps in Xinjiang and unknown numbers in "black jails," "custody and education" facilities, and other forms of arbitrary detention. India, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines are also in the top ten.

Many prisons and jails in Asia are overcrowded, according to the Institute for Crime and Justice Policy Research, with Indonesia, Cambodia, and Bangladesh prisons at over 200 percent capacity. The Philippines has a 464 percent over-capacity rate, the most overcrowded prison system in the world, and some of its prisons are at over 500 percent capacity.

Finally, it is a proven fact now that COVID-19 will remain with us for some time, and bringing it under control is going to take years. It will have serious impacts on prisons and prisoners around the world. Lebanon is one example which is much better than other Middle Eastern countries. We have no reliable data from other countries to assess the situation. UNODC should remind the governments around the world:

1. to meet prisoners' rights and avoid any health disaster;
2. to come up with clear plans for prisoners' future;
3. to ask for exchange of prison information from all UN member countries;
4. to have all non-violent, political and under-trial prisoners released to avoid a health catastrophe;
5. to state that there are no ethical or moral grounds for detaining such prisoners.



Rev. P. George Harrison

*Archdiocese of Kuala Lumpur/Prison Chaplaincy, Malaysia,
Vatican Dicastery for Integral Human Development*

In the Scriptures it is said, “What man among you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it?” (Luke 15:4)

Each and every person is endowed with the inherent dignity of the human being and has within themselves the “image of God.”

I would like to focus on three areas of human treatment in the prisons, and these are based on my own personal encounters and experiences of visits to prisons, pastoral help and outreach programs I have done. I have been visiting prisons for almost 13 years.

Here are my thoughts:

Opportunity: In Malaysia there are five main religions other than Islam: Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Tao, and Sikh. As such, in the prisons there is always a mixture of all faiths, races, and languages. During my visits I often take with me two other volunteers who are bilingual, so that they can help sharing in English, Bahasa, Mandarin, and Tamil. To be fair to all the listeners during the one-hour religious class, we ask them to sit in the four different language groups and share from their hearts. They are often inspired and touched when they can express their stories in the language that they speak the best. For other foreign nationals, like those from Myanmar, Vietnam or other regional countries, we try to give materials or conduct prayers in their language; but most of them can understand some Bahasa language since they have been in Malaysia for a few years. We always give them these opportunities.

Equal opportunity should be given to all friends in prison regardless of faith, color, race or language. When it is time to give a religious catechesis (doctrinal training), we are always aware of the presence of friends from other faiths. They may speak other languages or be of another faith. I would try to explain or ensure that all sitting there understand what we are sharing. At times, we conduct the prayer/sharing in an ecumenical way or interreligious dialogue. This is very helpful in the multireligious setting in our country.

There are those being set free from the prisons who are not yet welcomed by their families, friends, and society. They carry on being jobless, having nothing to do, and fall back into the same criminal trap. Therefore, having a “second home” and personal care would be great in order to have a fresh start in their lives.

Mental health: Those in prisons suffered the absence of family members visiting them during COVID-19. This created in them a great sadness and a vacuum of the warmth, support, and presence of their loved ones. Many of them suffered mental torture, and were depressed and sickly. During the pandemic period, there were no opportunities for temporary release from prison, and no visits at all. Opportunities to meet online with families would have been a great help. However, a pre-recorded sharing of the Bible from churches was carried out, and we were grateful for that. The worst is to see the many foreigners here who are completely forlorn, with no one to visit them. Only families are allowed, but they have no family here, so they look forward for a religious leader to visit and talk to them. Each one of them needs someone to LISTEN to them.

So many of them are deprived of an opportunity to be heard by the embassy, NGOs, or a lawyer. Some of them have no one from the embassy, or there is no embassy here. Women who give birth in the prisons are in a dilemma. What happens when the child reaches three years old? Will the child be taken away and sent to the welfare department, where they fear religious discrimination or conversion? Only with our intervention is the child sent back home or sent to a safer place. Very often these mothers go on suffering silently and their mental torture continues.

Hygiene: The prison cells are very often fully occupied by these inmates; at times they are overcrowded. In such a situation, it is quite impossible to take good care of one’s hygiene and health. During my visits I ask them what they need. Their answers often would be “I need soap.” ... Those friends in the prisons who have no one to visit will have no money or personal items given to them, for example, phone card, toiletries, dry food items. The most important need here is bath soap to keep themselves clean. A stay in an overcrowded cell is very unhealthy and unhygienic. Imagine you have no soap with

to bathe, to wash for months. Worse still during the pandemic is if the cell has no water with which to wash one's hands before meals, never mind about sanitizers.

I hope the practical matters mentioned here can help foreigners in the prisons.



Mr. Aung Naing Win (Mr. Shine)

Founder and President of the Interfaith Youth Coalition on Aid in Myanmar

I have been working mainly with young people and mostly using a youth-based approach. I have been working in the field of HIV and AIDS and also dealing with the people with drug abuse for more than 20 years. Now also I am mainly focusing on reducing the use of drugs among young people. We are planning to have a program to prevent drug use and also an HIV program for young people, together with a drug policy advocacy group in Myanmar.

Myanmar is one of the major opium producers in the world, accounting for 14 percent of the world's total opium production and 20 percent of the world's total cultivation. According to data from the 2018 Myanmar opium survey prepared by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the area of opium poppy cultivation in Myanmar dropped to 37,300 hectares in 2018, down 10 percent from the 41,000 hectares recorded in 2017. So, that is how much we are producing.

In Myanmar the largest population group are young people, so it is mostly young people who are at risk for this drug problem. In Myanmar, we currently have a new National Drug Policy. We adopted a crucial Drug Law in 2013, but it was only in February 2018 that we established the National Drug Control Policy. We work together with the Myanmar Police Force, the Central Community for Drug Abuse Control, the Ministry of Home Affairs, UNODC, and many other partners. We still need to abolish a lot of unnecessary laws which still remain in our country—especially in regard to the situation of COVID-19, because in Myanmar prisons are 40 percent overcrowded. About 100 organizations have come together and raised our voice against imprisoning drug users. In Myanmar we cannot control the drug problem in the prisons, because all of

the prisons are overcrowded. In most regions of Myanmar about 70 percent to 80 percent of the prisoners are drug users.

We still have a lack of resources and techniques. At the same time, there is also a lack of reliable information on the context of drug use and its health consequences. Although the number of people who inject drugs is estimated to exceed 80,000 in Myanmar, 30 percent of the total HIV prevalence is from injecting drug users. Dependency is rarely appreciated as a health issue, and drug users in Myanmar face stigma as well as social exclusion and limited access to services. In the whole country we have only 26 major and 47 minor drug treatment centers, as well as 51 methadone maintenance therapy sites. But we still need to expand a lot.

As I have already mentioned, in the prisons 70 to 80 percent are drug users. So detaining drug users is also a burden for the prison system. This is not only burdening the criminal justice system but also having serious negative social and health consequences, especially for young people. It's like they have lost their life. Even if two or three pills are found in the hands of young people in a group of three to five friends, all of them will be imprisoned. Such things have made the life of young people very difficult, sometimes totally losing their future. We are still advocating to the government and also to those dealing with those issues to change the laws in our country.



Rev. Father Brian Gowans

President of the International Commission of Catholic Prison Pastoral Care (ICCPPC)

I fully applaud and support this initiative, both personally and on behalf of the ICCPPC. As someone who has attended the Crime Commission for almost 20 years, I am always amazed to see and feel a real sense of unity from so many diverse cultures and faiths. This is a real strength—a great building block on which to build.

For several years I and many colleagues from a variety of NGOs have lobbied in the corridors and halls, tea stations and restaurants of the United Nations to get agreement on what is now known as the Mandela Rules. We now have them as of 2015. However, all of us know that was just the beginning—for those who thought the hard work was over, I'm afraid it is just beginning. The implementation of these hard-fought rules is where the hard work begins and the struggle continues.

COVID-19 has brought many difficulties and challenges, but I prefer to see them as opportunities. Our world has changed, but I don't want to go back to whatever was "normal" but rather forward with whatever we have learned. Our planet is breathing cleaner air again, the wildlife is flourishing, but intelligent life is struggling with so many issues—the economy, housing, work, education, mental health and so on.

It is no different for those who find themselves presently incarcerated, except that in the microcosm of a prison, everyday things can be greatly exaggerated, where even a simple thing like a bar of chocolate can become sought-after currency.

As someone who lobbied hard and long for the Mandela Rules, and particularly for the inclusion of the Freedom of Religion, I find the following things important:

- That all those who are incarcerated, and the staff working with them, be treated with respect and that there should be no degrading treatment or punishments meted out. The sentence given by the courts is the punishment—people who are in prison are not sent there to be punished and especially if on remand (Rule 1).
- That there should be no discrimination of any kind and that the religious beliefs and moral precepts of those in prison be respected. This is particularly true of those with mental health problems and special needs (Rule 2).
- Today in Scotland our schoolchildren return to school for the first time in over four months, and I have been hearing how important education is for the young. Equally it is just as important to ensure that those in prison have the opportunity for good education and vocational skills, so that they can seek employment on release (Rule 4).
- Accommodation is crucial to the good order of a prison and the health of those incarcerated. Overcrowding is a huge problem in many prisons, and often all the requirements of health and livable conditions are not met. Adequate bathing facilities are also a necessity to be provided (Rule 16).
- Rule 22 talks about nutritional food and drink—adequate water supplies and, following on from Rule 24, appropriate health care provisions.
- Moving on to Rule 58, we see the importance of contact with the outside world. During this pandemic, prison visits have been withdrawn or restricted, but this has led to new technology being introduced, such as video links and the use of mobile phones. We cannot expect people who have been incarcerated in prison to slip seamlessly back into society if they are cut off from the outside world.
- Finally, Rules 65 and 66 talk of religious practice and access to suitable providers and materials.

In such a short space of time it is impossible to cover all the ground necessary, but for me these are the key issues: respect, a non-judgmental/non-discriminatory environment, education/vocational training, decent accommodation, good food/drink and health provisions, communication with the outside world, especially family and friends, and the ability to practice religious beliefs and precepts or not, as the case may be. In short, the ability to be oneself.

To sum up, the practice in running prisons tends to have been:

- Custody
- Good Order
- Care
- Opportunity

It is so important to get the balance right, but all too often the emphasis is on the custody and good order. I maintain that while these are important, if we had the courage to shift the emphasis to care and opportunity, the custody and good order might just take care of themselves.

Violence Prevention: How Can Faith Leaders Save Lives?

August 28, 2020

This webinar continues a conversation on ways for faith leaders to assist the world to shift to a culture of prevention that will save thousands of lives, protect millions of women, and save hundreds of millions of children from violence. World leaders have committed at the United Nations General Assembly to significant reductions in violence for Agenda 2030. Solutions that tackle the roots of violence have been proven to reduce violence by 50 percent. How can faith leaders use their influence to spread the word? How can faith leaders partner with UN agencies? How can faith leaders partner with city leaders determined to achieve a world safer from violent crime?

Moderator:

- Dr. Thomas Walsh, Co-chair, Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations

Panelists:

- Prof. Dr. Irvin Waller, Professor Emeritus, University of Ottawa
- Dr. Veronica Martinez-Solares, Director of Research, Fundación para el Estudio de la Seguridad y Gobernanza, Mexico; Member of the Board of Directors, International Organization for Victim Assistance
- Ms. Rachel Locke, Director, Impact: Peace, University of San Diego; Co-facilitator, Peace in Our Cities
- Mr. Juma Assiango, director, Safer Cities Programme, UN-Habitat, Nairobi
- Ven. Dr. Bhante Chao Chu, President of the Los Angeles Buddhist Union; Chief Abbot, Rosemead Buddhist Monastery
- Dr. Muzammil H. Siddiqi, Imam and Religious Director of the Islamic Society of Orange County, Garden Grove, California; Chair of the Fiqh (Islamic Law) Council of North America



Prof. Dr. Irvin Waller

Professor Emeritus, University of Ottawa

Violence Prevention: How Can Faith Leaders Save Lives?

We need leadership to change the discourse from more or less humane treatment of offenders to stopping the offending before it happens. The good but little-known news is that we have scientifically proven ways that tackle the causes of violence and so reduce violence significantly. The other good news is that we know the essentials for successful implementation and cities that have succeeded.

The key question for faith leaders is whether they have a role in sharing knowledge about scientifically proven strategies and keys to successful implementation. Other questions are about engaging in outreach locally to change those causes and changing the conversation and national policies from punishment to prevention,

In 2018, Edna Chavez, a 17-year-old from Los Angeles, gave the answers from her heart after her brother was murdered. She bravely spoke to a half-million people in Washington, DC, at the “March for Our Lives.” The short speech is important to [witness](#). She did not talk about too little or too inhumane punishment. She focused on changing the conditions that foster violence and trauma. She called on us to outreach to tackle the roots and advocate for a shift to preventing violence. She talked about getting to the causes before violence happens. Here are some of what she said about the loss of her brother:

“I lost more than my brother that day. I lost my hero, I also lost my mother, my sister, and myself to that trauma and that anxiety. ... [Police departments in schools] continue to profile and criminalize us. Instead, we should have a department specializing in restorative justice. We need to tackle the root causes

of the issues. ... Policy-makers, listen up! ... [F]und mentorship programs, mental health resources, paid internship and job opportunities.”

Her brother’s death is one tragedy, but these are happening unnecessarily to a half-million families every year. They are “not inevitable,” as Mandela said, they are “preventable.” Globally a 50 percent reduction, which science shows is achievable, would save 250,000 lives from homicides a year, of which 9,000 are in the US and 18,000 in Mexico. It would stop 15 million women from being raped, of which a half-million are in the US and at least 250,000 in Mexico. It would protect a half-billion children from violence, of which 25 million are in the US and 10 million in Mexico.

This would reduce the harm to a still chilling \$4 trillion with a quarter of a trillion in the US but positively would increase the GDP of Mexico by more than 2 percent. These are staggering numbers of lives saved, persons not traumatized, persons without long-term ill health, lost GDP, corrupted criminal justice and failed democracy. These are what Edna Chavez experienced but multiplied by many millions. It is in our hands to save these lives and avoid the trauma.

The good news is that the world’s leaders are already committed to significant reductions in violent crime. In 2015, they called for these reductions as part of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and set a timetable of 2030. Unfortunately, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. These leaders have not yet taken the decisions to achieve the reductions. It is business as usual, with more police, more prisons and more efforts to do what feels good—intuitive—but does not work and allows so many young people to die, suffer and be traumatized.

There is now solid but little-known science on what is effective in ending crime and victimization. This science is endorsed but not acted on by the World Health Organization, the British College of Policing and even the US Department of Justice. The most effective ways are not the status quo systems of police, courts, incarceration and rehabilitation.

The actions require new investments, such as improving youth engagement, support for parents in early years, changing male attitudes to violence, mitigating financial stress and improving the physical environment. They also require a shift in the use of police, such as diverting critical incidents to other services, enforcing alcohol and gun regulations, problem solving and partnering with social agencies.

To be implemented locally successfully, cities must have a leadership office to plan and spearhead action by sectors able to tackle causes. The planning must mobilize those able to tackle the causes, be inspired by the science, organized

by qualified talent, supported by adequate and sustained funding, and engaging the public. It must focus on getting measurable results.

We have some examples of cities that have achieved a 50 percent reduction in violent crime, which confirms that it is achievable. In lower-violence countries, Glasgow's [public health approach](#) achieved a 50 percent reduction within three years of using a violence reduction unit to complete diagnosis and plan and sustained further reductions – London and UK regions adopting the unit and getting government funding. In high-violence cities in the US, Boston and Oakland are often cited, but now a new cohort of mayors of major cities want to tackle the causes but are not yet doing the planning and funding needed. In high-violence countries in Latin America, Bogota and Coahuila and Diadema are examples of reductions of more than 50 percent.

The Peace in Our Cities campaign is galvanizing a movement to halve urban violence by 2030. The UN agency responsible for cities – UN-Habitat – has helped governments agree to system-wide Guidelines on Safer Cities and Human Settlements. But all of these need encouragement and support from other orders of government that control funding.

Specific actions by faith leaders will save lives, protect women and stop violence against children. In the context of Black Lives Matter, Defund Police and Me Too Movement, here are three positive actions that faith leaders can spearhead. More information is available in *Science and Secrets of Ending Violent Crime* or from my website.

1. Increase awareness about the most effective and just ways to reduce violence.

For instance, faith leaders can prepare material for sermons, religious services, discussion groups, and social media exchanges, including online resources like videos.

2. Train human talent and outreach locally.

For instance, faith leaders can include in their professional development material ways to support violence prevention for their congregants and for community outreach.

3. Change minds and hearts to advocate for prevention.

Leaders of faiths can call for the shift from punishment to prevention to save lives and reduce brutality.



Dr. Veronica Martinez-Solares

*Director of Research, Fundación para el Estudio de la Seguridad y Gobernanza, Mexico;
Member of the Board of Directors, International Organization for Victim Assistance*

Reversing Violence Trends in Latin America: Role for Faith Leaders

The Foundation for the Study of Security and Governance (Fundación para el Estudio de la Seguridad y Gobernanza) is drawing attention to the crisis and providing actions that faith leaders can promote.

