

GLOBAL SUMMIT 2021: BUILDING GLOBAL CAPACITY FOR INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACIES

# Embracing Religious Diversity

## Global Workshop

July 27 – 29, 2021  
7:30 am - 11:00 am EST

All times are in EST, please check your local time [here](#)

### Overview

Violent conflict is often expressed in religious terms and religious discrimination has been on the rise over the past decade affecting every religious group. From the persecution of Rohingya in Myanmar and the Kurds in Iraq to Christians in Syria, Jews in Argentina, and Muslims in Nigeria, Europe and the United States, religious minorities are victims of discrimination on every continent.

While religious doctrines, traditions and norms can be a powerful force in encouraging and justifying discrimination and legitimizing violence, the underlying causes (the root causes) of Faith or Religious Belief (FoRB) violations or tensions have less to do with theological differences than with economic, socio-cultural, and political factors and with how societies memorialize the past.

Work carried out by Sites of Conscience around the world has also shown that in many contexts, religious and faith-based actors are playing a positive role in peacebuilding, social cohesion and conflict prevention by encouraging peaceful co-existence and tolerance and by influencing transitional justice processes.

To explore these intricacies and identify proactive strategies to address them, from **July 27-29, 2021** the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (the Coalition) will hold "[Embracing Religious Diversity](#)," the second of three global workshops that comprise our 2021 Global Summit, "[Building Global Capacity for Inclusive Democracies](#)," designed to support peer-to-peer learning, capacity building and project collaboration in promoting inclusivity and democratic values in our communities.

“Embracing Religious Diversity,” a global workshop open to all members of the Coalition, will shed light on the multiple factors leading to FoRB discrimination and violence today. Workshop sessions will focus on how communities can combat violations of freedom of FoRB and counteract the efforts of authoritarian regimes, armed groups, populist leaders, colonial powers and others who use religion as a tool to foment or justify violence and manipulate vulnerable communities, especially youth. The workshop will also examine how Sites of Conscience around the world are engaging religious and faith-based actors in peacebuilding, social cohesion, conflict prevention and transitional justice processes, and will provide training opportunities for members to bolster their capacities in developing community-led programs that increase interfaith dialogue and positive action.

## Agenda

### Tuesday, July 27

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7:30 – 7:40 am

#### Welcome and Introduction

Justine Di Mayo, Global Networks Program Manager Europe and MENA, [International Coalition of Sites of Conscience \(ICSC\)](#) (10')

7:40 – 8:25 am

#### KEYNOTE: Acknowledging Religious Discrimination as a Barrier to Democracy

This keynote conversation will address the extent of Faith or Religious Belief (FoRB) discrimination in our societies, and the imperative to acknowledge and confront religious intolerance, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons based on religion or belief. It will discuss how to identify and assess violations of FoRB and the key factors that lead to religious discrimination.

#### Keynote Speakers:

Katherine Marshall, Senior Fellow at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs; Professor of the Practice of Development, Conflict, and Religion at the Walsh School of Foreign Service; Executive Director of the World Faiths Development Dialogue; and Vice President of the G20 Interfaith Association (25')

Q&A (10')

**Moderator:** Elizabeth Silkes, Executive Director, [International Coalition of Sites of Conscience \(ICSC\)](#) (10' opening and closing)

8:25 – 9:35 am **GLOBAL PANEL: Conducive Factors to Faith or Religious Belief (FoRB) Discrimination and Violence Around the World**  
Violations of freedom of FoRB often take place in the context of conflict and violence; poverty and inequality; authoritarian or weak state structures; and official state religion or state atheism. Through the presentation of three Sites of Conscience case studies, this global panel will explore context-specific factors that lead to both “government-based” and “socially-based” FoRB discrimination.

- Mamadou Boussouriou Diallo (Senateur), President, [COJEDEV](#) and Souleymane Bah, President, [OGDH](#) - Guinea (15')
- Diana Abouali, Director, [Arab American National Museum](#) – USA (15')
- Emir Suljagic, Director, [Srebrenica Genocide Memorial](#) – Bosnia and Herzegovina (15')

Q&A (15')

**Moderator:** José Antequera, Director, [Centro de Memoria, Paz y Reconciliación](#) - Colombia (5' intro and 5' closing)

9:35 – 9:50 am **Coffee Break**  
Interactive Survey:

- Which groups or individuals are affected by FoRB violations in your community?
- What is the language being used to justify/legitimate discrimination and violence in your context?

9:50 – 11:00 am **GROUP DISCUSSION: Identifying Faith or Religious Belief (FoRB) Discrimination in Different Contexts (70')**  
This facilitated group discussion will identify and assess underlying causes of violations of FoRB in different contexts around the world. Understanding these will help Sites of Conscience design effective strategies to promote freedom of FoRB.

Mitzi Austero, Programs Manager, [Non-Violence International South East Asia](#) - Philippines (15' for intro and closing)

- Breakout groups (30')
- Plenary (25')

## Wednesday, July 28

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7:30 – 7:40 am

### Welcome

Justine Di Mayo, Global Networks Program Manager Europe and MENA, [International Coalition of Sites of Conscience \(ICSC\)](#) (5')  
Benjamin Seroussi, Director, [Casa do Povo](#) - Brazil (5' intro)

7:40 – 8:45 am

### GLOBAL PANEL: Strategies to Counter Religious Intolerance, Stigmatization, Discrimination, Incitement to Violence and Persecution

Through the presentation of three Sites of Conscience case studies, this session will explore examples of strategies to combat religious intolerance, stigmatization and persecution. It will showcase programs that foster freedom of FoRB and promote inter-faith dialogue and action to reduce mistrust and build bridges between community members of different faiths or religions.

