



## **CONFERENCE REPORT**

# **United Against Violence in the Name of Religion: How do Freedom of Religion and Freedom of Expression Coexist in Europe?**

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## SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **United Against Violence in the Name of Religion:**

#### **How do Freedom of Religion and Freedom of Expression Coexist in Europe?**

*Paris, 15-16 June 2015*

In Paris, France on 15 and 16 June 2015, the International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID), based in Vienna, held the European Media Forum on the universal human rights of freedom of religion and freedom of expression. This forum gathered around 40 European religious leaders, journalists, as well as civil society organizations.

The purpose of the two-day seminar was to bring European representatives from religious communities together with media professionals to discuss how members of these sectors can, as important influencers of public opinion, work to support a constructive public discourse on these two fundamental freedoms..

These sectors – media and religion – are often portrayed as being pitted against one another. In fact, as participants at the seminar agreed, religious leaders and media professionals are allied in the defense of both freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief. They are mutually supporting rights that allow the freedom and expression of individual conscience.

This forum was part of the implementation of the Vienna Declaration “United against Violence in the Name of Religion”, which was adopted in November 2014 and was followed up by a May 2015 conference in Beirut, Lebanon on preserving religious and cultural diversity in Syria and Iraq.

Organised with the support of KAICIID Board member and Metropolitan of France, His Eminence Metropolitan Emmanuel, and attended by KAICIID Board members Swami Agnivesh, Father Miguel Ayuso, Dr. Sayyed Ataollah Mohajerani, Reverend Kosho Niwano, Chief Rabbi David Rosen and Dr. Mohammed Sammak, the meeting brought together religious leaders from European Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, and Muslim communities, as well as leading civil society organisations such as Article 19, and the International Press Institute, and media organisations such as the BBC, European Broadcasting Union, El País, Reuters, and Religion News Service..

The following organisations supported the European Media Forum: the World Council of Churches; the Conference of European Rabbis; the Hindu Forum of Europe; the European Buddhist Union; the Islamic Cultural Centre of the United Kingdom; a Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe; the Blanquerna Observatory on Media, Religion and Culture; the Ethical Journalism Network; and the Religion Newswriters Foundation.

**Select Recommendations (please see Section 5 for a full list):**

- When religion is used to justify violence, religious people need to raise their voices in the media to denounce and reject such violence.
- Religious leaders need to speak out whenever any religious community is the victim of hate speech to assertively reject discrimination.
- A continuing dialogue between religious communities and journalists fosters greater knowledge and understanding.
- Mainstream religious communities gain a representative share of media attention when they utilize media literacy training, build constructive working relations with the media, and proactively provide journalists relevant, authoritative information.
- Journalists need access to more resources and tools to support their coverage, as well as training on religious literacy.
- The existing international legal framework and norms are sufficient; additional legal measures are not needed to counter hate speech. All should work toward rescinding blasphemy laws, and properly enforcing incitement laws in line with international standards.

## SECTION 2: FOREWORD

The question of what it means to exercise freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief has recently gained more prominence in public attention. This is particularly true in Europe, in the aftermath of the tragedy of the massacre of journalists and cartoonists at the French satirical newspaper, *Charlie Hebdo*, in January 2015. The various responses showed the stark contrast in perspectives that still exists today.

KAICIID is an intergovernmental organization whose mandate is to promote the use of dialogue globally to prevent and resolve conflict, to enhance understanding and cooperation . Over a seven-year-long negotiation and development process, KAICIID's mandate and structure were designed to foster dialogue among people of different faiths and cultures that bridges animosities, reduces fear and instills mutual respect.

KAICIID acts as impartial organization facilitates dialogue on pressing issues of concern to people of all religions and beliefs. KAICIID provides space for diverse stakeholders to meet and encourages respectful dialogue that respects differences and encourages the willingness to listen to Other in order find common ground around shared human values. I am delighted that KAICIID is able to provide a space for dialogue on the key issues of our day, and look forward to continuing to do so in the future.

Faisal bin Abdulrahman bin Muaammar

Secretary General, KAICIID Dialogue Centre

## SECTION 3: SEMINAR OVERVIEW

From 15 – 16 June 2015, KAICIID brought together 40 religious leaders, media professionals and civil society representatives to discuss the intersection of freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief in Europe.