Latin America has a high proportion of public spending on reactive safety and security, for which the budget is double the average in the developed world (Inter-American Development Bank, 2016). It's not money that has been lacking.

Since 2013 (United Nations Development Programme), Latin America and the Caribbean are the most unsafe and lethal subregions in the world. In 2016, the Americas, with 8 percent of the world's population, accounted for 37 percent of the homicides (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2019). It has increased at 3.7 percent annually over the past decade — that is three times the population growth rate of 1.1 percent. Mexico is the Latin American country with the fastest growth in homicide numbers, going from a rate of 8 per 100,000 in 2007 to 27 in 2019—an increase of 337.5 percent in just 12 years. More than 2 million young people aged 15–29 died in Latin America and the Caribbean between 2005 and 2015. Young men account for most of those deaths, and their homicides correspond to 27 percent of the overall mortality in those ages.

The reactive system is not enough to reverse the trends, and unfortunately the methods often are associated with human rights violations. In 2017 around 4,670 civilians were killed in Brazil, and 407 in El Salvador, by police forces.

Among Latin American and Caribbean nations, El Salvador has the largest number of young people (between 25 and 35 years old) who are in prison, followed by Brazil¹.

Gender-based violence is particularly serious in the region². It has the highest rates of gender-based violence in the world. The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars reported that countries in Latin America (Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, the Dominican Republic, Peru, El Salvador and Bolivia) account for 81 percent of global cases. In Mexico and Honduras, homicide is the second leading cause of death for women of reproductive age.

Sexual violence represents 25 percent of all acts of violence against women in the region. In Central America, it includes sexual slavery by the *maras* (gangs) and organized crime groups. In Mexico, three out of five women have suffered some form of violence against women. The official numbers are terrifying, despite the fact that domestic violence is widely underreported.

The impact of violence against women is enormous, reducing the life expectancy of Mexican women between 15 and 24 years by approximately 20 percent (González-Pérez, Vega-López, Ramos de Souza, Wernersbach Pino, 2017³). Violence is a particularly serious threat to girls: In 2018, Guatemala registered more than 9,000 pregnancies of girls between the ages of 10 and 19. Almost 100 percent of the cases, child sexual abuse by a close relative of the girls.

Impunity, the result of corruption and inefficiency in the judicial system, is a key factor of the problem of violence against women, including femicide: In addition to the high percentages of unreported crimes in Latin American and Caribbean countries, only 2 percent of reported gender crimes are investigated and a resolution is reached in less than 0.1 percent.

¹ Dentro de las prisiones de América Latina y el Caribe: Una mirada al otro lado de las rejas”, realizado por el Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID) en 14 países

² Sources <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/surge-violence-against-girls-and-women-latin-america-and-caribbean>

<https://www.dw.com/es/am%C3%A9rica-latina-y-el-desaf%C3%ADo-de-reducir-las-altas-cifras-de-embarazo-adolescente/a-48028862>

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Wilson Center: a double-pandemic: <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/double-pandemic>

³ González-Pérez, G., Vega-López, M.G., Ramos de Souza, E., Wernersbach Pino, L. (2017).

Violent death and its impact on life expectancy: A comparison between Mexico and Brazil. *Ciênc. saúde coletiva* vol.22 no.9 Rio de Janeiro Sept. 2017. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/1413-81232017229.12172017>

The extraordinary efforts

Every great challenge brings great opportunities and lessons. In 2015, we analyzed the lessons learned from what 15 Latin American countries were doing to prevent violent crime. The work was coordinated with the European Forum for Urban Security (which includes nearly [250 local and regional authorities](#) from 16 countries) and the Belgian Juvenile Justice Observatory, with funding from the Eurosocial program for cooperation between the European Union and Latin America.

As Professor Irwin Waller set out above, the study recognized the scientifically proven programs and the keys for successful implementation. It stressed the importance of both political will and technical leadership. Behind all the Latin American experiences that have managed to reduce victimization, there are multiple actors. It is not only the mechanical implementation of a project but also the possibility of convening multiple levels of government, actors and sectors, capable of talking among themselves and coordinating to achieve a common goal. It highlighted the successes such as Bogota and Coahuila. Cordoba in Argentina is a recent best practice.

Latin America presents a special opportunity for faith-based organizations to make a difference. Although the majority of Latin American states are secular and there is a very recent history of mistrust in all institutions, due to multiple abuses, the work that many spiritual and religious centers have been developing is undeniable, including with migrants, support for victims, and human rights.

The potential of faith-based organizations is in the following areas:

1. They know directly the problems of the communities, at the most micro level of human relations.
2. They know a positive social capital that governments are rarely able to identify.
3. They have a very broad convening power.
4. They still have a great influence at a community level in two aspects: moral and culture of legality.



Ms. Rachel Locke

Director, Impact: Peace, University of San Diego; Co-facilitator, Peace in Our Cities

Peace in Our Cities Mobilizing to Reduce Violent Crime by 50 Percent by 2030

Today, nine of 10 instances of lethal violence take place outside conflict zones, in locations broadly considered at peace. Much of this violence takes place in cities, where the majority of humanity will reside in the coming decades, given urbanization trends. Roughly 44 percent of cities with populations of 250,000 to 500,000 face epidemic levels of violence.

While urban violence is often as complex a phenomenon as violence in conflict zones, the reaction to violence in cities too often provokes overly simplistic responses that do little to prevent and reduce violence in the near to long term. [Peace in Our Cities](#) seeks to reverse this trend by creating concrete, participatory, and evidence-based platforms that make progress toward [SDG16+](#) with an initial focus on Sustainable Development Goal 16.1 (to significantly reduce all forms of violence).

Peace in Our Cities was launched on the International Day of Peace in September 2019. At its inception, Peace in Our Cities included a group of 11 early-adopter cities and a dozen partner organizations. This initial cohort pledged to champion the urgency of reducing urban violence and to outline a city-to-city platform that would enable cities worldwide to act on the science of reducing urban violence to build peace. On International Day of Peace in September 2020, Peace in Our Cities marked its one-year anniversary by transitioning from a “campaign” to a “platform,” with a goal to halve and transform urban violence globally over the coming decade.

As of January 2021, Peace in Our Cities numbers 18 city and 30 organizational partners, ranging from Oakland, California, USA, to Amman, Jordan, to Colombo, Sri Lanka. Although these cities have different “violence priorities”—the type of violence most prevalent in their city—they all share the same goal: to cut urban violence in half by 2030. This focus on urban violence is important, because it contributes significantly to all global violence figures, because it is all too often met with overly punitive responses that further violence, and because there is clear evidence of effective practice to save lives.

Promisingly, there is a range of evidence and emerging best practices to address high levels of urban violence. Cities around the world are achieving significant reductions in their violence rates, typically through integrated approaches that involve a cross-section of actors hyper-focused on the goal of saving lives and increasing peace and safety. Civil society organizations around the world are key to bringing attention to the imperative of reducing violence and building peace in our cities and implementing programming that saves lives and builds peace.

The Peace in Our Cities network is unique to other city-wide networks, in that it specifically centers around the belief that city officials and governments alone cannot succeed at violence reduction. In order to be successful, solutions must include both city officials and members of civil society. Both are needed to do the work of lowering violence levels today and—through addressing structural factors—keeping violence down in the long term.

Faith leaders and partnerships with faith communities are critical to these efforts. In many instances, religious and traditional leaders are extremely effective co-creators and messengers of knowledge, and carry weight in communities where there is often suspicion toward the government or security forces.

Faith community partnerships are human-centered and allow partners to tend to complex layers of needs, capacities, and traumas, while simultaneously addressing short-term violence and tending to underlying structural causes. They are relationship-centered, which is the most crucial component of effective violence reduction strategies.

Faith leaders are often able to bridge the gaps between community members, who have long been abused by the system, and institutions of the state. Most importantly, faith community partnerships are solidarity-centered. They use their influence to bring voice and motivate change to those most at risk, who often have the leader power and voice.

For a network like Peace in Our Cities, partnerships for violence reduction must include faith-based and traditional leaders. City partners—both governmental and non-governmental—require inspiration and partnership on how to

best put these evidence-based strategies into practice. Coupled with evidence, these partnerships can help us bring about a 50 percent reduction in urban violence by 2030.



Mr. Juma Assiango

Director, Safer Cities Programme, UN-Habitat, Nairobi

UN-Habitat Has 20 years of Fostering Safer Cities

Crime and violence threaten the social cohesion and economic stability of cities. One in five people worldwide has been a victim of crime and violence. The Safer Cities Programme looks at violent crime as an aspect of the broader issue of social cohesion. Public safety, social cohesion, and prosperity all feed into each other. Socialization processes shape our attitudes, behaviors, and lifestyles; nobody is born a criminal. Mr. Assiango called on faith leaders to join the Safer Cities Programme in its goal of building a global network of communities for public safety.



Ven. Dr. Bhante Chao Chu

*President of the Los Angeles Buddhist Union;
Chief Abbot, Rosemead Buddhist Monastery*

Cause and Effect, Local Action and Buddhist Teaching

The relationship between cause and effect in the Buddhist teaching is always emphasized, and it is a core teaching. Sometimes we do not see that there are more causes.

We always hear numbers, statistics, and reports for what is going on. All these issues and problems that involve violence have their causes. People are always looking at the effects but not the causes. The root causes are important. If we do not pay attention to the root causes, we may not be able to take care of the problems.

Sometimes, faith-based organizations are also creating violence. They go to other countries to convert people from poor communities by feeding them and giving a little money. Religions should play a major role in creating a peaceful society if they have nonviolent teachings in their scripture. Religious leaders have to educate people with moral responsibilities.

The Buddhist teaching emphasizes the value of ethics, which is crucial to the health of society. Verse 129 of the Dhammapada says: “All are afraid of the stick, all fear death. Putting oneself in another’s place, one should not beat or kill others.” This teaching goes beyond human beings by respecting all living beings and their unique rights.

It is not easy to build a peaceful society. People have selfish desires, greed, hatred, and violent behavior, which they can learn from associating with other people. Educating people about consequences changes their behavior. To reduce violence, we need responsible media and government involvement to

work together. Teaching nonviolence should start in schools at an early age to understand the meaning of nonviolence and the value of respect for seniors, parents, animals, government officials, teachers, employers, neighbors, and other members of society.

The prevention of violence depends on how we understand how violence, poverty, culture, education, life skills, and other social behavior are interconnected. To reduce crime, we have to adopt practical methods. If crimes are not violent, then people should find a way to teach correct behavior to avoid the consequences of continuing crimes.

In Los Angeles, we did a program for troubled youth. High school kids sometimes fight and go to court. We have connections with the judges, officers, and the police who send us these kids after sentencing to do community service. We make use of that opportunity not to let them do hard labor but to do some work to know that work is not easy. At the same time, we talk to them so that they know that work is hard and that their parents work hard to feed them. Families have their own culture, and sometimes they create problems. We are using different techniques to teach them and talk to them. We have to work and not just talk.

We are not only talking about religious beliefs. We are talking about social values and moral responsibilities. In many religious sermons and discussions, we are not emphasizing enough ethical values. Creating peace is educating. I am not talking about academic education. I am talking about social education. We have to learn how to live first. Right now, people are doing what they can to survive, but this can include stealing and cheating to build monetary prosperity. Violence is related to poverty, so we need to teach people how to live with respect to other people and animals.

Offering services in the community centers can provide education through teaching and experience. People can go through training and be ready for decent jobs. We need moral education to act differently from violent habits. By teaching people through action how we can be part of society without violence, we can improve interconnected causes to live more peacefully.



Dr. Muzammil H. Siddiqi

Imam and Religious Director of the Islamic Society of Orange County, Garden Grove, California; Chair of the Fiqh (Islamic Law) Council of North America

Collaboration between faiths and across the whole society

Violence is happening in all sorts of places, on all levels. Because of this, violence prevention requires the mobilization of the whole society. Faith-based organizations must collaborate with one another and resist manipulation by political and nationalistic forces that would pervert religion in order to promote violence. People of goodwill must stand together against hatred and violence. Injustice anywhere is a threat against justice everywhere.

The Role of Ethics, Education and Good Governance for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice: Perspectives from Faith-Based Organizations

September 15, 2020

The role of ethics, education and good governance in strategies to prevent crime and achieve justice are often not considered together. They build from promoting better individual decisions, to ways the educational process can support ethical decision-making, to building capacity and reducing corruption for inclusive and effective governance. This webinar will discuss and highlight the contributions of faith-based organizations in promoting ethics, education and governance in our efforts to prevent crime and achieve justice more equitably and consistently.

Moderator:

- Dr. Thomas Walsh, Co-chair, Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations

Panelists:

- Prof. Dr. Jay Albanese, Professor of Criminal Justice, Virginia Commonwealth University
- Dr. Wendy O'Brien, Legal Officer, Violence Against Children, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
- Dr. Elmar Kuhn, Roman Catholic theologian, Austria
- Rev. Darcy Roake, pastor, Community Church Unitarian Universalist, USA



Prof. Dr. Jay Albanese

Professor of Criminal Justice, Virginia Commonwealth University

1. What are the largest problems in the world? This question is a useful starting point, so that we may direct resources at the most serious problems facing humankind.
2. After reviewing identified lists of these serious problems, from climate to conflict to health and education, can it be said that for every one of these largest problems:
 - It was either created or was pushed to a crisis point by the decisions of humans?
 - Multiple poor decisions emanated from ignorance, selfishness, and/or corruption?
 - The outcomes often resulted from selfish (inward-looking) choices and decisions made worse by corruption?
3. What is a major source of these poor decisions?



a. The diagram describes (moving counterclockwise from top left) that discovered instances of public corruption (i.e., misuse of funds or authority) reveal untrustworthy persons in positions of authority. Most often, these officials exploit available criminal opportunities with low risk of oversight or apprehension.

b. The solutions to these incidents often sought by the public and policy-makers are structural changes involving new laws, regulations, enforcement and oversight. Less attention is given to locating where the people who are disposed to making corrupt choices (i.e., unethical people with selfish motivations) come from.

c. The presentation ends with a recommendation for improving the ethical conduct among people in general, and especially public officials entrusted with the welfare of others. Increasing ethical behavior involves making it a focal point in schools, in the workplace, in the popular culture, and emphasized by faith-based organizations.

4. Premises are offered to consider for change in both the present and the future:

1. Corrupt people will exploit both corrupt and non-corrupt environments (i.e., continuous self-seeking is not uncommon).
2. More than structural changes are needed to reduce corruption (i.e., the presence of motivated actors is unaddressed by structural changes).

3. Ethics education, training, and reinforcement can play a major role in generating more principled decisions (i.e., moving from selfish to selfless—from self-seeking to altruistic).
4. Civil society, including faith-based organizations, NGOs, academia, and the private sector, *can be the source for change*, especially when government corruption is rampant and popular culture emphasizes the self over others.

* * * * *

The full oral presentation is available at:

<https://coalitionfbo.org/2020/09/15/webinar-september-15-2020/>

Additional sources for more information on this topic can be found at:

- Jay Albanese. *We Are Not as Ethical As We Think We Are*. (Great Ideas Publishing, 2021).
- Jay Albanese. How Education Could Reduce Corruption: Finding Ethical Conduct. *Oxford University Press Blog*. Oxford University Press' *Academic Insights for the Thinking World*. (2020).
<https://blog.oup.com/2020/07/how-education-could-reduce-corruption/>



Dr. Wendy O'Brien

*Legal Officer, Violence Against Children,
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)*

I would like to reflect on some of the challenges that undermine *trust in the law* as a way of thinking about how we might best harness the potential for ethics, education and good governance in preventing crime.

In legal scholarship we worry over something called the “implementation gap,” which highlights the distinction between “law in the books” and “law in action.” We talk about this with respect to international law, for example, noting that while the Convention on the Rights of the Child has achieved near universal ratification, we know that children around the world suffer violence, abuse and adversity daily—in clear contravention of their rights. While a great deal of good work is being done to uphold children’s rights, we are clearly failing children in many domains.

At the national level we observe that even where there are comprehensive protections in statute, there may be a range of ways in which individuals miss out on the full protections envisaged in law. In many places access to justice is not equal. Discriminatory law, procedure and harmful stereotypes all play a role in the marginalization of individuals on the grounds of race, sex, sexual orientation, class, caste, age, ability, religious or political beliefs, among others.

- In some jurisdictions a woman or a child cannot report an assault (including a sexual assault) to the police without a male guardian, which, of course, means many crimes go unreported and unpunished.
- In many jurisdictions a transgender person who is the victim of an assault will fear reporting to police, lest they endure additional, and perhaps more brutal, violence at the hands of police.

In many parts of the world, children forced to live on the street face criminalization for everyday acts of survival or simply for their presence in the street.

These brief scenarios offer a glimpse of the challenges to ensuring equal access to justice for all. These same scenarios (and many others) also highlight the context for crime, abuse of power, and the erosion of trust in the law and criminal justice institutions.

