



25 Recommendations

About

The Role of Religions in Syria towards the challenges of Solidarity, Reconciliation and Peacebuilding

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Developed by a Group of Christian and Muslim Syrian Religious Leaders from different regions, in the framework of the project: “Building Resilience and Reconciliation through Interfaith Mediation, Dialogue and Peace Education”, organized by Adyan Foundation, this white Paper proposes twenty-five recommendations to faith-based actors working in four different and complementary fields.

A) IN THE HUMANITARIAN ACTION

1. Reject discrimination between aid beneficiaries, deal wisely with donor institutions and donations on this basis, and provide a testimony of universal and comprehensive love
2. Coordinate humanitarian, social or development actions between various institutions
3. Build the capacities of social workers on the concepts of diversity, cooperation, and solidarity, as well as on humanitarian action as a factor for promoting solidarity and social cohesion instead of aggravating divide and fanaticism
4. Undertake joint projects whenever possible
5. Keep on exchanging expertise and provide society and people in general with an image of cooperation and interfaith solidarity in order to set right any potential misperceptions

B) IN THE MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE

6. Reject the logic of accusations of infidelity (*takfir*), respect religious diversity and offer a vision that highlights diversity as a necessity and that shows that the logic of exclusivism is contradictory with the spirit of faith
7. Make dialogue objectives clear to everyone, explaining that it is not synonymous with mission, proselytism, persuasion or controversy, but rather with fraternity, a correct knowledge of the other, the acknowledgment of the faith experience of the other and the exchange of spiritual experiences
8. Promote mutual knowledge and break free from religious prejudices and preconceived ideas by:
 - Organizing joint action meetings and activities (involving people on the grassroots level and in their daily lives)
 - Making efforts to learn about the other’s religion from its sources
 - Raising awareness to the threat of religious ideological media and voice clear religious stances regarding such programs and stations
 - knowing the cultural elements related to the other religions (specific terminology, traditions, ...)
 - Identifying, documenting and spreading information on positive and pioneering initiatives

9. Identify commonalities between both religions to be used as a foundation and the know specificities of each religious denomination in order to educate everyone on respecting them

C) IN FIGHTING EXTREMISM

10. Be convinced that extremism is not to be faced with extremism and that it calls upon us to show mercy and wisdom
11. Consider extremism as an existential threat for everyone, rather than just for Christians or minorities
12. Take the various dimensions of extremism into account instead of focusing exclusively on its religious dimension (feeling of being threatened, deprivation, ignorance...)
13. Safeguard honesty in our positions and sincerity in our faith, avoid any dual positioning or language, fanaticism and division, and promote contacts between the followers of various faiths based on honesty
14. Organize joint awareness, cultural and artistic activities
15. Dismantle the religious references of extremism in all religions and take this dimension into consideration in homilies/sermons and religious media
16. Develop curricula, especially religious education curricula, with the aim of promoting accurate knowledge and shared values, and educate on citizenship and peace
17. Promote the role of family, especially of women and mothers, in transmitting the culture of openness and respect for diversity
18. Provide joint psychological support to victims across various communities

D) IN THE RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE

19. Start from the vast shared space based on common concerns, hopes and values
20. Avoid generalizations, accusations and counteraccusations due to the abuse committed by some
21. Emphasize the values of forgiveness and reconciliation as foundations for rebuilding society and living together
22. Make joint efforts to clarify the main concepts of living together (such as governance, citizenship, national unity and participation)
23. Abstain from ignoring sensitive issues and imperfections, and address them together reasonably and transparently
24. Put emphasis on childhood and youth issues, and strive for a generation aware of the national belonging
25. Develop the adequate mechanisms to rehabilitate preachers and preachers in keeping with the current circumstances and the challenges they entail



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