The seminar was a follow up to two events. In November 2014, KAICIID held a high-level conference of Arab-region religious leaders entitled “United Against Violence in the Name of Religion: Supporting Diversity in Iraq and Syria”, which aimed to create a solid response to the rising problem of the so called ISIS, a group whose deadly tactics and political agenda threaten and even at times erode a centuries-long history of diversity in the Middle East. As an outcome of this conference, KAICIID committed to holding further dialogues on a regional level, to encourage religious leaders to work together to condemn violence, to focus on citizenship as an aspect of social cohesion, and to help strengthen ties and understanding between religious communities and the media.

On a much more specific level, the tragedy of the massacre at Charlie Hebdo and a Jewish supermarket in Paris, France followed a month later by the shooting attack against a free expression event in Copenhagen, Denmark, demonstrated that there was an immediate need for religious leaders and media professionals to come together to dialogue about and hopefully find common ground on the relation between the freedom of expression and the freedom of religion or belief. .

In recent years, all too many incidents of violence in the name of religion have fueled tensions between different religions and worldviews in European society and beyond. The media sector and religious leadership, in particular, are often portrayed as being at odds, or are represented as stand-ins for two different worldviews.

### **Why is dialogue between Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Religion or Belief necessary?**

KAICIID is an intergovernmental and multi-religious organization mandated to facilitate dialogue on issues just like this. It is because KAICIID reaffirms the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that it seeks to hold dialogue to help clarify international standards of those freedoms while staying true to its primary role as an impartial facilitator of dialogue between people and groups of diverse opinions and perceptions about a conflictual topic.

In the case of freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression , KAICIID convened the European media seminar in Paris in order to promote a more constructive public discourse on freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief. The goals of the seminar were to identify:

1. Common values
2. Best practices

3. Cooperation mechanisms
4. Recommendations
5. Next steps

### **What is “Dialogue”?**

There are multiple definitions and interpretations of the word “dialogue”, which is used differently in everyday speech than in the specific field of interreligious dialogue. Even among interreligious dialogue researchers and specialists, the term can have different meanings depending on a variety of specific situations. When we then translate this concept into other languages, an even greater diversity of meanings emerges.

While the word "dialogue" can often simply refer to a conversation between different people, KAICIID understands “dialogue” - whether inter- or intra-religious, intercultural, or inter-civilizational – as a form of interaction :

- between two or more persons of different identities
- that emphasizes self-expression
- and reciprocal listening
- without passing judgment,
- in an intellectual and compassionate spirit of openness
- to mutual learning
- with deep transformative potential.

The exponential growth in the practice of dialogue in the last half a century, both intercultural and interreligious, has led to deep transformations in both theological perceptions and interreligious collaborations for justice and peace.

Both interreligious and intercultural dialogue contribute to a paradigm shift away from winning arguments for controlling results, towards collective and inclusive decision-making for a sustainable common good.

Dialogue is at the heart of positive peacebuilding. Its processes are present in all phases, from prevention of conflicts, to peacemaking and post-conflict rebuilding.

At KAICIID, dialogue is both a means and an end, from conception of strategy and delivery of programmes, to impact assessment.

### **What is the role of KAICIID?**

KAICIID considers itself a third-party impartial convener and facilitator. KAICIID believes that true change can only occur through dialogue, and not through advocacy alone. In order to facilitate dialogue, KAICIID cannot be seen to “take sides” on

particular issues. However, while KAICIID strives to remain impartial, its use of a value-based transformative and inclusive approach contributes to promoting human rights and responsibilities.

As part of fulfilling its role, KAICIID provided facilitators and rapporteurs for all sessions and small group discussions at the Paris seminar.

### **The two-day Seminar Structure**

The first day of the seminar began with a plenary session in which four experts presented on the topic of freedom of expression and the freedom of religion or belief in Europe. They shared their thoughts on the roles of news media and religious leaders in supporting these two complementary freedoms in particular (see page XX).