Genuine efforts to promote ethics, education and good governance must start with an unflinching analysis of the inequalities and structural injustices of everyday life for so many. We urgently need redress for the contexts of entrenched hardship and discrimination that create and perpetuate tensions in our communities—tensions that alienate individuals, families and social groups and largely exclude them from the protective functions of education and the law.

The sustainable development agenda offers a comprehensive framework for considering just how central these interconnected questions of social justice and equality are to our shared commitment for the creation of peaceful sustainable and ethical communities.

It is clear that the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 2, for example—to end hunger and to end poverty—are absolutely necessary to create the conditions whereby learning can occur. In the context of the COVID pandemic, for example, school closures and homeschooling arrangements have had a disproportionate effect on children already living in hardship. In August 2020, UNICEF reported that at least a third of the world's schoolchildren—463 million children globally—were unable to access remote learning. Children from the poorest households and those in remote areas are hardest hit, and there is concern that not all children will return to formal education.

The pandemic also underscores the importance of achieving SDG 5—gender equality and the elimination of discrimination and violence against women and girls. UN Women has documented the impact that the pandemic has wrought on women (as frontline workers in essential and care roles, and as victims of gender-based violence in the home). Lockdowns have imposed additional barriers for women seeking justice, with curfews, reduced court lists, and the inaccessibility of women's shelters closing vital pathways to justice and safety. Where gaps in law and service continually fail victims, perpetrators enjoy impunity. This *erodes public trust* in criminal justice institutions and their role in upholding the rule of law.

This deficit in trust underscores the importance of efforts to achieve SDG 16 and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions that ensure justice for all.

If we recall, for example, the barriers that women and girls face in accessing justice, we recognize the importance of eliminating all forms of discrimination

within criminal justice institutions. Redressing corruption is part of this – but ensuring good governance requires more than abstaining from corruption. Achieving good governance, that will ensure equal access to justice for all, requires redressing all forms of discrimination. It requires promoting equal opportunity for participation in all levels of political, public and economic life, which includes ensuring a gender-diverse criminal justice workforce (trained on non-discrimination, gender-based violence, and gender-sensitive law, policy and practice).

I will make three points in closing:

- It is important that we don't think about ethics, education and crime prevention as a Band-Aid applied only to problems, often too late, and in a manner that elides or exacerbates the underlying drivers of social exclusion and crime.
- Rather, redress for structural inequalities and discrimination is a *prerequisite* for trust in, and the relevance of, education, law, criminal justice institutions and criminal justice actors (the sustainable development agenda provides us with the framework for action on this). Upholding the equal human dignity of all is key to strengthening the social fabric and creating strong, peaceful and sustainable communities. Non-discrimination is at the heart of this work. Faith-based and community-based organizations can play a powerful role in rejecting discriminatory practices, and modeling the values and behaviors needed to promote inclusivity, unity and a celebration of our human diversity.

In closing, please allow me to share information about a range of educational materials on [integrity and ethics](#), [anti-corruption](#), and [crime prevention and criminal justice](#) that we have developed at UNODC as part of the [Education for Justice](#) initiative. Designed to strengthen teaching on these topics within universities globally, these materials are freely available on our website, <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/tertiary/index.html>.



Dr. Elmar Kuhn

Roman Catholic Theologian, Austria

The lecture refers to several hate attacks and street fights which took place in Vienna in 2020. It shows that such hate actions do not come out of the blue. Youth crime is an indication of failures in the education system. Young people must receive education in tolerance and good citizenship, both in public schools and in their community churches, mosques, and temples. It is often young people with an immigrant background who are susceptible to hate speech.

While young children of different social, cultural and religious backgrounds hardly have any problems in getting along with many ethnic groups, the problems intensify when they enter school.

Bad teaching and bad role models turn young children's acceptance into intolerance and hostility toward the "other." Interreligious cooperation in the education of teachers is highly recommended, Vienna practices this. Such models have to concentrate on our unique selling points (USP) which are:

- Spirituality
- Forgiveness
- Hope
- Communion
- Help for the helpless
- Voice for the voiceless

Always we should teach and remember the Golden Rule, which is alive in all religions, for example also in Islam and Christianity: *None of you truly believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself.* (Al-Bukhari Hadith 13) and *Always treat others as you would like them to treat you* (Matthew 7:12).

Our USPs are highly demanded in our world. Neither politics nor economy can create these values. But our discussion has to come down to earth. We should find ways to integrate specific project realities into our FBO work. Finally, interreligious theory and practice have the power to turn the face of our earth.



Rev. Darcy Roake

Pastor, Community Church Unitarian Universalist, USA

Ethics, at its core, is about the lived experience of individuals. Religions help create moral frameworks from which to make decisions out of these lived experiences. My religious tradition, Unitarian Universalism, affirms the inherent worth and dignity of all beings. Religions across the world speak of equity and justice. However, in practice, traditions, including my own, can create rules that support racist, homophobic, misogynistic structures that go against an ethics of care, justice and equity. As a minister, I take seriously the responsibility, then, to create positive culture change, particularly around issues rooted in a religiosity of shaming.

Today I'll be focusing on a program created by the Unitarian Universalist Church and the United Church of Christ called Our Whole Lives – a comprehensive, scientifically accurate, developmentally appropriate sexual education program with programs for kindergarteners to senior citizens.

For context, I live in Louisiana, a state with some of the highest HIV/AIDS and STI rates in America. Yet Louisiana fiercely guards abstinence-only education – supported and promoted by evangelical Christian politicians and religious leaders with a foundation of shaming. Many of you may have heard about the recent sex scandal and resignation of the president of the Christian conservative college Liberty University, Jerry Falwell Jr. Feminist theologian and Disciples of Christ Minister Dr. Rita Nakishima Brock put it best when she wrote of the scandal and the attendant religious values that have become the ethic of a certain type of Christian conservatism:

“Why, we might ask, did his (Falwell’s) departure take so long? Why was it kinky sex that took him down when he risked lives to reopen the university in the midst of a pandemic, offended Black alumni with his creation of a blackface

face mask, and made a mockery of Christian ethics with his support for a thrice-married president who boasts of sexually predatory behavior? Because Falwell's worst offenses didn't violate core fundamentalist principles that define Liberty University's understanding of the Bible: disbelief of science, racism, and male domination of women—the trifecta on which they've bet their future.”

Progressive religious traditions—nay, all religious traditions—must not only resist the shaming, anti-science rhetoric that conservative evangelical Christianity has wrought but also create alternatives based in equity and care. Our Whole Lives, taught everywhere from faith communities to schools to correctional facilities, is an example of such an alternative.

While OWL has a secular foundation (with additional religious components), it has clear values around self-worth; sexual health; responsibility and justice and inclusivity. Our Whole Lives respects the diversity of participants with respect to biological sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, and disability status. The activities and language used throughout the program have been carefully chosen to be as inclusive as possible.”

Thus, OWL creates an inclusive foundation for both individual decision-making, rooted in one's values system, as well as tools to actually make a positive change in the larger culture.

A few brief examples from my facilitation of, and having a child in, a comprehensive sexuality education setting. First, my son attended the kindergarten OWL, where he learned about consent in a developmentally appropriate way. For example: If I push or hug you and you say no – it is my responsibility to stop. Conversely, we each have the right to say no to something being done to *our* bodies. While a simple lesson, it provides a foundation for later learnings.

According to the United Nations study of Ending Violence against Women, “It is estimated that 35 percent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or sexual violence by a non-partner (not including sexual harassment) at some point in their lives.” Some studies show up to 70 percent. This speaks to a culture of, as Dr. Brock wrote, male domination of women – in which another person's body is property. This is learned behavior, supported by some religious cultures. Thus, religious institutions can and should take responsibility to create better foundations. A 6-year-old who learns to stop when asked by his peers, particularly female peers, will take these lessons, solidified over time, into not only his sexual life but his general relating in society. However, a person who learns that other people are to be dominated – whether in sexual situations or in any number of ways—will also take those lessons into life and work.

Second, as part of my ministry, I work with the Louisiana Public Health Institute around sexual education. I recently helped facilitate a virtual brunch in which teenage girls spoke of their experience, or lack thereof, of sexuality education. While I won't go into specifics, I was amazed by these young women's depth and honesty. While some girls defined themselves as religious, others did not. However, they all saw sexual education as helping to provide a foundation of learning for which they could then, with their values systems, make informed decisions. They noted, of course, that they will learn information, particularly with the Internet, in one way or another. The questions are – are they getting accurate information? Have we helped facilitate a moral framework that supports their decision-making?

As we consider more collaborative relationships between the United Nations, NGOs and religious institutions; we religious leaders, while calling for change from secular society, must also recognize the change that we must create within our churches, synagogues, sanghas and mosques. We must be more welcoming of a variety of sexual and gender identities and meet young people where they're at; only then can we connect their lived experience to their religious lives. Finally, we must not only teach but also support the leadership of young people. For it is they who will move forward the values that lay the groundwork for the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights – justice, inclusivity, and equity.

Restorative Justice, Victim Assistance and Faith-Based Organizations

October 5, 2020

Moderator:

- Dr. Robert Peacock, Professor, University of the Free State, South Africa; President, World Society of Victimology

Speakers:

- Dr. Daniela Bolivar Fernandez, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, Catholic University of Chile
- Dr. Tali Gal, Senior Lecturer, School of Criminology, University of Haifa, Israel
- Dr. Fernanda Fonseca Rosenblatt, Professor, International Institute for Restorative Practices, Pennsylvania, USA
- Mr. Michael O'Connell, Consulting Victimologist; Secretary General, World Society of Victimology



Dr. Robert Peacock

*Professor, University of the Free State, South Africa;
President, World Society of Victimology*

Moderator's remarks

- Recognizing that all the great faiths of the world encompass beliefs and practices that are compatible with restorative justice.
- Observing that there is no single definition of restorative justice.
- Acknowledging that there is consensus on several aspects: a focus on the harm resulting from an act or omission; the obligation of the perpetrator, or perpetrators, to right the harm; the perpetrator (or perpetrators) and victim (or victims) are key stakeholders; communities often have an interest, as well.
- Recalling that for thousands of years faith manifesting as religion has shaped concepts of justice by, among other things, informing the creation of laws, including perpetrators' rights and victims' rights, and the evolution of punishment, including rehabilitation and reparations.
- Pointing to the relationship between spirituality and restorative justice as a potential means to improve interactions between victims, perpetrators, and others.
- Conceding that elements of the scriptures and teachings of religions are also inconsistent with the tenets of restorative justice.
- Acknowledging that faith-based organizations have informed and will continue to inform restorative justice in theory and in practice.
- Accepting that restorative justice is one way of looking at criminal justice that emphasizes reconciliation and reintegration and affords victims who choose the opportunity to express forgiveness.

- Cognizant that public justice must be responsive to a variety of interrelated principles, including, but not limited to, retributive, distributive and restorative justice.
- Recalling international law, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Basic Principles for the Treatment of Offenders, the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law.
- Noting the guidelines on justice in matters involving child victims and witnesses of crime; the Guidelines and Principles on Access to Legal Aid in Criminal Justice Systems; and the Basic Principles on the Use of Restorative Justice Programmes in Criminal Matters.
- Aware that faith-based organizations are committed to religious charity and responsible for serving, among others, prisoners, ex-prisoners, victims, and their families.



Dr. Daniela Bolivar Fernandez

Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, Catholic University of Chile

Child Sexual Abuse by the Clergy of the Catholic Church in Chile: Is There a Possibility for Restorative Justice?

Introduction

In Chile during the last years, accusations against the clergy of child sexual abuse have been on the rise. This represents a very serious and harmful problem that neither the State nor the Chilean Church has been able to face adequately. In the meantime, survivors, most of them adults by now, are still suffering the consequences of the abuse and especially the pain of an insufficient response.

In 2019, the rector of the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile requested the creation of an academic commission oriented to better understand the phenomenon of child sexual abuse in the context of the Chilean Catholic Church and to produce some general recommendations. Sixteen scholars from different faculties became part of this group, the writer of this manuscript among them.

The work of such an academic commission was based on statistics and data publicly available. Therefore, this was not an investigating or a truth commission, as has occurred in other countries. The aim was to understand the nature and scope of the child sexual abuse in the context of the Catholic Church, identify the response of the Chilean Catholic Church, and explore the impact and effects of such crimes on victims and communities.

The objective of the present manuscript is to share some of the findings of this commission, together with some reflections on the possibilities to address such

an issue with restorative justice practices. The manuscript concludes that in Chile, restorative justice could not be used at this moment, unless an important number of conditions are fulfilled—a situation that seems very far away.

Scope of the problem

According to the database constructed by the research team, between 1970 and 2019, a total of 194 members from the clergy (priests, brothers and deacons) were accused of child sexual abuse. This would mean that 3.6 percent of the priests in Chile, during the same period, had been involved in sexual abuse of children. Forty-five percent of the offenders were parish priests or priests who were parish residents. In addition, 41 percent of the accused offenders were working at Catholic schools (Pontifical Catholic University, 2020).

In relation to the victims, the report identifies a number of 221 victims, mostly male, as also has been the case in other countries. The average number of victims per offender is 2.6; while 39 percent had two or three victims, and 13 percent had more than five victims (PUC, 2020).

Importantly, most victims notified their case to the Church itself (66 percent) (PUC, 2020). Even though there is no information about the reasons why victims could decide to denounce their cases to the Church itself in addition to or in replacement of the ordinary justice system, we could imagine victims desire the Church to react to it, both in terms of their own case and also in terms of preventing new cases for the future.

Regarding the characteristics of priestly abuse, “one characteristic feature has been the prevalence of abuse in environments of religious care and pastoral care, almost always exerted on people the priest knew, preceded by a process of grooming and scheming which takes advantage of the trust that the victims and their families place in the priest” (PUC, 2020; p.9).

Sexual abuse of children by the clergy could be explained by individual factors of the offenders; however, that is insufficient to understand this harmful phenomenon. There are important institutional issues that could have facilitated child sexual abuse. On the one hand, data show that the first offense committed tended to occur between 31 and 40 years old (33 percent) or 41-50 years (36 percent), which implies that abusive behavior is strictly related to sacerdotal life (parish church). On the other hand, there is an evident lack of control or supervision, and concealment and secrecy in the way that accusations are handled. For example, some common reactions in our country have been not to initiate any investigation or to initiate it late; to transfer priests to other communities (which only gives a location for new offenses), rejection of the victim’s account, attempts to avoid the victim’s accusation, to appoint arbitrarily a priest to do the investigation (sometimes one who is close to the accused)

and promote slow processes of investigation (in some cases, years) (PUC, 2020). It has become clear, therefore, that the Chilean Catholic Church has reacted far below other responses, when compared internationally.

Restorative justice and abuse in the Catholic Church

The use of restorative justice in sexual violence has been widely recognized and supported by evidence (see, for example, Koss et al., 2003; Keenan & Zinsstag, 2014; Daly, 2002; Jülich & Buttle, 2010). In the case of child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church, some countries also have explored this option, as it provides recognition of the victimization and offender and institutional accountability. Some examples are the Netherlands, Belgium and Ireland. In all these cases, restorative justice took place after a truth or investigating commission was implemented, which sometimes recommended explicitly the use of restorative justice or other forms of dialogue, compensation and accountability (Willems, 2013). We must have in mind that, in all these cases, denunciations took place several years later, when victims were already adults and several times when cases presented no possibility for a formal investigation, because of the statute of limitations or because offenders were already dead (see, for example, the experience shared by Aertsen, 2015; and Darmody, 2015).

Concluding thoughts

Responding seriously to victims of child abuse by the clergy of the Catholic Church means that victims are at the center of any action, policy or intention.

This requires, in my view, two main conditions:

- An honest intention to listen to victims' narratives and needs. For that, to establish an investigating commission that is natural, plural and validated by the public opinion is fundamental.
- A global, unified institutional recognition of the abuses implies that diocesan church and religious congregations and orders react together in a single discourse, recognizing the abuses and promoting individual and institutional accountability.

In Chile neither of these two conditions has been fulfilled. On the one hand, the idea of implementing an investigating commission has not been part of the discussion either among policy-makers or members of the government or among leaders of the Catholic Church, despite the insistence of Chilean survivors and experts' recommendations. On the other hand, a unified recognition of the abuses by all religious communities is also at the moment an

unlikely reality. Congregations and leaders have responded in a very variable way, most of them tending to avoid publicly taking institutional responsibility and to emphasize, instead, individual reasons for abuses in the Church. Without these two conditions, it is very difficult to think of implementing restorative approaches in dealing with historical cases of child sexual abuse.

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Dr. Tali Gal

Senior Lecturer, School of Criminology, University of Haifa, Israel

Conducting Restorative Justice with Children and Youth

The starting point of my presentation is the Needs-Rights Model¹, which integrates legal and psychosocial terminology in order to map the various interests of victimized children. After describing the model and its application in restorative justice, I demonstrate how it can be adapted to map the interests of children and youth who are victimizers as well. I conclude with eight heuristics for working with victimized and offending children and youth.

