Factsheet: The KAICIID Peacebuilding Programme

The KAICIID Peacebuilding Programme utilizes interreligious dialogue to support conflict prevention and resolution. In 2014, the Programme convened consultations on the Central African Republic and on common citizenship among Christians and Muslims in Arab societies, and is developing a response to the murderous violence in northern Iraq.

KAICIID condemns any violence committed in the name of religion. Working with religious, interreligious international and civil society organizations, KAICIID seeks to form a united front to stand up in defence of the universal values of peace and dialogue, shared by all religions. KAICIID convenes local, regional and international stakeholders to develop and implement multilateral peacebuilding initiatives. KAICIID also offers training to strengthen interreligious dialogue and interreligious cooperation to foster plurality and tolerance.

Fostering Common Citizenship among Christians and Muslims in Arab Societies

Some Arab societies are witnessing violence and political conflicts, which gravely threaten to weaken the region's social and cultural fabric. In June 2014, the KAICIID Dialogue Centre brought together many of the religious, inter-religious and civil society institutions currently engaged in supporting and strengthening peace building and dialogue in the Arab world.

KAICIID Secretary General Faisal Bin Muaammar noted that "All of our relations depend upon trust. Trust results from inclusive dialogue, bringing together religious leaders, governments, teachers and civil society to strengthen common citizenship for Muslims and Christians in the Arab world based on equality and respect for human rights."

Participants

The participants included: the Arab Group for Christian-Muslim Dialogue; the Adyan Foundation; the Arab Reform Initiative; the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services in Egypt; the Center of Christian-Muslim Studies at Balamand University; Diyar Consortium; the Forum for Religion and Cultures for Development and Dialogue; the Global Center for Justice and Humanity; the House of the Egyptian Family in Al Azhar, the Iraqi Council for Interfaith Dialogue; the Iraqi Institute for Human Rights; the Organization of Islamic Cooperation; the Middle East Council of Churches; the Pontifical Council of Inter-religious Dialogue; the Royal Institute for Interfaith Studies; the Syrian League for Citizenship; the World Council of Churches

Recommendations

- Request KAICIID to foster, facilitate and coordinate local and regional initiatives, focusing on citizenship and respect of diversity, especially providing space for exchanging and highlighting the successful and positive experience of the various institutions in the Arab world;
- Launch a special initiative for dialogue to engage youth to ensure sustainability and continuation of the young generation in this field;
- Launch a special campaign to reach out to Arab society through social media;
- Engage political and religious institutions and leaders to adopt and substantively implement dialogue and common citizenship.

Peacebuilding in the Central African Republic

In May 2014, KAICIID convened a two-day meeting of experts and religious representatives from the Central African Republic (CAR) to explore how to support peacebuilding processes in the conflict-torn country.

Participants

Gathering under Chatham House rules, the consultation included participants representing Catholic, Islamic and Protestant religious communities in CAR, representatives from interfaith organizations based in CAR, as well as mediation experts from national and international organizations, such as Finn Church Aid, the Network of Traditional and Religious Peacemakers, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Special Envoy to CAR, the United Religion Initiative and the All Africa Council of Churches.

Insights

"This is not a religious conflict, but a profoundly political one."

The participants agreed that the conflict in CAR was not a religious conflict. Its causes are rooted in historical, political and economic concerns.

Participants also warned that without immediate action to promote interreligious dialogue and alleviate the growing humanitarian and security crisis in the country, there was a significant risk of the country fracturing along religious lines leading to the eventual disintegration of the country. The risk of a wider conflict beyond CAR's borders is evident and must be prevented.

"We need to build a common language of peace"

One participant said: "On a religious level, we don't have a common peace language, so what can we share with the population? We need to build this peace language, to find solutions for people to find out what social cohesion really means. We live in a very rich country but politics have failed us." The participants emphasized the need for interreligious unity, unified models of social cohesion and a common peace language.

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Recommendations

Considering the conditions under which peacebuilding must be pursued, the meeting developed recommendations for consideration in KAICIID's work to build dialogue in the country. These included a call to:

- Work towards using dialogue to end hostilities in CAR and support efforts for reconciliation;
- Correct the myth that the conflict is affiliated with religion or that conflict occurred as a result of religion;
- Promote sustainable interreligious dialogue at the grassroots level in CAR;
- Support peacebuilding with other international and national organizations to help prevent the situation's further deterioration;
- Work with the local and international organizations now active in CAR to create synergy in providing effective support.