After this, religious leaders met in one group, while media professionals and advocates met in another. This separation for one session allowed each group space for internal reflection on their specific roles and perceptions of the many challenges each group faces. Volunteers provided short, three-minute personal reflections on the main questions of the day in order to kick-off discussions. In the afternoon, the groups joined in plenary to report back on the outcomes of their discussions and ask each other questions about their opinions or interpretations (see pages XX to XX).

The second and final day began with presentations from two experts on the Istanbul Process (see page XX), which is an international process to determine how countries can best implement Human Rights Council Resolution 16/18 (2011). This resolution tackles the intersection of freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief by identifying individuals – rather than religions – as the proper holders of legal protection against discrimination or stereotyping on the basis of religion or belief.

Participants then split into two working groups, each of which contained a mix of representatives from both religious communities and media professionals and advocates. These group discussions were again opened with short inputs from participant volunteers offering their reflections on the themes of the day (see pages XX to XX).

In the afternoon, the two groups returned to plenary, where each presented its list of general recommendations, as well as specific recommendations for the media, for religious leaders, and for KAICIID as a facilitating organization (see page XX).

The final, combined list of recommendations was then presented at a closing public panel discussion in the late afternoon (see page XX).

The seminar was held in both English and French, with simultaneous interpretation offered during all sessions.



## **Dialogue guidelines**

During the first plenary session of the first day, participants were presented with a list of dialogue guidelines that would inform the rules of engagement over the next two days. These were:

- Respect others, even if you disagree
- Discussions should be focused on ideas, not individuals
- Avoid being judgmental towards others
- Propose clear and concise priorities and recommendations

All discussions took place under the Chatham House Rule, which is a form of confidentiality in which “participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.”<sup>1</sup> (For this publication, specific speakers and presenters agreed to lift this rule).

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<sup>1</sup> Chatham House website, The Royal Institute of International Affairs.  
<http://www.chathamhouse.org/about/chatham-house-rule>. Accessed 7 July, 2015.

## SECTION 4: SESSION INPUTS AND DISCUSSION

### Opening Plenary Session

**MC:** *Fahad Abualnasr, KAICIID Chief of Staff*

**Welcome Address:** *H.E. Faisal bin Abdulrahman bin Muaammar, KAICIID Secretary General*

**Words of welcome:** *Metropolitan Emmanuel of France*

**Panelists:**

- *Moderator: Mr. Peter Kaiser, KAICIID Director of Communications*
- *Dr. Miriam Diez Bosch, Director, Blanquerna Observatory for Media, Religion and Culture*
- *Nedžad Grabus, Grand Mufti of Slovenia*
- *Moché Lewin, Executive Director of the Conference of European Rabbis*

**Presentation on Conference Structure:** *Prof. Patrice Brodeur, KAICIID Director of Research*

The conference opened with inputs designed to present participants with the structure, rationale and planned outcomes of the conference, and to introduce various perspectives on the topics that would be addressed over the next two days.

**KAICIID Secretary General Faisal bin Muaammar** welcomed participants and thanked them for their willingness to contribute ideas to “enrich the broader European discussion” about freedom of expression and freedom of religion.

He underscored KAICIID’s commitment to providing a “safe and non-judgmental forum for all parties to share and discuss their experiences and opinions. And most importantly, to listen.” The Secretary General hoped to bring the media and religious leaders “closer together” in their understandings of each other, and of the coexistence of these two important freedoms.

In his welcome remarks, **Metropolitan Emmanuel** of France said that the terrorist attack on Charlie Hebdo on 7 January 2015 was an attack on the state, on freedom of expression, and was anti-Semitic in nature. Yet, this terrorist attack resulted in unity among the French population. Freedom of religion and freedom of expression are not opposed, and religious leaders and journalists are not against each other, said the Metropolitan. Rather these groups share a role “as mediators, as brokers”.

A panel of four representatives from the worlds of academia, media and religious leadership was moderated by **Mr. Peter Kaiser**. The panelists presented their thoughts about the intersections of freedom of expression and freedom of religion; and on the interactions between media and religious voices.

**Dr. Miriam Diez Bosch** neatly summarized the all-too-common attitudes of voices from media, religious communities and society at large toward one another.