Restorative justice (RJ) is an approach to address harm through direct encounters between victims, offenders and their supporters, in which a shared agreement about the appropriate reparation is reached. The core principles of RJ, such as respect for people, material and symbolic reparation, its support for emotional discharge, and the centrality of active participation, make it a potentially healing platform for young victims as well as offenders.

At the same time, the involvement of children and youth in RJ raises unique challenges, among them the risk of secondary victimization in the process; adult manipulation; pressure to participate; and the difficulty for most children and youth to speak freely in a room full of adults.

The Needs-Rights Model integrates between a legal layer, which is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and the psycho-social layer, which draws on empirical studies related to the needs and

¹ Tali Gal, *Child Victims and Restorative Justice: A Needs-Rights Model*. Oxford University Press, 2011.

coping mechanisms of victimized children and youth. The following is a short summary of the four needs-rights clusters of the model:

- The child well-being cluster – The child's developmental needs and interests should shape the process, the format of participation and the outcomes; welfare considerations should shape program design at the systemic level.
- The control/partnership cluster – The importance of listening to children throughout the process; the need for tailored participation; the importance of using participating-enhancing techniques; and the centrality of child representation.
- The procedural justice cluster – The need to ensure equal access to RJ processes for all child victims everywhere; and the need to secure special empowerment for children with special needs.
- The protection/development cluster – The need to develop evidence-based, specifically designed RJ models for all types of child victimization; safety as a precondition as well as a goal of RJ processes; and the importance of effective monitoring.

The same steps can be taken to construct a needs-rights model for children and youth who are the perpetrators of offences. First, we identify the relevant articles of the UNCRC which apply to children accused of criminal behavior. Second, we collect psychosocial knowledge about young offenders. Integrating those bodies of knowledge, the outcome is a set of four comparable clusters:

- The well-being cluster: Actively involving parents and supporters is likely to lead to *reintegrative shaming*, a process that allows offenders to take responsibility for their deeds and regain the support and trust of their loved ones.
- The control/partnership cluster: Meaningful participation requires ongoing relationships with those who hold legal power over the young offenders. Temporal adjustments are often needed, relating to the timing of the process and its length.
- The procedural justice cluster: Young offenders assign importance to having a voice in the process; understanding it; being treated respectfully; and having a neutral decision-maker.

- The protection/development cluster: Each process must be accessible and inclusive to everybody, notwithstanding their specific capabilities. Tailor-made processes preceded by thorough preparations and realistic expectations by all participants are more likely to be successful.

Considering the vast literature and the complexity of the needs-rights model, a set of eight heuristics provides a simple and practical starting point:

1. *Holism*: It is important to consider young victims and young offenders as whole human beings, without labeling them as either “the victim” or “the criminal.”
2. *A tailor-made process*: Just as each victim is different, so is each offender, and RJ processes must be tailored to meet their specific capabilities, wishes and interests.
3. *Children as partners*: When reaching decisions regarding children and youth, adults depend on them for providing the most expert knowledge about their needs, interests and wishes. We must, therefore, consider children as our partners in the shared goal of reaching the best decisions for them and with them.
4. *Participation as a continuum*: Partnerships differ from each other, and they depend on the ability and motivation of the stakeholders. Significant differences in capacities exist among children. Young victims and offenders should be offered a range of options and levels of participation.
5. *Liberating children’s voices*: Children and youth of different ages express themselves differently, and this is true for both victims and offenders. It is the adults’ role to be their “translators,” to let the youths express themselves in any possible way, as long as their message is authentic and non-dominating.
6. *Let go*: Professionals often want to protect young victims from further harm – thus often deciding to exclude them from the decision-making process. However, a difficult experience is not necessarily a harmful one. This is true for young offenders as well. It is important to provide

young people with all the information about the process and let them decide whether and how they want to participate in it.

7. *Restorative process as a goal*: No matter what the outcomes are, the process itself, when conducted well, can become a model for children and their parents in reaching decisions and communicating emotions and expectations.
8. Finally, *Empowering advocacy*: Lawyers representing youth should provide zealous representation on the one hand but keep the youth at the front at the same time. Accordingly, they should avoid the use of professional jargon; provide detailed and clear information; and maintain non-dominating dialogue throughout the process.

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Dr. Fernanda Fonseca Rosenblatt

Professor, International Institute for Restorative Practices, Pennsylvania, USA

Restorative Justice for Victims: A Voice of Hope and Concerns from the Global South

Although there is not much agreement on what RJ is, no one would disagree that it is “something” (be it a social movement, a new justice paradigm, a new justice mechanism, or what have you) aimed at repairing the harms caused by crime. RJ is almost “naturally” a victim-friendly option, offering victims more opportunities for participation, reparation and healing than the conventional criminal justice system and, very importantly, preventing as well as reducing secondary victimization. This has become quite clear from everything that already has been said. Indeed, empirical research has suggested that restorative justice programs can:

- Provide wider and more timely access to justice for victims
- Provide victims with a voice and an opportunity to be heard
- Provide victims with an opportunity for material and symbolic reparation
- Mitigate the emotional impact of victimization and reduce post-traumatic stress disorder among victims
- And so on.

Unsurprisingly, several studies have reported very high rates of satisfaction with restorative processes among crime victims. This, of course, is all good and promising. Having said that, there’s perhaps nothing more international than faith and faith-based organizations, and therefore a look into any topic within this important forum of discussions – that is, within the Coalition Webinar series – requires that we put truly international lenses on to discuss any topic.

This includes adding a Global South perspective to what normally is looked at and discussed from a Global North and/or Western European/North American perspective. This is what I want to do now: relook at the benefits of RJ for victims using a Brazilian or, indeed, a more Global South lens as a means of teasing out the potentialities and challenges of using restorative justice in countries such as Brazil.

To start with in this vein, it is important to note that, like the criminal law more generally and conventional criminal justice practices, RJ narratives have tended to replicate the binary way of classifying people as either “victims” or “offenders.” I’d like to argue that this is problematic (or, at least, that not acknowledging that is problematic), particularly in the Global South, for sure in countries like Brazil. Many decades ago, [Norwegian sociologist and criminologist] Nils Christie warned us against the creation of an “ideal victim”—the “little old lady,” he’d say, fragile, vulnerable, and so on. And where there is an ideal victim, there also will be an “ideal offender,” built within racist structures, institutional and individual bias.

Unfortunately, there seems to be an “ideal victim” of RJ. More often than not, this victim is a disempowered victim—someone in search of participation, recognition, empathy; an emotional victim, with needs revolving around emotions, moods, feelings. The victim in RJ is a concrete human being victimized by a specific, clearly identifiable offender. Not a social structure or organization. Attention is placed on the victim’s psychological/individual disempowerment, while related social or political disempowerment more often than not is left out of the script. As such, the victim in RJ appears to be an ageless, colorless, gender-less, classless individual.

As Christie also reminds us, the man in the bar is a much more common victim than the “little old lady.” That is, the victim may not be this disempowered, emotional, and so on, victim. The victim may not be a person, but the environment. Victims may be “collective” victims of corruption, economic or, more generally, white-collar crimes. There may even be no individual victims (such as in drug-related offenses). Moreover—and I’d argue that more importantly—victims and offenders are not distinct populations. These labels have the potential to dehumanize and lock people into one single identity. Social, personal and cultural similarities or overlaps between victims and offenders are forgotten. When “(s)electing” an “ideal victim” for RJ programs, we are ignoring, for example, that in oppressed or marginalized communities, or in countries like ours, many victims may also be offenders.

Whilst the “ideal victim” of RJ appears as a colorless, ageless, classless individual, we know the color, class, and age of those who, for example, are incarcerated in Brazil. We know the color, class and age of those selected by the

criminal justice system to be either victims or offenders. We know that it is people of color who overwhelmingly bear the burden of the horrific inequities of our criminal justice systems. In the Global South, this discussion about going beyond such sterile labels as “victim” and “offender” is crucial and urgent. A more nuanced awareness of structural and institutional racism within RJ practices, for example, is necessary.

Although RJ is not a panacea against all social evils, it may not close its eyes to social injustices. As the American racial justice and RJ activist Fania Davis suggests, it should be, all at once, a reactive response to harm, but also a proactive relational strategy to create a culture of connectivity in which all members of a community, regardless of the color of their skin, class, gender, and so on, can thrive and feel valued. This has so much to do with the important work carried out by faith-based organizations all over the world.



Mr. Michael O'Connell

Consulting Victimologist; Secretary General, World Society of Victimology

Restorative Justice and Victim Assistance: Faith-Based Organizations Have a Role to Play

Criminal victimizations daily claim countless lives and injure many others. International human rights and humanitarian law seek to guide—as well as, in some circumstances, compel—nation-states to provide for the rights and needs of victims of crime. With respect to victims of crime, the overarching objectives are to restore victims to a fair, equitable and just place in civil society and in legal systems across the globe and to improve the availability and accessibility of medical, psychological, practical, and financial assistance consistent with victims' needs¹. To achieve such there must be partnerships between government agencies, non-government organizations (including faith-based organizations) and civil society.

It is obvious, however, that despite the steps taken to achieve the said aims, too many victims are ignored, too many victims do not get the assistance they need, and—if they do get help—it is not necessarily when they need such².

¹ See the UN Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power, A/RES/40/34, November 1985 (attached). In brief, the Declaration calls for victims to have the right to: be treated with compassion and respect for their dignity; receive information; allow the views of the victim to be presented and considered; proper assistance throughout the legal process; protection of privacy and physical safety; informal dispute resolution; medical, practical, and psychological assistance; offender-restitution and state compensation. It also requires the building of partnerships between government agencies, NGOs, and civil society.

² O'Connell, M. & Hayes, H. (2019) "Victims, Criminal Justice and Restorative Justice" in H. Hayes & T. Prenzler (eds), *An Introduction to Crime*, Pearson, Australia, fifth edition.

Furthermore, religious institutions and faith-based organizations are among those that have failed victims of crime³.

Thankfully, some religious leaders and faith-based practitioners have been willing to speak out for victims who have a fundamental right to be treated with respect, dignity and compassion. Such recognition is often premised on the realization that victims' rights and victims' needs are not in conflict with the concerns of those who seek a just world for all to share⁴.

For many victims, the "need for recognition" is crucial to their coping⁵. These victims want to understand why and how the crime happened and to express what the crime has done to their lives. They seek respect and recognition. It is of utmost importance that options are offered for victims to participate in key decisions that affect them and that victims can choose whether to accept or not.

Restorative practices (underpinned by the principles of restorative justice) are promoted as one way to allow willing victims to actively engage in a process that focuses on the harm they suffered, requires offenders to take responsibility for causing that harm, and to seek redress. It is argued that the process can lead to transformation of victims, offenders, and communities. Daniela, Tali and Fernanda have outlined the theory, evidence and practice of restorative justice, so I will make only one further observation, then focus my comments on victim assistance.

Restorative justice in practice can be very appropriate for some victims when healing wrongs, such as those perpetrated by religious and faith staff. Such practices, however, should first and foremost seek to represent victims' interests as a priority. It is crucial to ensure that victims can choose, or not choose, restorative practices as mechanisms to attain justice; and if they do choose such, these practices must accord with victims' dignity, compassion and other rights and assistance.⁶ Mindful of these imperatives, faith-based organizations may:

³ See for example, Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2017). Religious Institutions. <https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/religious-institutions>

⁴ See for example, Pope Francis suggests putting the victim at the centre and lifting veil on Church secrecy over child abuse. (<https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/12/1054031>)

⁵ O'Connell, M. (2015) "Violence in Australia and its Victims – A Case for Victims' Rights and Victim Assistance." In A Day & E. Fernandez (eds) *Violence in Australia: Policy, Practice and Solutions*, Federation Press: Melbourne.

⁶ See Article 9 of the WSV draft Convention on Justice and Support for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power. http://www.iustice.gov.za/VC/docs/international/2006_Draft%20UN%20Convention%20Victims.pdf

- Utilize restorative processes to resolve their own conflicts
- Sponsor and/or support their members' participation in restorative practices
- Advocate for the implementation of restorative practices as responses to criminal and non-criminal victimization
- Encourage communities to support restorative processes, practices and programs.

There are many countries with fully functional victim support services. On the other hand, there are at least as many nations where any such services are completely absent. The United Nations handbook to guide the implementation of the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power lists the core elements of a comprehensive approach to victim assistance.⁷ That approach includes a “cluster of services”: crisis intervention; counseling; advocacy; support during investigation of a crime; support during criminal prosecution and trial; and support after case disposition.

In many developed nation-states a combination of public agencies and non-government organizations, such as faith-based organizations, provide a myriad of victim support services. In nation-states where victims' rights have not been entrenched in domestic law and in developing nation-states, non-government organizations, including faith-based organizations, frequently are at the forefront in the delivery of victim assistance. In fact, millions of people throughout the world, when faced with crisis resulting from crime, call upon religious people for support, information, counsel, and spiritual guidance. In response, faith-based assistance programs have evolved and expanded to offer a range of assistance.

Thus, faith-based organizations are an important source of support for victims of crime, including their families and their communities. It is important that faith-based organizations continue to aid victims whenever possible. It is also essential that pastoral or like counseling techniques are evidence-based and are trauma-informed. Further, it is vital that faith-based organizations cooperate with other victim assistance providers to offer victims assistance in timely and appropriate ways that match victims' needs; otherwise, it is impractical to deliver the cluster of services.

⁷ https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/UNODC_Handbook_on_Justice_for_victims.pdf

Assistance to victims should counter the deleterious effects of crime⁸. In order that those working in victim assistance do so in ways that cause “no more harm,” two other ingredients are necessary: training and education. As with other victim support providers, there is a need for religious and faith-based staff to understand criminal victimization and how it differs from other sources of trauma; and they should be sensitive to the needs of victims and their rights. Unaware and ill-trained workers and others can cause a “second injury.”

In conclusion, faith-based organizations should help forge restorative practices that bring victims and perpetrators together to facilitate healing (including, when possible, spiritual healing). Such practices could help religious institutions right “their” own wrongdoings in non-litigious ways. Faith-based organizations and mainstream victim services, as well as victims and victim-advocates, should work together domestically and internationally to improve outcomes for victims of crime.

For this, and other purposes intended to be victim-centric, it is necessary to adopt a rights-based, needs-driven approach. Victims’ rights are not pious platitudes, but rather they are mandatory entitlements that create obligations. These rights and obligations should be paramount considerations in the administration of justice, including non-adversarial approaches such as restorative justice (in theory and in practice).

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⁸ See, for example, section 11 of the Victims of Crime Act 2001 (SA), which states, “A victim should be informed about health and welfare services that may be available to alleviate the consequences of injury suffered as a result of the offense.” https://www.legislation.sa.gov.au/LZ/C/A/VICTIMS%20OF%20CRIME%20ACT%202001/CURRENT/2001_58.AUTH.PDF

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Social Harm of Organized Crime on Communities

October 15, 2020

In sharing with faith-based organizations the values of intense humanness, universal interconnectedness, compassion, respect and reconciliation, we submit that practices and programs ground on the values and processes of restorative justice can be very appropriate for some perpetrators and some victims when healing wrongs. Such processes and programs, however, should seek to represent victims' interests as a priority. It is crucial to ensure that victims can choose, or not choose, to participate; and if they do choose such, they must be afforded dignity, compassion and other rights and assistance. Consistent with victims' and perpetrators' rights, faith-based organizations should help forge approaches that bring victims and perpetrators together to facilitate healing.

Moderator:

- Dr. Michael Platzer, Co-Chair, Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations

Panelists:

- Father Don Luigi Ciotti, Italian Priest and Activist; Founder of Libera Association
- Dr. Anna Alvazzi Del Frate, Chair, Alliance of NGOs for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
- Dr. Angela Me, Chief, Research and Trend Analysis Branch, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
- Brigadier Gerald Tatzgern, Central Office for Human Trafficking and Smuggling Migrants, Federal Criminal Police Office, Austria
- Dr. Leo Gabriel, Director, Institute of Intercultural Research and Cooperation, Vienna
- Ms. Evelyn Probst, Head, LEFÖ-Intervention Centre for Women affected by Trafficking, Austria
- Mr. Max Edelbacher, Former Chief of the Anti-Crime Program, Austrian Ministry of Interior
- Dr. Billy Batware, Program Officer, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)



Father Don Luigi Ciotti

Italian Priest and Activist; Founder of Libera Association

Libera was present at the High-level Political Conference in Palermo, Italy, from 12 to 15 December 2000. This is the Conference at which the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) was opened for signature by Member States.

We affirmed that, in the fight against crime, corruption and other forms of violence. Responsible and mindful civil society actors are of critical importance. Steps forward have been taken, but the way is long and uphill. Above all, we are still lacking many things. By this, I mean that despite the extraordinary struggles of judges and law enforcement agencies against transnational organized crime all over the world, support is very often insufficient at a political and cultural level. We frequently lack an adequate understanding of the profound changes that our society has experienced in the last 20 years. Now more than ever, in the Christian church, it is essential that we question ourselves, shift paradigms, and flip our perspective on the matter. We cannot forget that organized crime is not a universe apart from us anymore; it is related to our world. Within the church, we have been slow to recognize the presence of the mafia among us.