- Hermine Pool, Head Collections, Research and Presentation [Our Lord in the Attic Museum](#) – Netherlands (15')
- Mofidul Hoque, Founder Trustee, [Liberation War Museum](#) – Bangladesh (15')
- Sangar Youssif, Executive Director, [Peace and Freedom Organization](#) - Iraq (15')

Q&A (15')

**Moderator:** Benjamin Seroussi, Director, [Casa do Povo](#) - Brazil (5' closing)

8:45 – 9:45 am

### WORKSHOP: Facilitating Cross-Cultural and Inter-Religious/Inter-Faith Community Dialogue

Participants will be trained on dialogue as a tool for engaging community members in cross-cultural, inter-religious, inter-faith and inter-generational dialogues, laying the groundwork for community-led projects that foster social cohesion and lasting peace. The workshop will equip participants with new understandings of the role dialogue can play in bridging divides and the skills required to organize and host community dialogues.

**Facilitator/Trainer:** Denis Ngala, Executive Director, [Manene Cultural Trust](#) – Kenya

9:45 – 10:00 am

**Coffee Break**

Interactive Survey:

- As a global network of SoC, what initiatives could be launched to promote freedom of FoRB?

10:00 – 11:00 am

**ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION: The Role of Religion in Conflict Prevention and Strengthening Transitional Justice Processes (15')**

This session will explore the positive role of religion in preventing violence and in responding to a period of conflict or authoritarian rule, and will discuss how religious and faith-based actors play formal or non-formal roles in transitional justice processes.

The session will include a presentation of outcomes from the Coalition's Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation (GIJTR) project "Strengthening Religious and Faith-Based Actors' engagement with Transitional Justice," and will introduce a new assessment tool developed by GIJTR as a basis for discussion. Drawing from the findings of case studies on Guatemala, Northern Ireland, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tibet and Tunisia undertaken in a previous activity of the project, the GIJTR has created contextually adoptable assessment tool for practitioners to assess under which circumstances and to what extent religious and faith-based actors should engage in transitional justice processes following a period of conflict or authoritarian rule in order to best support truth, justice and reconciliation goals, and how their engagement impacts these processes.

**Presenter:** Simon Robins, Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Applied Human Rights at the University of York (UK), and Author of GIJTR's *"Strengthening Religious and Faith-Based Actors' engagement with Transitional Justice,"* Assessment Toolkit

**GROUP DISCUSSION: Strengthening Religious and Faith-based Actors' Engagement in Conflict Prevention and Transitional Justice Processes (45')**

Through three case studies from GIJTR's project *"Strengthening Religious and Faith-Based Actors' engagement with Transitional Justice"*, this facilitated group conversation will examine how religious and faith-based actors engage in formal and non-formal roles in conflict prevention and transitional justice

processes, and the implications of their engagement on achieving truth, justice and reconciliation.

- **Group 1: Northern Ireland** (30')  
**Facilitators:** Cate Turner, Director and Brian Lambkin, Board member, [Healing Through Remembering](#) and Adrian Kerr, Manager, [Museum of Free Derry](#)
- **Group 2: Tibet** (30')  
**Facilitator:** Tenzin Jinpa, Content Developer, [Tibet Museum](#)
- **Group 3: Guatemala** (30')  
**Facilitator:** Luisa Fernanda Nicolau, Coordinator of the Defense of Human Dignity Area, Human Rights Office of the Archdiocese of Guatemala, [Centro de la Memoria de Monseñor Juan Gerardi](#)
- Plenary (15')  
  
**Facilitator:** Justine Di Mayo, Global Networks Program Manager Europe and MENA, [International Coalition of Sites of Conscience](#)

## Thursday, July 29

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| 7:00 - 7:15 am  | <b>Welcome</b><br>Justine Di Mayo, Global Networks Program Manager Europe and MENA, <a href="#">International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC)</a> (5')   |
| 7:15 - 11:00 am | <b>TRAINING OF TRAINERS: "Inter-Religious Understanding Through Graphic Arts"</b><br>This training session is geared towards members interested in applying to the <a href="#">"Inter-Religious Understanding Through Graphic Arts" Community Engagement Grant</a> ", which offers financial and programmatic support to engage youth in a graphic art project to foster freedom of Faith or Religious Belief (FoRB) and to hold consultations and community dialogues involving youth and religious and faith-based actors. |

The Training of Trainers (ToT) session will prepare members to train youth in their communities to develop comic books pertaining to freedom of FoRB and

inclusion. Comic books or graphic novels are particularly accessible tools to raise awareness and foster dialogue, mutual understanding and social cohesion in divided communities.

**Trainer:** Joseph Kai, Lebanese Comic Illustrator and member of the [Collective Samandal](#)

**Agenda:**

- Participants' introductions, expectations and objectives of the ToT session (30')
- General introduction to the Art of Comics and its key tools: image, text, their complementarity and endless possibilities. (30')
- How to overcome the obstacle of drawing and focus on expression (30')
- Main steps of Comic-Making: from the idea to the product (how to help trainees think of a project and make it possible) (30')
- Coffee break (15')
- Designing a Project: writing a very short story, breaking it down to key moments, and thinking of possible techniques of visual representation (60')
- Applying to "Inter-Religious Understanding Through Graphic Arts" Community Engagement Grant (15')
- Wrap Up and Closing Session (15')