Media, Dr. Diez Bosch said, see religion either as a problem, or as news only in the case of conflict, or as a total non-issue – with each perspective being problematic in its own way. Religious voices, on the other hand, complain that society does not accept religion. They say that media are biased, have no knowledge, don't understand, and are generally against religion.

Society, according to Dr. Diez Bosch, holds opinions about religion ranging from the extremely negative, in which they see all religions as hiding extremism, to positive visions that see religions as covering areas of welfare that would otherwise be neglected.

Dr. Diez Bosch pointed out that ignorance about religion and phobias toward it are also harbored by educated people. On the other hand, religious voices have failed to make their positions on human rights violations and other atrocities clear. Dr. Diez Bosch shared some examples of the work of the Blanquerna Observatory of Media, Religion, and Culture, which has recently tackled blasphemy laws and initiated a project to strengthen the engagement of journalists with religious leaders.

**Rabbi Moché Lewin** agreed that he, as a religious leader, used to have a prejudiced view of journalists but was able to build friendly and productive links. He noted that religion is a main source of meaning for many people, but that over the past few years there has been an apparent confrontation with the concept of secularism, or *laïcité*. He discussed the expression of religious belief through halal and kosher slaughtering practices, or through the process of religious circumcision, as examples.

**Mufti Nedžad Grabus** said that when it comes to religious expression, religious communities form alliances on different issues. For example, in his experience, working with Roman Catholics on family issues, with the Jewish community on circumcision, and with atheists on freedom of expression.

Although many Europeans are Muslims, Muslims are often excluded from the discourse or treated as foreigners, he said. As an example, in Slovenia a group applied to build a mosque in 1969, and didn't receive permission until 2009. They are not covered by the official education system, though Christians and Jewish people are. The Mufti explained that he must constantly explain that Muslims belong in Europe.

The media can be Islamophobic, and often focus on negative issues surrounding Muslim communities. After the Charlie Hebdo attacks, Muslims had a difficult time across Europe. For example, at a celebration of the Prophet Mohammed, Mr. Grabus said, journalists kept asking why Muslims support violence.

The Mufti said there is a problem with integrating Islam into wider society. The problem is not the performance of religious services. All constitutions, he said, protect freedom of expression, but the fair implementation is problematic.

He called for journalists to distinguish between religion, belief and customs. There should be open discussion about differences and moral values, and differences need not be a cause for conflict.

**Mr. Brian Pellot** provided an overview of existing international standards on freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief as codified in Articles 18 and 19 of both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and in subsequent interpretations. Mr. Pellot noted that tension often arises over interpretation of Article 20 of the ICCPR, which prohibits “advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence”.

The European Union’s Human Rights Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline (2014) states that abusively invoking “public morals” or “national values” to protect religions and ideologies are undermining freedom of expression. The guidelines also state that criminal blasphemy laws are often applied to “persecute, mistreat or intimidate persons” in a way that inhibits freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief, and should be decriminalized.

The E.U.’s 2013 Human Rights Guidelines on Freedom of Religion or Belief note the “universality, indivisibility, inter-relatedness and interdependence” of all human rights. The E.U. is guided by the principle that restrictions on freedom of expression must meet the criteria set by Article 20 paragraph 2 of the ICCPR. All other speech, including offensive speech, is protected. Mr. Pellot cited a passage that said international human rights law protects individuals, not institutions or religions.

When it comes to defamation of religion, it is necessary to protect against discrimination of people who hold certain beliefs, rather than the beliefs, Mr. Pellot said.

Human Rights Council Resolution 16/18 (2011), which Mr. Pellot noted would be further discussed the following day, consolidated an international consensus on dealing with discrimination on the basis of religion or belief in accordance with international human rights standards.

**Mr. Kaiser** then opened the discussion to the floor.

One religious leader shared his experience of joining with other religious leaders to speak to journalists and condemn violent attacks, such as the Charlie Hebdo massacre. He called for further dialogue to bridge the gap between religious voices and the media, noting that there is a lack of understanding between the two groups, but that media will respond in the public interest. He suggested that, as a best practice, members of different communities should defend and protect one another.

Another participant noted that journalists are trained to look for the unique. She suggested that the concept of “peace journalism” might be useful for discussion. She also recommended that media monitoring be conducted specifically about religion.