On the one hand, we have had great and prophetic figures such as Don Sturzo, who in 1900, said the mafia has its feet in Sicily, but its head in Rome, that it will become more ruthless and inhuman, and that from Sicily, it will rise to the level of our entire country and cross the Alps themselves. On the other hand, we have underestimated the power of the mafia, we have been excessively cautious in dealing with them. We have been accomplices to silence, and sadly, in some quarters, we have shown indifference to the problem and treated it as if it were inconsequential.

One very serious mistake was made in the interpretation of the mafia's religious beliefs. Christian beliefs were flaunted by the mafiosi, and they used them to portray themselves as honorable and respectable people, especially when they were in political posts, where an expression of one's faith is also part of traditional rituals. In fact, this posturing is incompatible with the teachings of the gospel, which is the word of truth, not of deceit, and of love, not of violence.

Awareness began to dawn in the 1980s.

When Gen. Carol Alberto Dalla Chiesa took up his fight against the Sicilian Mafia in May 1982 as Prefect of Palermo, he swore to use tactics he had successfully used during his years as Italy's top terrorist fighter. Dalla Chiesa and his wife, Emanuela, were murdered in traffic by Mafia hit squads on 3 September. In the aftermath, the Cardinal of Palermo strongly denounced, in his own church, the reluctance and tardiness of the political powers to act against the mafia.

This may seem as if it is past history, but it is continuing today in many parts of the world. We cannot forget what Pope John Paul II said on 9 May 1993, in the valley of the temples in Sicily, where he spontaneously urged the mafiosi to convert and change, and at the same time, supported the people of Sicily, calling them a life-loving people oppressed by a civilization of death—a clear and firm condemnation of mafia violence and crimes.

On 27 July 1993, bombs were detonated in two churches in Rome. Later on, two priests, witnesses of the gospel, were horribly murdered Don Pino Puglisi in Palermo, in September 1993, and Don Pepe Diona in Casala di Principe, in March 1994, by the Camorra. The mafiosi spoke about the interference of the church in their affairs.

The church is now transcending its places of worship to create a connection between heaven and earth, between the spiritual dimension and social commitment, between the words of Jesus and the administration of justice *on this earth*: right here, down here.

On 23 June 2014, in Sibari, Calabria, in front of thousands and thousands of families of mafia victims, Pope Francis told Italian Mafia members in strong language that they were excommunicated from the Catholic Church. Whoever worships evil is excommunicated, he announced. There can be no co-existence between the mafia and the word of God. In my opinion, Pope Francis' words and actions mark the point of no return. His words have swept away any excuses, leaving no space for caution or reticence, such as there was in the past.

While Francis was not the first pope to denounce the evil of the mafia, he went much further than anyone else had. He understood that there were two factors that gave power to the mafia. First, the moral and material corruption that undermines relationships and steals all hope. Second, a financial system that has lost all sense of ethics and responsibility for the common good. Francis saw the connection between the mafia and the economy that he labeled “a thief’s economy,” oblivious to the people’s needs and causing ever-increasing in unacceptable inequalities. Therefore, churches, by that I mean communities of all religions, should have a vision based on a project of ethical, social, political, and spiritual dimensions addressing and including every person, both believers and non-believers. Their purpose should be to affirm sacred human dignity and freedom, as opposed to the kind of logic that reduces people to numbers, tools, or property.

It is not a coincidence that Pope Francis has established a ministry dealing with corruption and the mafia-related problems within the Vatican. The Italian Episcopal conference is also part of the Libera network which draws together 1600 associations in Italy and is also active all over Europe, in Latin America, and in Africa. We must take an active role as citizens as communities, groups, and churches, and we must commit ourselves and take on our share of this responsibility.



Dr. Anna Alvazzi del Frate

Chair, Alliance for NGOs for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

I am the Chair of the Alliance of NGOs and crime prevention and criminal justice. That gives me the opportunity to work with quite a lot of organizations that are really on the frontline in efforts against organized crime. It is true, I'm Italian and I'm proud of it. When I see Don Luigi Ciotti's continued energy, I see a really extraordinary person who managed to transform the relationship between civil society and the mafia and organized crime.

You can imagine how organized crime affects communities in a country like Italy, especially in southern Italy. The changes that took place when the law was passed to seize the assets of organized crime and reuse them for social programs were profound, letting the communities again benefit from the properties and the money that had basically been taken from them by organized crime. It was this transformative action, this push, this lever, the organization that Don Luigi founded, that managed to generate this. It was something revolutionary in the scenario of the relationship between civil society and organized crime in Italy.

This is a model that we are trying to replicate in many places so that communities are not just the victims of organized crime, but can also provide an effective response through the actions that they can generate and coordinate with other stakeholders. It should never be forgotten that organized crime controls illicit markets and the access that communities have to certain goods and services.

The important thing we have here is something that goes beyond a legal response, encompassing the potential to interact economically, through sometimes simple projects that are reconverting confiscated goods and properties to the benefit of the community they were taken from. There are also efforts

to limit to the illicit trafficking drugs and the role of organized crime in racketeering. What we just heard is very, very strong message that we can all adopt and share. I hope that this will help in in promoting a new access for civil society in the discussion of an effective response to organized crime.



Dr. Angela Me

Chief, Research and Trend Analysis Branch, UNODC

My role in this discussion is to describe what the evidence tells us about the social harm caused by organized crime to the community.

Let me start by asking, in terms of social harm, what kind of harm do we see, and if I may just simplify, is it visible harm, and or, is it invisible harm? Regarding the visible harm caused by organized crime, violence is one. But just because you don't see violence doesn't mean there is no organized crime involved. Organized crime depletes society of natural resources. Look, for instance, at illicit markets relating, for example, to trafficking in wildlife or the exploitation of natural resources, illicit mining. If you want something visible and easy to see and understand, look at the exploitation of human resources, both in terms of people being exploited by a criminal organization, or people being exploited for criminal profits.

Let's look at reduced social development, lower educational participation, particularly when young people are involved in organized crime to make a living rather than get an education. Most of all, we see the violation of human rights. We all have movies going round in our head about organized crime, the extortion, the control that organizations have over territories. That's what organized crime is to us. Maybe we see in the literature that organized crime keeps control in a territory and gives some benefits to society. We think, why then is that so bad?

It's also important is acknowledge the invisible kind of harm at work in our societies. This occurs in two areas. One is the economic harm in terms of how organized crime infiltrates the legal economy, triggering unhealthy economic mechanisms and also the impact that such distortions in the legal economy bring to areas that are very highly affected by organized crime. We see this

distortion that in the relocation of resources away from legal activities, what we would call “high yield activities,” very profitable activities. These activities profit organized crime, but are hard to detect. They cause price distortions where they are practiced. For example, in real estate, there are towns, even countries in Europe, where the real estate prices are hiked by the huge infiltration of organized crime money, and there is also unfair competition involved here. All these mechanisms then limit foreign direct investment.

On the economic side, again, and not directly visible, at least in the short term, is the extent to which organized crime undermines governance, weakening institutions with corruption. Some harm is not immediately visible, but it has very long-lasting consequences for the fabric of a society.

The challenge from the evidence side, from the research side, is that we have a lot more evidence of visible harm, and ways of showing it, than of invisible harm. For those that work in the field of crime, this may seem banal to you, but it’s not banal for the majority of the people who are not familiar with this area.

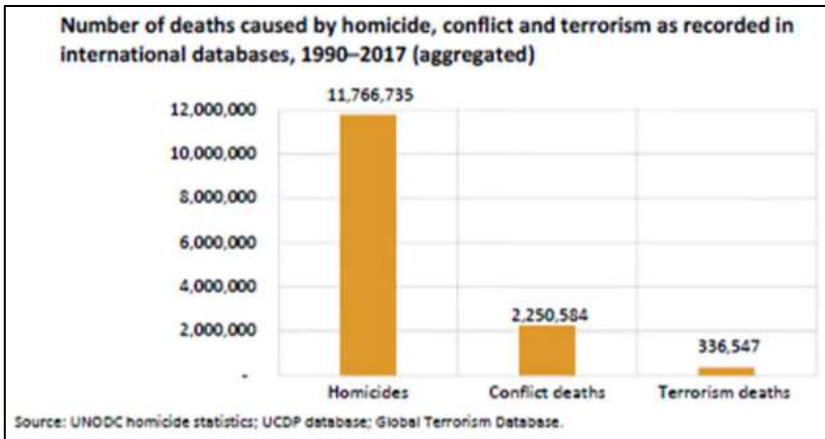


Figure 1. Number of deaths caused by homicide, conflict and terrorism as recorded in international databases, 1990–2017 (aggregated)

Homicide: 11,766,755; Conflict deaths: 2,250,584; Terrorism deaths: 556,547

*Source: UNODC homicide statistics; UCDP database; Global Terrorism Database

Here, the number of deaths caused by homicide, conflict, and terrorism. Ask an average citizen, what is the main threat to life globally?

Terrorism is very much on the minds of many people as being responsible for the majority of deaths. But actually, the numbers clearly show something different. Overall, we see the same magnitude of deaths from conflict and organized crime. Between 2000 and 2017 basically, we see one million of deaths on

each side. Think about this at the international level—how much attention goes to conflict-related issues and how much goes to organized crime? We need to acknowledge the impact of organized crime which is very often underestimated in some regions. I want to add that organized crime violence is very much clustered in the Americas.

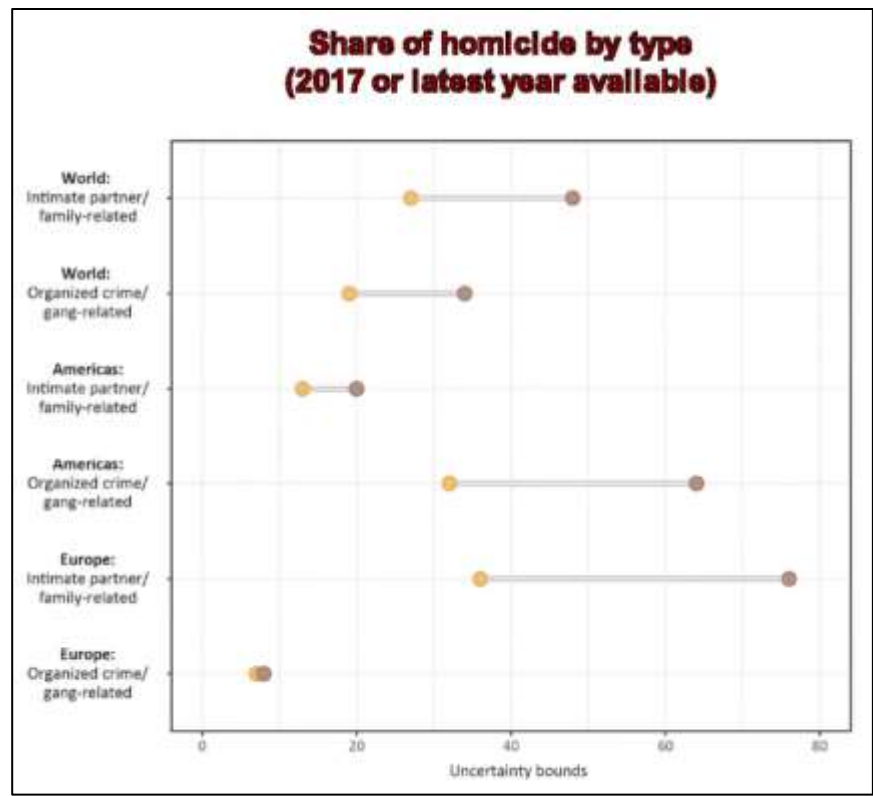


Figure 2. Share of homicide by type (2017 or latest year available)
Comparing intimate partner/family related to Organized crime/gang-related homicides in the world overall, the Americas region, and the Europe region

You can see here, for example, our estimates of the percentage of homicides related to different regions. In Europe, the largest share of homicides are related to intimate partner violence – here, it is women whom the violence is mostly impacting.

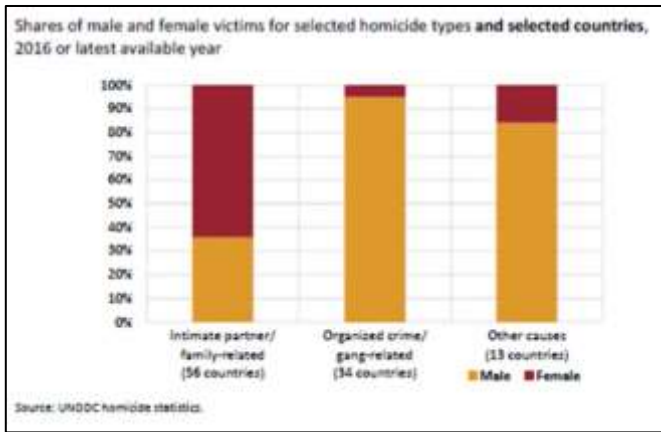


Figure 3. Scares of male and female victims for selected homicide types and selected countries, 2016 or latest available year

Comparing male/female victims of crime in: Intimate partner/family-related (56 countries), Organized crime/gang-related (34 countries), and other causes (13 countries)

*Source: UNODC homicide statistics

There's also organized crime violence. Here you see the bars showing the share of male and females in homicide for intimate partner and family crime, organized crime, and other types of crime. You see that in organized crime, the victims are male; in intimate partner and family crime, the great majority of victims are women. The pitch I would like to make is the very negative impact that organized crime is having on young men in the Americas, really a generation of young men, particularly in countries with very high level of violent organized crime like Central America. Look at the distribution by age and sex in the Americas and how skewed it is.

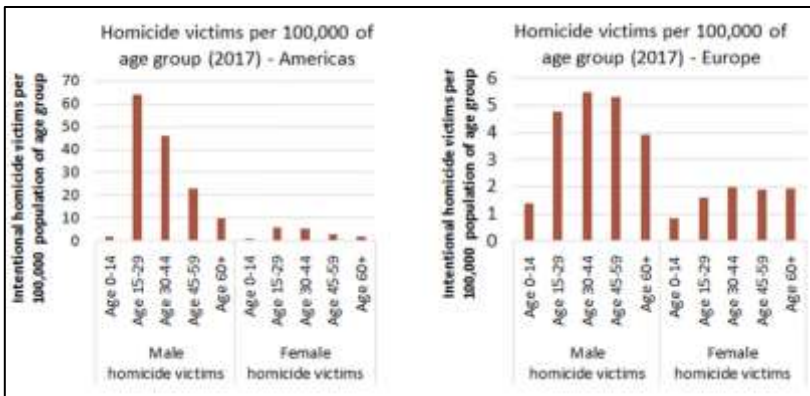


Figure 4. The impact of organized crime on American young males Comparing ages, male and female, and the Americas with Europe

In the Americas, the homicide victims in the male and young male categories, particularly 15 to 29, are very different from what you see on the right in Europe. In the country with the highest level of homicide in Central America, a 14-year-old boy today has 8% risk probability of being killed before he becomes an adult. This allows us to see the magnitude of the impact of organized crime. I don't want to leave you with the idea that organized crime only impacts men. While this is important to acknowledge, women are also the victims of organized crime, and feel its impact.

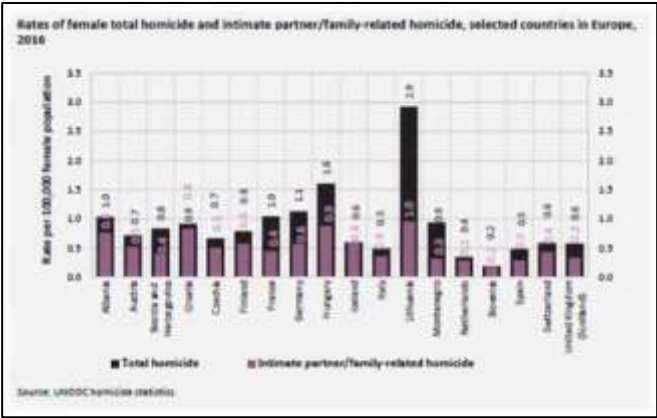


Figure 5. Rates of female total homicide and intimate partner/family-related homicide, selected countries in **Europe**, 2016
Comparing total homicide (black) to Intimate partner/family-related homicide (pink)
*Source: UNODC homicide statistics

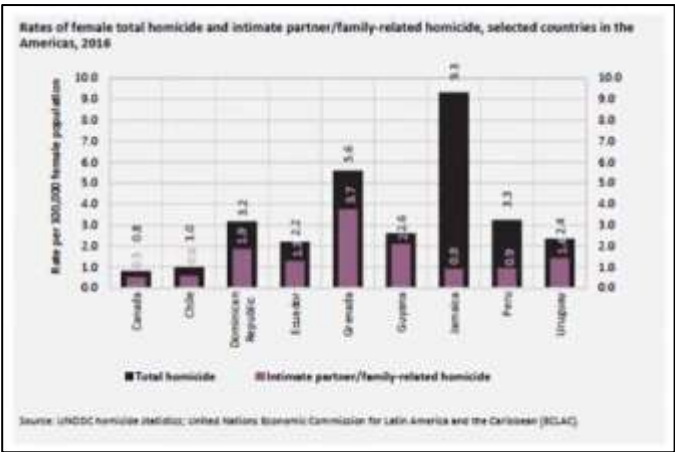


Figure 5. Rates of female total homicide and intimate partner/family-related homicide, selected countries in the **Americas**, 2016
Comparing total homicide (black) to Intimate partner/family-related homicide (pink)

**Source: UNOCD homicide statistics; United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)*

Just to give you an example here, you have the homicide rate of women. In pink, on intimate partner related homicide for Europe and for the Americas. What you can appreciate here is that for the Americas, the level of homicide of females is much higher than in Europe. That means with organized crime, even if the majority of the victims are young males, the level of the female side, is still very high, and among the highest in the world in Central America. This means that when you have a very high level of organized crime violence, you also have a very high level of violence against women.