A number of religious voices said that the media ignore or marginalize their communities, or won't cover anything but negative stories. As one participant said, "the media are not interested" even if they have good sources.

Another participant noted, "You can protect religious freedoms, but you cannot protect religious feelings."

Several journalists raised the issue of the need for media professionals to have more knowledge and understanding of religion – to have "religious literacy". An editor noted that journalists need to be more self-critical about their reporting. Another pointed out that even if reporters are very knowledgeable about a particular religious issue, their editor on any given day may not see the significance.

Another journalist emphasized that the reason extremists are so over-represented in the media is because they are accessible and active; he said "moderate" voices must take a more offensive role. It was also pointed out that journalists ultimately mirror society and its perspectives. In a market economy, bad news will continue to outsell good news and will therefore continue to dominate.

After a half hour of discussion, the plenary ended with a presentation by **Prof. Patrice Brodeur** on the structure and methodology of this two-day event.

Prof. Brodeur described KAICIID's working definition of dialogue, which is understood to be a form of interaction:

- between two or more persons of different identities
- that emphasizes self-expression
- and reciprocal listening
- without passing judgement
- in an intellectual and compassionate spirit of openness
- for mutual learning
- with deep transformative potential.

During Day 1 of the seminar, participants would break into two groups, with religious leaders and representatives in one group, and with media professionals and advocates in another. The idea was to create space for internal reflection on roles, challenges, opportunities and perceptions.

During Day 2, participants would split into two working groups that each contained a mix of religious leaders and media professionals, in order to create space for collaborative discussion and problem-solving.

Plenary sessions at the beginning and end of each day would allow participants to gather the same expert inputs and report back to one another for discussion.

Simultaneous French-English interpretation was offered through booths during the plenaries, and via whispered translation during the break out groups.

Prof. Brodeur ended his presentation with a run-down of dialogue guidelines for the rest of the seminar.

## BREAKOUT SESSIONS, DAY 1

During the morning breakout session on 15 June, participants were divided into two groups. Religious leaders and representatives were in one group, and journalists, media advocates and experts were in another.

Each group was asked to reflect on recent news events and discuss how participants perceive media coverage about religious affairs. They were to discuss the roles of religious leaders and news media in exercising and explaining freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief. Participants were asked to identify and analyze those problems and recommend best practices for addressing them. Finally, each group identified questions to put forward to members of the other group.

### **Group 1: Religious leaders and experts**

Prof. Brodeur moderated the discussion, in which religious leaders talked about their perceptions of media coverage and how this can be improved.

Many participants were concerned about selective media reporting, or about media narratives that were unfair toward members of religious communities.

One participant said that the news media celebrate some expressions of religious freedom but scandalize others. The participant gave the example of a small Jewish school in England that had banned its pupils' mothers from driving them. No one was forcing parents to join this school, but it created a national media scandal.

Some participants noted that the news media prefer negative narratives. One went so far as to say that while "one part of the media is very sensible, another part only picks up particular issues to create hatred or incitement."

Others simply felt ignored. One participant said, "When religions are doing something together, it is of no interest to the big media." They added that "especially among young people there is an idea that religion is the root of all problems in the world."

Other participants felt that their expertise or roles in their communities were overlooked, and that they mainly received silly interview requests that perpetuate stereotypes. One cited an invitation to discuss "yoga for dogs."

Another participant said that religious leaders could do more to speak out. They noted, "a lot of wonderful things are happening within religious communities," and should be highlighted by religious leaders. It is also important to "look at things in a broader perspective" and remember that "we are enormously lucky [in Europe] to be able to discuss these issues," and that "people are not being killed here for expressing their opinions."

The news media's choices of who "counts" as a representative of religious communities was also considered to be problematic. One participant said he had offered to give interviews in the wake of the Charlie Hebdo attacks, but the media turned him down because they said they "want a bishop or nobody." He was later asked why Christian voices had been silent on the issue.

## **Group 2: Media professionals, advocates and experts**

Moderated by Mr. Peter Kaiser, the group of media professionals and experts, discussed their perceptions of media coverage about religion, their reflections on the enforcement and exercise of freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief, and recommendations for action.