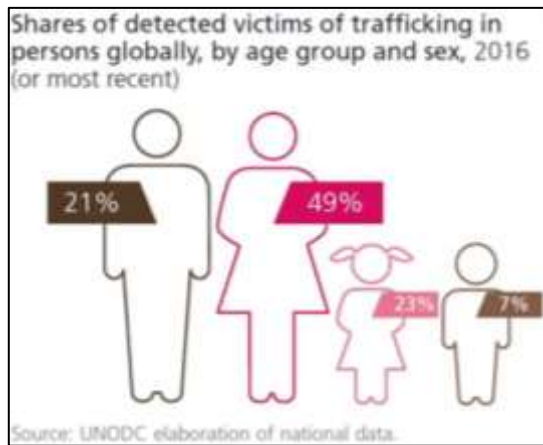


Figure 6. Shares of detected victims of trafficking in persons globally, by age group and sex, 2016 (or most recent)

**Source UNODC elaboration of national data*

To finish, I also want to acknowledge that there are other impacts of organized crime on women. The example is trafficking in persons. We know from the data that we have on the victims that we have detected, that the majority of victims of trafficking in persons are women: 50% are women, and almost 25% are girls. Regarding gang members, even though evidence of the impact of organized crime on gender violence is still thin compared to other organized crime research, what is emerging is that the violence against female gang members is sexual and perpetrated by members of their own gang; male gang members are impacted mostly by rivals' gangs. Also, indirectly, women as partners of the gang members of are also very much impacted by organized crime violence.



Brigadier Gerhard Tatzgern

*Central Office for Human Trafficking and Smuggling Migrants,
Federal Criminal Police Office, Austria*

I am working to combat organized crime groups, human trafficking, and migrant smuggling. Yesterday I had a meeting with the Anti-Mafia Prosecution Service. Today, here in Catania, with my colleagues located here in the *squadra mobile* (“mobile team”), we discussed current cases. There’s also one organized-crime prosecutor from Austria with me. There are bodyguards. This is our daily work.

What’s the situation? Why is Austria so interested in this? Perhaps you can see the screen behind my head. We are a joint operation office. I have two heads! As one head, I have been combating the organized crime phenomenon on behalf of the Austrian Criminal Police for over 20 years. Then, four years ago, we established this idea of having a joint operational office, like a platform to provide support to combat human trafficking and smuggling of migrants. That is my second head. We work to support all our colleagues and team members in this work as a State. We are not an agency like Europol [European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation] or Frontex [European Border and Coast Guard Agency], which is situated within the European Union. It is Austria that is building bridges to combat crimes like these, especially in the western Balkans.

What is the situation now with the COVID? The coronavirus has made it much harder to traffic human beings and much harder for the victims of human trafficking themselves. Our central metadata shows the routes that the migrant smugglers might use. Sometimes we go to Nigeria, Libya, quite often now to Tunisia. We are a bit stuck because of the travel restrictions at the moment. That’s the reason we are here in Sicily, where we are staying for a few days. The

whole issue of human trafficking is much more sensitive and difficult in the region due to COVID, especially in Libya, where the situation is a disaster. We try to cooperate with the so-called authorities in Libya. And then we also try to establish an operational platform and an office in Tunis in Tunisia, to work closely with them, in the Northern African countries. We see these crime groups are often earning hundreds of millions of euros based on human trafficking.

Some smugglers bringing their cargo to Sicily use COVID as a kind of protection from the police. For us, it's a challenging situation. If you have a group of migrants, for example, on a boat or a ship or on a truck traveling through the Western Balkans with, say, 100 migrants inside, and some of them are infected with coronavirus, it's harder for us to investigate, because we also have to protect ourselves. There's a lack of safety for a police officer, if you try to interview the migrants for debriefings, interrogations, even if you want to seize their cell phones and work on the information in them. We try to do our best to compensate for this, especially through improved communications.

From the office in Vienna, we will support our partners within the European Union and in the Western Balkans and also in some Northern African countries in the next year. We will provide some technical equipment so that we can be very fast in connection and in cooperating. The influence of organized criminal networks is heavyweight, and the word "corruption" is also mentioned quite often. Corruption of this kind has occurred in Austria very seldom. We once had a migrant-smuggling case in which a police officer at Vienna airport was quite involved in some aspects of migrant smuggling. He was sentenced a few weeks ago to one year in prison. It was not really a high-level organized crime group he was involved with, but you can see how challenging and dangerous it is for law enforcement officers to be very close to this phenomenon.

The criminal network groups try to influence you, pressure you in person or give you the feeling that your family is under surveillance, telling you to take care, and so on. We really need to work on that. I don't know if any of you have ever had the feeling of being watched by someone or someone is perhaps trying to put pressure on you and your family. We have experienced this in some countries, especially in some European Union countries like Bulgaria and Romania. We have some sensitive cases in Hungary too. If we cooperate in fighting against these networks, we have to build bridges between countries. Cooperation is never perfect, but we use and try to use the best channels possible, the best bridges of cooperation, especially in this region.

In the last years there has been a strong development in migration flows with landings here in southern Italy. Nigerian criminal groups are becoming more and more established in the south of Italy. They have influence all the way to

the north. In the region of Milan and Turin we were given descriptions of groups within society; then in February in Piacenza, we arrested a large number of Nigerian members of this criminal network who had been human-trafficking. They exploited hundreds of victims, especially from Nigeria, young girls, young women, abusing them, sexually exploiting them and forcing them into prostitution. I was at a press conference in Vicenza with the mayor. He told me that society was very, very thankful that we are not stopping the fight against this phenomenon.

To summarize, I could say this is a phenomenon that has always existed, and it is just changing its face over time. What it looks like can depend on the region, citizenship, and nationality; or it is moving around Europe and the European region to establish itself there, looking for weak points. This criminal network is composed of organized crime groups. As well as in the areas mentioned, they are very, very active also in the Austrian-German region.

Let's talk about Nigerians. They're very active in Italy and also in Germany. Let's talk about the Pakistanis, whose groups are very active in the United Kingdom. You can see that they are a big network, they are using new facilities, social media communication, to protect themselves from the police. Finally—just to tell you something about a mafia type we recently interrogated—we asked him, “Do you have your cell phone with you?” He said, “No, I don't carry a police officer in my pocket!” This is how they think they can protect themselves from police surveillance.



Dr. Leo Gabriel

Director, Institute of Intercultural Research and Cooperation, Vienna

This subject has consumed me for a long time, nearly as long as I have been living in America, in other words, half of my life. When I look at the subject—the social harm of organized crime on communities—it sounds as if organized crime is some outside force. There are immigrants coming to our communities, or at least to the area. I was working a great deal in Central America and Mexico, and I can tell you, this is not an outside force. Organized crime is a development from within society, a society which is in a state of decomposition.

There's a kind of circuit. The community starts to disintegrate due to the economic system. We must mention here that the average income of a worker is about \$2 a day. Then somebody comes along and says to a young guy, "Come and work for us on the drugs side; we'll pay you \$20 a day." That's 10 days' income for him. Then another phenomenon comes into play, directly related to organized crime in this circuit: refugees and migrants. It is much more profitable to live by extorting people than from drug trafficking. They start smuggling and trafficking. They have a lot of money, in Mexico and other countries, which they use to get the police forces to turn a blind eye when the police forces theoretically should have to go to the defense of the migrants.

I have been writing and editing, for 45 years a review in the German language called *Lateinamerika* ("Latin America"). I have organized social forums in El Salvador, Honduras, and Mexico on the question of what alternatives civil society has, what their strategies are against organized crime. Interestingly, at the beginning there was no political party, no grouping, no economic entity; not even the police officers whose job is to do something against this horrible phenomenon took part. But the churches did.

It is relatively easy to put together a coalition of churches, no matter whether they are Evangelical, Catholic, or another denomination, with regard to this phenomenon. They unite, they unite also with the people, the local authorities, which are often much more open than the national authorities in terms of really understanding that putting people in jail, or killing them or whatever, isn't a real solution. You have to go to the very roots of the matter, which is to offer them an alternative community. If you talk to the *Maras* (gangs), for instance, you will find that they are humans, not aliens; they kill people, but they are humans.

When you ask why this happens, you find out that it happens to people who are psychologically, anthropologically, isolated. The answer to organized crime is to make a worldwide effort to integrate people—for example, those trafficked migrants—into the community. The communities will become the alternative. This is a much better solution and strategy than quite simply condemning them and persecuting them and saying that these people are so evil that we don't want anything to do with them. The European Union and the Australian Government, among others, have been making a big mistake by rejecting these people. Because we are fomenting crime by doing that, we are not providing solutions, and here religion plays a very, very important role.



Ms. Evelyn Probst

Head, LEFÖ-Intervention Centre for Women Affected by Trafficking, Austria

I am the coordinator of the intervention center for trafficked women and girls in Vienna, Austria. I would like to give you a little practical information, including our experiences with the European and worldwide networks. Because of this specific situation—that all over the world we are living with this pandemic situation—we can focus slightly differently, and this also informs the analyses that we already have made in recent years.

The impact of organized crime on the women we are working with is huge. As an organization we have four shelters, where places are offered to women and girls who have been victims of trafficking or are presumed victims of trafficking. In Europe, and also worldwide, we have established NGO networks to focus on the rights of the victims and also to find long-term solutions to organized crime and trafficking in human beings, which is only part of organized crime. There are many other forms, in which individuals in very small groups are taking advantage of people who are in a difficult situation. That therefore needs the most funding.

One of the starting points is to analyze the situation in the countries where the victims are coming from. What are the root causes; why are these people entering a trafficking situation? At the beginning, we can't detect some of these things. When we look at our figures, we see that in recent years we have had an increasing number of women from Nigeria, China, or the Philippines. And we have still the same high number of victims coming from specific European countries: Bulgaria, Romania. Hungary. Slovakia. Women and girls from the Roma minority.

These are communities that very often are socially excluded, and they or the countries they come from are in poverty. Going to another country is seen as

having the possibility of a better life. In a European context, there is sexual exploitation and also petty crimes. If somebody decides to step out of, say, this drug trafficking situation, they don't have anywhere or anyone to go back to. Their communities wouldn't accept them back.

The other root cause is that the majority of female victims of organized crime come from sexual exploitation. There's a missing element of forms of trafficking, which also deals with discrimination. This is the recognition of what is perceived as work, that is, domestic work, or caretaking, which is traditionally a burden on women: a genuine situation all over the world.

Therefore, women abroad—also boys and girls—are exploited by organized crime, sometimes via agencies. Sometimes it doesn't even look like exploitation. All this money earned this way can be freely used, and now with the corona pandemic all over the world, there's more to be made. The people who already have been exploited in a trafficking situation are again in a vulnerable situation.

We had a couple of situations that have strong indicators of exploitation in the field of caretaking and especially of seasonal work. It was quite interesting that even in the seasonal work in an exploitative situation, men got 4.40 euros an hour and women got 4.20 for the same work.

Another question is how people get support for their illegal stay in the country. As the person is a potential victim of trafficking, knowledge of this person is the most important source of information with which to really tackle the big groups of organized crime. To get this information, what we need is a strong alliance between all actors in the field that can provide support from a rights-based perspective and NGOs that cooperate strongly with states.

We also need cooperation with faith-based organizations, which have a different kind of access to people. We know that in certain countries where trafficking has become embedded, there is a lack of religious organizations. The victims are not actually in the country. We have to face the problem of religious or faith-based organizations in those countries coming under control of organized crime and participating in organized crimes.

If that is the case, then establishing cooperation with them could be quite harmful. Then we need to connect with people who are fighting for people's rights. We established a very, very good cooperation with the Austrian Protestant church here in Vienna, where there is a priest with an African background. We hope that we can continue this cooperation on a very practical level, and can disrupt systems totally that are trafficking persons.



Mr. Max Edelbacher

Former Chief of the Anti-Crime Program, Austrian Ministry of Interior

In 2008 we had a conference in Vancouver on trafficking of human beings. This was very interesting because, if I understood correctly, more than 200 million people are away from their home country for different reasons, and trying to find a better life with a better life experience for them, for their wives and children.

When I went to the conference in Sicily, it was asked, “What can we do to reduce the poverty and the push factors that drive people to leave their home country?” I think this question still has not been solved. So, to all the speakers, I want to repeat this question: What can we do to improve the situation, to ameliorate poverty and the push factors of immigration?



Dr. Billy Batware

*Program Officer, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice,
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)*

I would like to take a few minutes to play a video that we have just released, a brand-new video that explains how the convention works, and how non-governmental stakeholders can be involved in a review mechanism, which I think is extremely important in building that coalition that other speakers mentioned.

UNODC Video - “Transnational Organized Crime” - transcript

Transnational organized crime includes a variety of criminal activities carried out for profit by organized criminal groups. It brings about significant economic losses and environmental harm, and often involves human suffering and exploitation. To address these challenges, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) in November of 2000. This is the first instrument of its kind to receive new universal adherence from UN member states. By joining the convention, states parties commit themselves to taking a series of measures against transnational organized crime, including creating specific domestic criminal offenses, supporting extradition, mutual legal assistance, and law enforcement cooperation, and providing technical assistance and training for national authorities.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is the guardian of the convention, and assists states parties to implement these measures. In 2018, states parties adopted an essential process called the mechanism for the review of the convention’s implementation. With the support of the UNODC, this process helps states parties identify their

needs for technical assistance during implementation of the convention and provides them with opportunities to exchange best practices and strengthen cooperation.

Following a two-year preparatory phase, the review mechanism is split into a two-track process. The first track is the country reviews, in which individual states complete a self-assessment questionnaire on one of the four clusters of the review mechanism, which are (1) criminalization and jurisdiction, (2) prevention, technical assistance, protection measures, and other measures, (3) law enforcement and the judicial system, and (4) international cooperation, mutual legal assistance, and confiscation.

The questionnaire is then reviewed by experts from two randomly assigned states. The reviewing states provide feedback, based on which they work together with the state under review to prepare a list of observations, as well as a summary identifying gaps, challenges and best practices. The list of observations will be made available to other states parties within a secure module of Sherloc, the UNODC knowledge management portal. The summaries will be made public in the six official UN languages. This serves as an aid to the state under review and provides the Conference of the Parties (COP), which is the central decision-making body of the convention, with valuable insights to support the implementation process.

The country reviews are organized as follows. All states parties are divided into three groups. The groups stagger their reviews by three consecutive years, treating the four clusters of the review mechanism one at a time over the course of eight years.

The second track is called the general review and is conducted in parallel to the country reviews. UNODC will draft a report on trends and patterns, based on the outcomes of the country reviews. The report will be made available to the public in the six official UN languages. The rules and procedures of the review mechanism encourage the participation of civil society, the private sector and the academic community in the review process.

One major innovation designed to facilitate this is constructive dialogues, meetings that provide NGOs and other stakeholders with the opportunity to engage with states parties and to discuss their observations of the review process. NGOs may also contribute to the implementation of the convention at a national level during country reviews. The rules and procedures of the review mechanism encourage governments to complete their self-assessment questionnaires in broad consultation with relevant civil society stakeholders. All stakeholders may also

undertake partnerships with states parties among themselves and/or with the UNODC to generate society-wide support for the implementation of the convention. For more information, visit our website or contact us at unodc-se4u@un.org.

This is really one of the ways that we can work to an effect through the convention itself. At UNODC we have started a project just last year on behalf of stakeholders for the review mechanism, meaning that we are preparing them to be ready when the constructive dialogue starts next year to come to the table with a government, ready to actually contribute and to look at the specifics of organized crime in the country, in cooperation with the government. That is what we are doing.

We do this also through training. We just completed two trainings, one for the Americas, Africa, and Europe. For those in Asia, we are conducting the next training. All the information, of course, is available on our website, and we'll be happy to share that. If you are an NGO or an academic or a private sector who would like to be trained on the convention and the review mechanism and how you can engage with governments to tackle organized crime, we'll be happy to receive applications from you as well. Thank you for allowing me to share this and also what we are doing at the UNODC civil society unit to facilitate member states' work on organized crime.

Faith-Based Organizations: Combatting Organized Crime and Corruption

October 19, 2020

The Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations is a broadly-based multifaith coalition of leading representatives of the world's great religious traditions, along with interfaith and civil society leaders, academics, and practitioners actively engaged in criminal justice and crime prevention. The Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations supports the work of various UN agencies, most notably the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), as well as the Vienna-based Alliance of NGOs for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

Moderator:

- H.E. Aftab Khokher, Ambassador of Pakistan to Austria

Panelists:

- Mr. Jean-Luc Lemahieu, Director, Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
- Dr. Venerable Sobhita, Founder and Principal, International Buddhist Education Center (Myanmar, Nepal and The Netherlands); Founder and Pro Rector, Sitagu Buddhist University
- Father Don Luigi Ciotti, Italian Priest and Activist; Founder, Libera Association
- Ambassador Alvaro Albacete, Deputy Secretary General, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID)
- Sahibzada Najeeb Sultan, Sufi Saint and Spiritual Leader, Pakistan
- H.E. Thomas Stelzer, Ambassador; Dean and Executive Secretary, International Anti-Corruption Academy
- Rev. Dorothee Hahn, Vicar, Christuskapelle (Wien-Ost), Vienna
- Dr. Azza Karam, Secretary General, Religions for Peace



H.E. Aftab Khokher

Ambassador of Pakistan to Austria; Moderator

It's a great honor and privilege for me to moderate this important discussion today. I must commend the host organization for taking this initiative and organizing this panel discussion as part of the sideline events of the 10th Conference of Parties to the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime. A very timely initiative, very relevant. Equally important is the relevance of this venue, this university, because of the contribution of Sigmund Freud to our knowledge of development.

Let me share my personal perspective on organized crimes. These crimes pose serious challenges to the international community, as they undermine the rule of law and threaten peace and stability. As well, they impede sustainable development in varying degrees in different countries.

Regarding the role of religion and faith-based organizations, fundamentally speaking, all religions are against crime. However, individuals and political leaders have used religion to promote and propagate hatred against other religions, which has led to organized crime. We have seen this manifestation in different parts of the world, including South Asia.

I was reading research material on exactly what role faith-based organizations can play in crime prevention and justice. I saw a study that says the relation between religion and crime falls into three categories. The first category focuses on individual beliefs and practices, and their relationship to involvement in deviance and crime. The second category is based on ecological studies that consider whether religious practices at the community level influence levels of crime. These studies asked whether relatively more religious communities, in

contrast to secular communities, have less crime. And the third category involves research on the effectiveness of faith-based programs to reduce crime and deviance. That is a question we need to understand.



Mr. Jean-Luc Lemahieu

Director, Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs, UN Office on Drugs and Crime

Like other civil society actors, it is of utmost importance that faith-based organizations unite in this challenging time mobilizing the willing and mobilizing the youth, making sure that we have the vulnerable in the center of our attention.

It is an honor and opportunity to share a few remarks with you today, in the margins of the *10th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* (UNTOC).

UNTOC is only 20 years young and is in more demand today than it was at its inception in 2000. Organized crime is not only a justice issue, but equally an impediment to development and the 2030 Agenda, to peace and security and to human rights. I can tell you that from our end, UNTOC has been very often invited to address the UN General Assembly or the UN Security Council on transnational organized crime, clearly indicating the interest for the topic which we are sharing here today. UN Secretary General António Guterres gave the following strong statement specific to corruption:

For many people in all regions, corruption has been a longstanding source of frustration and anger against leaders and governments. But corruption in the times of COVID-19 has the potential to seriously undermine democracies around the world. Indeed, in a pandemic, the vulnerability and fragility of many has become an opportunity to criminals. COVID is a health crisis, a social economic crisis, a human crisis, but also a security crisis. Vulnerabilities abilities and inequalities within societies and between countries and regions have been laid bare by the global pandemic. Extreme poverty has gone up by 7% in just a few

months because of COVID-19, ending two decades of development progress. Organized criminal groups will exploit these hardships to expand operations, infiltrate legitimate business, target public funds intended for COVID recovery, and much more. Developing countries struggling in this crisis will be hit the hardest. High demand and low supply present opportunities to organize cultural groups, while gaps in regulatory frameworks and corruption helps to ensure that their crimes remain low-risk and high-profit activities. Criminals have already taken advantage of the COVID crisis and the recovery efforts to mount cyberattacks on health infrastructure, as well as the manufacture and trafficking of falsified medical products.

An international operation coordinated by Interpol recently resulted in the seizures of more than 4 million potentially dangerous pharmaceuticals worth more than \$14 million, disrupting the activities of 37 organized criminal groups. More than 34,000 unlicensed or fake products were being sold across 2,000 websites, including falsified masks, substandard hand sanitizers and products billed as corona spray, coronavirus packages, and authorized antivirals. Organized school groups are expected to traffic falsified vaccines, once a viable vaccine for the virus is developed, posing a direct and legal threat to public health.

A world made poorer and more fragile by the pandemic will offer still more opportunities for criminals to exploit and abuse. The International Labor Organization estimates total working hour losses in the second quarter of 2020 at 495 million full-time equivalent jobs, and the organization has revised downward projections for the second half of the year. The decline in employment numbers has generally been greater for women than for men. Almost 77% of the world's young workers were in informal jobs without any social protection when the current crisis began. Furthermore, the World Bank shows that close to 7 million students could drop out of school due to the income shock of the pandemic.

Our countries face a prolonged economic downturn, which will put further pressure on limited public resources and on people's ability to cope and to survive further heightening abilities to human trafficking, to migrant smuggling, to radicalization, to violent extremism, and to criminal recruitments. Indeed, competition for scarce resources in highly stressed areas is likely to increase, and public discontent with local and national governments is likely to grow, feeding into the antigovernment narrative used by criminal groups, and sometimes terrorists also to radicalize and recruit.

Protecting people through the COVID response recovery and beyond requires government to address the root causes of exclusion and inequalities and to increase social protection for marginalized and at-risk groups. Safeguarding health security and development also requires creating cross-border criminal justice responses to the threats posed by organized crime, drugs, terrorism, and corruption. To address all these multi-dimensional transnational challenges, we need to have integrated responses, making the most efficient and effective use of all the tools we have available to us, with a particular focus on assistance to the most vulnerable among us. COVID has made it all too clear that none of us is safe until we all are safe. This is also the terrible lesson we have learned from terrorist attacks, and from the devastation caused by drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime. To prevent and stop such shared threats, we need shared action based on shared responsibility and building on shared commitments.

Now more than ever, the international community needs to strengthen cooperation to respond to these unique and unprecedented challenges through multilateralism. As the Charter of the United Nations points the way to defend universal values and recognize people's common future, multilateralism points the way to strengthen the commitment to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and building a world that is safer and more just for present and future generations. UNTOC has brought the world together for 20 years to tackle organized crime and protect its victims. It provides a tried and tested near-universal framework that can support effective criminal justice responses to criminal exploitation in the COVID-19 crisis. UNTOC strives to support a multi-stakeholder engagement.

Next to the procedural involvement within the UNTOC review mechanism, the added value of the faith-based organizations in delivering humanitarian aid, reaching out to the vulnerable, assisting refugees, maintaining schools and hospitals, and advocating for peace, tolerance and human rights are in the current era more in demand than ever. It is in this context, that we warmly welcome the many webinars held this year, under the auspices of the Coalition of the Faith-Based Organizations, highlighting various issues of interventions between faith-based communities and academia on the nexus of crime prevention and criminal justice. We in UNODC look forward to continuing our collaboration and joint efforts with you, the faith-based organizations, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and for building a safer world together, this time in the framework of the UNTOC 20 years.



Dr. Venerable Sobhita

Founder and Principal, International Buddhist Education Center (Myanmar, Nepal and The Netherlands); Founder and Pro Rector, Sitagu Buddhist University

I want to share my loving-kindness to all the representatives from Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, as well as some high-level UN officials.

Present Situation in the World

In the last several decades, we were confronted with the same sad news: violence, crime, wars, and disasters every day. It can be known from every corner of the world. We cannot recall a single day without a report of something terrible happening somewhere. Nowadays also, we have to face so great a mass of crime, fraud, swindling and murder. The coronavirus also brings people more suffering. It disturbs the development of all nations, along with economic and political crisis around the world. It would be suitable to say that no former generation has had to experience so much terrible processes as we face today; this invariable awareness of fear and nervousness should make any sensitive and compassionate person question seriously the progress of the world.

The Source of Committing Transnational Organized Crimes

Transnational organized crime as both a global and national threat has only recently been elevated as a “clear and present danger” for international security. The varieties of cross-border crime have become a concern for both “low” (domestic police) and “high” security (national and regional security). A consequential challenge has been to integrate the national, regional and international security response such that traditional policing (criminal justice), military and national security agencies can work more effectively and seamlessly in reducing the harm of transnational organized crime. The emergence of crime as an international security problem arises from the increasing interdependence

of global markets, especially in illicit goods and services, and the emergence of resilient cross-national crime groups.

I think these crimes happen because of something needed in life such as insufficient food and shelter. No one was born to commit crimes, but they have to. Every being wants happiness and does not want to commit crimes that have bad effects on their lives and their community. However, some people have a passionate desire for and attachment to things that they misunderstand as enduring entities. The chase of the objects of their desire and attachment engages the use of aggression and competitiveness as supposedly effective tools. These mental processes easily translate into actions, breeding belligerence as an obvious effect. Such processes have been going on in the human mind since time immemorial, but their implementation has become more effective under modern conditions. Even though science and technology have been advanced, we are in danger of losing touch with the aspects of human knowledge and understanding that aspire towards honesty and unselfishness. And injustice and inequality push some people into crime.

Buddhist Perceptive on Preventing and Combatting Transnational Organized Crime.

I want to suggest deliberating about this with a Buddhist perspective. Buddha said simply to keep abstaining from doing bad deeds and to perform good deeds for oneself and for the community. The Buddhist environment reflects the call of the times, and the love and compassion advocated by Buddhism will help to encourage the mission of building a harmonious world. Peace is humanity's eternal hope and harmony is a desirable state. Everyone is responsible for world harmony, which begins in the mind. Peace or war is our decision. Each and every day, we ourselves encounter and generate prejudicial attitudes and behaviors. If we are ultimately to survive at all on this tiny earth that is our mutual home, we must learn to appreciate, and to value each other as human beings and thus to live together in peace.

While a general disarming of all nation-states would seem the ideal, this process cannot be begun until we have first disarmed our own individual hearts. If one could simply decide to become peaceful, gentle and compassionate in all their communications with other beings and with the world, then we should all be enjoying a culture of peace. To achieve such a culture is not easy. To do so require effort, resolve, patience, and teamwork. The criminals who have perpetrated acts of terrorism must certainly be brought to justice. Terrorism cannot be allowed to continue. We must condemn the crime, but not let our anger escalate into unreasonable aggression, discrimination, and even more violence in the world. We must get to the root of this, not just punish individuals. Our

talks and discussion must be truthful, must be honest, harmonious, polite, beneficial and acceptable to all. It is important for every country to have justice and the rule of law, as inequality causes explosions and violence.

Incitement to violence that targets communities or individuals based on their identity can contribute to enabling or perpetrating atrocity crimes, (genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity), and is both a warning sign and early indicator of the risk of those crimes. Monitoring, preventing and countering incitement to violence, particularly in societies divided along identity lines and in situations where tensions are high, can contribute to prevention efforts.

States have the primary responsibility to protect populations from atrocity crimes, as well as their incitement, but other leaders can and should play a role. Religious leaders and political leaders can play a particularly influential role, as they have the potential to influence the behavior of those who follow them and share their beliefs. Given that religion has been misused to justify incitement to violence, it is vital that religious leaders from all faiths show leadership in this matter.

Thank you very much. May Buddha bless you!



Father Don Luigi Ciotti

Italian Priest and Activist; Founder, Libera Association

Libera was present at the Palermo Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime. We were there. We affirmed that in the fight against crime, corruption and other forms of violence, it is critical to include responsible and mindful civil society actors.

Steps forward have been taken, but the way is long and uphill. And above all, we are still lacking many things. I mean that, despite the extraordinary struggles of judges and law enforcement agencies all over the world, very often the support is insufficient at a political and cultural level. We often lack an adequate understanding of the profound changes that our society experienced in the last 20 years.

Hence, now more than ever, it is essential that we question ourselves, shift paradigms and flip our perspective on the matter. We cannot forget that organized crime is not a universe apart from us anymore, but it is quite related to our world.

The process of realization of the presence of mafias within the Church has been slow and not always linear. On the one hand, there were great and prophetic figures, such as Don Sturzo, who in 1900 said, "The Mafia has its feet in Sicily, but its head, perhaps, in Rome. It will become more ruthless and inhumane, and from Sicily it will rise through the entire country and across the Alps." On the other hand, there were so many underestimations, excesses of caution, accomplice silences and, sadly, also serious forms of indifference and shallowness. A central role in this was played by a mistaken interpretation of Mafia's religious belief: a belief that was flaunted by the mafiosi as it was an instrument to portray themselves as honorable and respectable people, especially in environments where faith is also jointly expressed in traditional rituals.

In fact, this religious belief is incompatible with the teachings of the Gospel; which is the word of truth, not of deceit, and the word of love, not of violence.

A moment of awareness begun in the 1980s. We cannot forget that in 1982, in the aftermath of the murder of Dalla Chiesa, prefect of Palermo, the cardinal of the city strongly denounced in his own church the immobility and tardiness of the political powers.

This seems like past history, but it is still happening today in many parts of the world. We cannot forget what John Paul II said on May 9, 1993, in the Valley of the Temples, in Sicily, where he suddenly urged the mafiosi to convert and change, and at the same time encouraged the people of Sicily, calling them a life-loving people oppressed by a civilization of death. This was a clear and firm condemnation of the Mafia's violence and crimes.

The response: on July 27, 1993, bombs went off in two churches in Rome. Later on, two priests, witnesses of the Gospel, were horribly murdered: in September: don Pino Puglisi in Palermo, and on March 19 don Peppe Diana, killed in Casal di Principe by the Camorra.

The mafiosi speak about the interference of the church... Finally, the church goes out of its places of worship to create a connection between heaven and earth, between the spiritual dimension and social commitment, between Jesus' words and the administration of justice on this earth already: right here, down here.

In my opinion, Pope Francis' words and actions today mark the point of no return. His words are sweeping away any excuse and leave no space to caution or reticence, as it was in the past. The pope called for the mafiosi to convert themselves in front of thousands of relatives of the victims of the Mafia in March 2014, during a meeting organized by Libera. Just a few months later, shaken by the previous meeting, the Pope announced with force that whoever worships evil is excommunicated, and he proclaimed this in Sibari, in Calabria, in front of thousands and thousands of families. Once more, he emphasized that there can be no coexistence of mafias and God's Word.

It's true, he's not the first pope to denounce the evil of mafias, but he goes much further. He understood the two factors that give power to the mafias. First is the moral and material corruption that spoils relationships and steals all hopes; second is a financial system that has lost all sense of ethics and relation to the common good, with just a few exceptions. Francis saw the connection between mafias and economy, which he labelled as a thief's economy, oblivious to the people's needs.

Therefore churches, and with that I mean communities of all religions, please, should have a vision based on a project that is ethical, social, political, and

spiritual, addressing to and including every person, believers and nonbelievers, in order to affirm the sacred human dignity and freedom, opposing a logic that reduces people to numbers, tools or property.

It is not a coincidence that Pope Francis established within the Vatican a ministry working against corruption and Mafia-related problems. The Italian Episcopal Conference is also part of the Libera network, which draws together 1,600 associations in Italy and is active also all over Europe, in Latin America, and in Africa. We should take an active role as citizens, as communities, groups, and churches; we should commit ourselves and take on our portion of responsibility.



Ambassador Alvaro Albacete

Deputy General Secretary, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Inter-religious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID)

Members of the Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations have been involved in different webinars dealing with ethics, environment, social justice, prevention of violence, stopping violence against women, and the humane treatment of offenders and their successful reintegration into society. The webinar today is the last of a series that we initiated a year and a half ago, but it doesn't mean that it will be our last initiative the last one where KAICIID is involved.

On the contrary, I just want to commit myself and to commit a seed by saying that we look forward to continue collaborating with the Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations, but also with our partner, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, on areas connected to crimes and drugs from the perspective of religious organizations and also considering the angle of sheltering victims.

As for the topic today, I have decided to focus on corruption as a serious threat to the idea of social cohesion and common citizenship. On one side, corruption exacerbates poverty where poverty exists. Also, corruption erodes social contract by eroding trust in social and political structures. And it harms the understanding of solidarity as it perpetuates a sense of every person for himself or herself. All these ideas explain the reasons why our programs deal with social cohesion and common citizenship as a way to combat against corruption.

For me, that connection between social cohesion and corruption is very clear. It's very relevant in the time of a pandemic, where limited resources must be used in a very efficient way. The lack of transparency or the use of resources in a partisan way—let's say, not based on equality—will affect mostly the vulnerable because it exposes the very value of solidarity, regardless of political or

religious affiliation. With corruption, there is a shift from a common citizenship approach to parties and groups. So, there is a discrimination against certain groups; resources are used or spent in favor of certain groups by discriminating against others. Now, the question is how religious actors can play a role to combat corruption? The first answer to that question for me is very obvious. Religious actors remain as a strong moral voice for many people. It is true that it depends on countries and regions of the world, but we shouldn't forget the figures that we have learned from the very famous report from the Pew Research Institute that indicates that at least 80% of the population of the world feels that religion is something very important in their life, and therefore they are open to receive religious messages from religious actors. So that idea of the strong moral voices from religious actors, it remains as a very important aspect in our societies. And that is what the Pew Research Institute highlights in the report.

The second is that advocates for moral values such as integrity and honesty also advocate for legal frameworks based on those values. So, they advocate for the rule of law based on moral values as a way to combat corruption. In a way they are claiming to have a legal framework that recognizes those moral values that they defend. So, we have the values on one side, but also, we have the religious actors advocating for clear and legal rules based on the moral values. That is the second way that religious actors in the religious sector combat corruption.

And the third, which is probably the most important one, is the work of religious actors. For example, in many parts of the world, religious actors are involved in delivering aid to people in need. It means that they are able to use huge amounts of money as well as labor assets and services. First, they have their own guidelines or codes of conduct to avoid corruption. And those rules are based on their moral commitments. So, these commitments are framed in the guidelines that they apply to themselves in the use of resources. That's a very clear way that religious leaders act against corruption, and the second is the way they apply the rules.

From my point of view, the implementation of rules from religious leaders should avoid in any case any kind of discrimination based on religious beliefs, political affiliation, ethnic groups, and so forth. A good practice of religious organizations in order to deepen in the area of nondiscrimination is to avoid assigning resources to religious groups only on the basis of religious affiliation and to mingle religious beneficiaries in the use of resources that they have in their own programs. As you see, there are various common areas where religious actors and politicians are mutually engaged: values, legal frameworks, and then the application or the implementation of those rules.

In KAICIID, as an intergovernmental organization, we have a mandate to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue. So we have a mandate to work in the area of social cohesion and common citizenship, along with our partners such as the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, but also the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect. With those two organizations, KAICIID has been largely involved in the definition of three UN action plans. They were not preventing incitement to violence, they weren't preventing hate speech, and they weren't protecting religious rights. Those action plans adopted by the UN and launched by UN Secretary General Guterres contain certain elements dealing with good governance and how to prevent corruption in a way that they avoid any kind of discrimination based on religious beliefs or political affiliation.

So, as you see, the angle that religious actors are preventing or are combating corruption is very much based on that idea of avoiding discrimination. In KAICIID, we give religious actors different platforms to speak about corruption. The most recent one is the G20 Interfaith Forum, something that is happening right now. We give them a platform where they can raise their voices in order to share their views on topics that are going to be discussed at the important gathering of the G20 Summit. Every year, this year as well, all the religious actors agree to speak about corruption. For them, it is always a topic for which they consider they should raise their voice and their commitment so that politicians know that there are certain values that they cannot surpass, surpass. So, I refer to the idea of *integrity*, the idea of *honesty* as a common commitment that they want to emphasize every year so the politicians know that the commitment is always there.

Finally, I commend the Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime for organizing this dialogue today. Recognizing that a momentum is present, we should utilize this to support communities in a common struggle through the common values of compassion and solidarity that all religions sustain.



Mr. Amir Ali

Sabibzada Najeeb Sultan, Sufi Saint and Spiritual Leader, Pakistan

It is an honor to speak in front of such an August audience on the topic of faith, especially in contrast to spiritualism. Every religion has its own unique terminology for *spiritualism*. Various languages have also translated it and pronounce it differently. But interestingly, attributes and features of spiritualism are somehow identical in all religions throughout the course of history. One of the finest properties among all of its attributes is that spiritualism does not have any religion. That's how the old and new testimony of every religion depicts it. In fact, I must say, with great care and intuition, that spiritualism is the base and the core of all religions. You would definitely agree that religion is always followed by spiritualism. It is that leads to the clear path of religion, which actually draws up social values and laws for the civilized society.

Let's have a brief synopsis of major religions in contrast to spiritualism. Because, if we come, if we get to know the importance of the spiritualism, it will be quite easy for us to know how to curb social or organized crimes with the help of spirituality. First, in Islam, spiritualism is called Sufism, and it had deep origins back to Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu alayhi wa Salam*) with a clear and heart-touching message of peace and love to all. Sufism, or spiritualism in Islam itself is a wide and far-reaching subject for us. The best description of Sufism is a gateway that leads to the eternal and divine attributes of goodness that can save human beings from evil thoughts and deeds.

Let's go to the other major religion on the planet, which is Hinduism. Hinduism has its own form of spirituality. According to Hinduism, God doesn't have a form or shape, yet God is an omnipotent soul or in Hindi. *Paramatma*. In other words, soul is everything. And everything is soul, and there is nothing

but soul. Numerous rituals and practices lead to a point where one can attain Mukti or Moksha.

Let's go to the Christianity. In Christianity, spiritualism is also referred as belief. Christian spirituality relies on the power of the Holy Spirit, to leave to live according to God's will. The Holy Spirit serves to lead us into the truth. That's what John says in Chapter 16, verse 13. It is further said in John Chapter One, verses five to eight, that God is light, and in Him there is, no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice that truth.

Another major religion is Buddhism. Buddhism is a spiritual tradition that focuses on personal spiritual development and the attainment of a deep insight into the true nature of life. Buddhists seek to reach a state of Nirvana following the path of the Buddha. According to Buddhist beliefs, Buddhism is the path to enlightenment attained by utilizing morality, meditation and wisdom. Buddhists meditate because they believe it helps awaken the truth. Some scholars also recognize Buddhism as a way of life or a spiritual tradition. In contrast to spirituality, all four religions reach one point: If you are enlightened, your inner self will stretch with spirituality. Only then can you attain the highest peak of enlightenment. Once enlightenment is reached, there is no darkness, no evilness, only the glory of goodness. This is the path of God. Walking along the path of God, one gets close to God. And where there is God, there is no evil, no crime, and no negativity.

The purpose of all this background is to make a point that spirituality is the answer to all social events, evils and organized crime. History has witnessed that from the 13th century through the late 18th century, spirituality has ruled over the world, resulting in less crime and far fewer social evils. At the end, I close with a thought of the Sufi saint Hazrad Sultan. He says that saints are actually the people who have reached the path of spirituality. Saints never die. Rather, all ill desires, jealousy, greed, and evil things die inside them, and they get blessed with the vision of God.



H.E. Thomas Stelzer

Ambassador; Dean and Executive Secretary, International Anti-Corruption Academy

I was asked to work in a bit on how faith-based organizations can contribute to the strategy against corruption. Much background on organized crime and corruption has been given to us.

I would like to approach it from a more practical point of view. Long time ago, when I chaired my first crime commission in Vienna, that crime commission adopted a resolution stating that corruption is a structural impediment to sustainable development. That stuck in my head. And it grew. During the years I became more and more aware of the truth of this statement. And 20 years later, it brought me back to this issue full time to the struggle against corruption. In the meantime, the global situation is totally changed. First the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) was negotiated in Vienna. It was adopted by consensus and is still waiting to be implemented. It is a very important instrument. But very often in the UN context, it happens quite regularly that delegations come together and work very hard on achieving results. But then they lack the energy and dedication to implement this work. Very useful conventions become dead wood.

So about by 2007, I became quite frustrated when I saw the slow progress of UNCAC implementation because this instrument gives us a very practical framework to fight corruption on the basis of the rule of law. The five substantive aspects of the convention, put together implemented, give us strong guidelines for criminalization of corruption, international cooperation, law enforcement, asset recovery, technical assistance, information sharing: All of these issues need to be implemented.

But what do you do first? In the UN system, there's a lack of accountability. How do we hold our decision makers accountable to do what they promised

to do and at one time seemed dedicated to do? How do you do that? The first step, and this is a very important part of your mission, is advocacy. In the case of UNCAC, helping our constituents to understand why fighting corruption is in our shared interest. That's the first step.

How do we make everybody aware that corruption is a cancer? It destroys society, it has no positive aspects for anybody, only short-term gains for some people. This is the first step: help raising consciousness in which direction we go. Then of course, we have the framework, the technical provisions, the legal provisions contained in a convention to be implemented.

But how do you do what convention itself suggested for technical assistance. That's the next second pillar of UN advocacy, to make people available to do technical assistance to help them to implement what they want to do. Implementation was very slow because very little technical assistance was provided. So in about 2007, I became very impatient and brought some of my friends together and said, what can we do to facilitate implementation of UNCAC? And we thought, we need a global program that galvanizes political will forces us to conceptualize a strategy, breaks it up into progress with projects, prices these projects and offers realistic steps to help to train our constituents in 187 member countries. This is to help them gain the capacity to strengthen the national criminal systems, making them more resilient so that they can fight corruption efficiently on the basis of the rule of law. And excluding impunity.

That's all there is. Somebody has to do it. In 2007, we started that. The idea was to have a global program and then to institutionalize this global program with free-standing ones in these nations. A year later, I was called to New York and left the process. And I just returned half a year ago to see the results of these efforts, which were very different from how we had conceptualized them but still very useful. A small organization called the International Anti-Corruption Academy is the only organization with an exclusive mandate to offer post-graduate degrees to fight corruption. It has several pillars First, the academic pillar. We happen to be the only international organization that is authorized without academic degrees. We have developed two master's programs in which we train practitioners to gain the experience and the expertise to strengthen the national systems executives in cooperation with our summer academies. In the meantime, we have trained about 3,000 alumni in 161 countries. That's not enough, but it's a good start. They know exactly what they need to do. They can train others to become multipliers. So, we are starting to build a global network of practitioners able to understand and implement the framework that we negotiated 15 or 20 years ago. There's a big temptation to reinvent the wheel.

Right now, we have a great opportunity. The member states of the United Nations decided to hold a special session of the UN General Assembly against

corruption in August 2021. This is now the framework to think about how we can bring the global community together in the fight against corruption. What do we like? Where is the strength, the structures that we need? How do we prevent reinventing the wheel? Of course, in this situation, big ideas are coming in that are not always deliverables. How do we criminalize corruption? We don't need a global definition for corruption because it can only be national. Each country has to define it in its criminal law system. What is corruption? How do we eradicate corruption efficiently? How do we create institutions? How do we make sure that institutions are independent and financially sufficiently equipped to do their job? These are the first steps.

So academic training is our main pillar. How can we manage that every future diplomat, every future manager in the international system, every future manager of the private sector of the global economy gets basic anti-corruption training, at least as much that he or she is able to distinguish between tradition, generous behavior, negligence, and criminal behavior? This is a big challenge. But it's doable, not only by us, but through, global cooperation. We have two modules that we can provide to universities to be integrated into an existing curriculum.

We wanted to scale up our work, dramatically and fast. My staff looked at me a little bit incredulously. Every organization has some inertia built in. But then 14 days later, we had the global lockdown. Suddenly, from one day to the next, we could not deliver our programs. We were challenged to translate 10 years of content of expertise into an internet base. Six weeks later, we continue delivering our programs without delay, and without lack of quality, to students sitting on five continents, not coming to Luxembourg, but sitting on five continents, with lecturers connected virtually to the students. This is not ideal, of course, but it's the best we could do right now. This is how we can overcome the challenge of COVID.

Our second pillar is tailor-made programs. Here we work with countries to build them anti-corruption departments with regional organizations, but also with the private sector, which is very important. I'm a big believer in multi-stakeholder initiatives and approaches. Governments need to be held accountable by long-term interests, which are rooted in the civil society, in NGOs, which go beyond four-year electoral cycles that politicians are normally tempted to limit themselves to. Bringing in not only civil society, but academia and all the other powers in society, including the private sector, you know, this is very important.

The third pillar is science. I'm a strong believer in evidence-based decision making. Now, there's a lot of research being done in anti-corruption that is not connected; it's free floating. So, we need to create a repository, an integrative

platform. If we manage to develop a narrative that explains the externalities of discussion, how much it hurts society, and how negative and destructive it is, we will make a step forward.

I also want to bring in my big hero, Pope Francis, who has expressed himself many times on corruption, He is maybe the most radical critic of the present system. He approaches it from a very different point of view, not from a societal point of view. It is a reality impoverishes everyone. Corruption disheartens individual dignity. Corruption is something that is worse than sin. That's another good reason to fight it.



Rev. Dorothee Hahn

Vicar, Christuskapelle, Vienna

Coming from the Christian faith, the key for all faith-based organization is, indeed, that we are working together no matter what our specific faith is. We are global as faith organizations. So, in the dozens of countries that we are living in, we need to be educated and grounded in our respect of belief, and to stand up and not be silent, facing organized crime and corruption. Ambassador Albus said that corruption is a serious threat to all our societies. That is indeed true. But faith-based organizations are in all the societies of the world. And we must not forget that deeper sensitivity is necessary for us to teach all our members to acknowledge corruption because, very often, it is known but not seen.

This is the solidarity that we need to have between all faith-based organizations. It is not for us, as Ambassador Stelzer said, to reinvent the wheel but to use existing structures because they are sufficient if they are used efficiently. This is something we need to follow up on in the places where we are living, in the countries where we are living, so that the people there can start also to see where faith-based organizations come from and that our goal is that we help sinners become light and not remain in the darkness. The coalition that it has been able to network, and networking is what teaches us what we have to do and where we can look and learn how to combat organized crime and corruption. I hope that the organization will continue to work on this, and the coalition will continue to network with people all over the world, so that we can do the work on the ground to get all the things against the organized crime and corruption in place.



Dr. Azza Karam

Secretary General, Religions for Peace

I was approached by the leading members of this Coalition of Faith-Based Organizations for Crime Prevention and Justice at least one year ago, if not more, when I was still working at the United Nations Population Fund, coordinating the UN Interagency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development. This Interagency Task Force was set up in 2010 to support the UN system within all of the UN member states. One of those mechanisms was to set up interagency mechanisms that would bring together the UN system entities working around specific issues and themes of relevance to the UN's agenda on peace and security, sustainable development and human rights.

I am not sure how many people know that this UN Interagency Task Force still exists today. Indeed, its membership has expanded from six founding UN system entities—the World Bank, the World Health Organization, UN Women, the United Nations Development Programme, UNICEF, and the UN Population Fund—to include today 22 UN entities. The reason for this expansion was that many of the UN Secretariat entities in New York and Geneva were realizing that they were engaging with faith-based organizations, institutions and leaders. Some in capitals like New York, Geneva, Vienna and Rome were not aware that their operational entities in situ in different countries had already been engaging with religious actors for many years. Others knew of this legacy of engagement, and felt the need, given the geopolitical dynamics around us, which include religion in every way, shape and form, to try to be much more coherent and coordinated in the engagement with religious partners.

Therefore, the UN system already has an interagency mechanism that is tasked with developing the guidelines for how to engage with religious actors, documenting the work of the different UN system entities in this space and ensuring that there is the appropriate information provided for the policy, the tool kits, the briefing notes of all different UN system entity heads. This is not new to the UN system; it is simply ever more important. I am no longer working in the UN system; I am working in Religions for Peace.

Religions for Peace is the United Nations of religions. Just as the United Nations has member states, Religions for Peace has member religious institutions. The Vatican, the Anglican Communion, the entire range of religious institutions and representations of religious communities around the world are the members of Religions for Peace; they make Religions for Peace. No matter what it is committing to in its three pillars (peace and security, human rights, and sustainable development), the United Nations needs a proactive, critical, and also extraordinarily well-targeted, well-thought-through, and well-coordinated engagement with different religious actors on its systemic agendas. But religious actors themselves also need to be better coordinated, and better consolidated in their own understandings and findings and in their own commitment to the realization of human rights and to supporting the observance of member states of international human rights law, international human rights, humanitarian laws, and all international conventions.

This brings me to why it is absolutely critical to see how there is now conversation and hopefully adoption of our review mechanisms. I firmly believe that for the multilateral system to survive, civil society has to survive, and civil society cannot survive globally without the support and consolidation from the multilateral system. Conversely, the multilateral system cannot do without a very engaged civil society. The truth of the matter is that religious actors and all the diversities in us are part of civil society. Therefore, there is no point in recognizing only the secular elements of any civic infrastructure. But it is critical that civil society take into account the role of religious actors and institutions, particularly those that have a long track record of engaging already with UN system entities and member states in serving the agendas of international human rights, law, practice and certainly observance.

It is with these thoughts that I sincerely hope you will recognize the critical role that religious actors play in this space. I asked this of the UN system and member states. But I also quite frankly need to make a commensurate ask of all the religious communities that are coming together to serve this UN space on crime prevention and justice. And that ask that I make is not really an ask: It's an imperative. We have no choice today, as religious actors with diverse views from all over the world, but to work collaboratively. The day that we

decide to work on our own within our own institutions and communities, serving only them, is the day we serve, not social cohesion, but social disintegration. When we work strongly together as different religious actors, multireligious actors, and we collaborate with one another, we also set an example for member states and for the multilateral system itself. Frankly, if we each decide as religious institutions to do our own work independent of one another, we may well find out that corruption, which is endemic within religious institutions as well as without, that the crimes in which religious institutions and actors also partake will not be addressed properly. Let us as religious institutions and actors present an example, for collaboration and for transparency, in conduct and in partnership. I wish you all the best at this very important moment.