Much of the discussion rotated around the concept of what it means to be a journalist. One participant asked, “Do we really understand freedom of expression the same way?” He said that religious voices sometimes deal badly with criticism, and said it must be accepted that “you criticize wrongdoing of religious affairs without the notion that you are a racist or that you are anti-religious.”

Several participants referred to the traditional conception of journalism, as something that holds accountable, criticizes and challenges institutions and ideas, including religious institutions and religious beliefs. As one expert said, “One of the purposes of media is to allow people to challenge the ideas they have been brought up with [...] and the role of critical media is to examine identities and break them down a little bit.”

Another journalist cited a colleague of hers who believes that you shouldn’t write something that “will hurt”, even if it is true. She disagreed because “that would introduce mercy into journalism, a new value”.

At the same time, participants agreed that journalists must adhere to ethical standards and best practices. One said journalists should better appreciate that religion is “something that touches people deeply.” They should be equipped by their employers to have the proper training and knowledge to report in an informed way. They should show sensitive issues, such as the Charlie Hebdo cartoons, in a relevant, meaningful way that provides explanation and context. As one participant said, his news outlet – like many others – refrains from mentioning the religious or ethnic background of an alleged criminal or victim unless it is directly relevant to the attack. News media should also understand who their audiences are and consider that many audience members also hold religious beliefs and ought to be catered to, if for no reason other than that it makes business sense to do so.

Participants also mentioned economic limitations that affect reporting. Many newsrooms can no longer afford to send reporters to be “on the ground” in crisis areas. Deadlines are tighter and work pressure is greater than ever before. And mainstream media, like any other business, must sell its products. One noted that journalism “is a mirror of society,” and “the logic of marketing media is that you have to produce a product that is acceptable for customers, and customers are not interested in positive stories.” Another journalist said that news media would happily cover positive stories, but only if they are interesting to readers.

## END-OF-DAY PLENARY, DAY 1

In the afternoon both groups met to share their consolidated inputs. The media group began by presenting problems and challenges, as well as their thoughts on freedom of religion and freedom of expression, and their best practices and recommendations. They were followed by the group of religious leaders.

In the text below, the problems and challenges identified by each group are presented beside one another in order to highlight the similarities and differences. Their lists have been consolidated and explanations added in some instances.

### PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

**Religious leaders and experts** reported back on a number of problems and challenges that they had identified.

1. **Misunderstandings about the nature of religion.** Religion is perceived in some places to be negative, and in other places as something positive. At other times, religion is misunderstood to be an aspect of culture. In fact, for many it is a “question of being”.
2. **A lack of factual knowledge about religions,** or perceptions about religious people or leaders that are skewed by general prejudices.
3. **Good news is not news.** Stories about religious leaders solving problems don’t make the news, because these don’t sell. Journalists appear primarily interested in conflict, and in creating narratives that support conflicts. They seem to think that there is no news in religion, and that religion does nothing newsworthy.
4. **A lack of authentic representation.** The news media get to select who speaks for a particular religion, and that may not be representative or representative of a range of views.
5. **Sensationalism.** Participants perceived the media to ignore all but the most sensational stories relating to religious communities or leaders.
6. **Lost opportunities.** Religious voices have sometimes failed to take advantage of news media interest in a particular issue to speak out or clarify their beliefs, or place these in context. As one example, a Christian noted that until recently Christian women in many places also covered their heads, which could have been explained. Journalists, on the other hand, should understand that some religious leaders have relevant expertise, and shouldn’t only be included as tokens.
7. **Unfair expectations and categorizations.** Regarding the role of religious leaders, one participant expressed dismay that religious leaders are put in a position of having to defend all religions against “non-believers”. Others are expected to defend cultural traditions that people mistakenly believe are based on religious beliefs.

**Media professionals and experts** also shared their analysis of problems and challenges.



1. **Overworked journalists and resource constraints** – Because of staff cutbacks, reporters must simultaneously produce content for different streams. They may not have the time (or column space) to provide sufficient context or background information. News outlets might not have the people in the field or be able to invest in longer, investigative reports.
2. **Limited access to diverse and representative religious voices.** As one participant noted, the term ‘leader’ can be misleading – the loudest are often given space, rather than the most representative.
3. **Religious leaders do not have relationships with journalists.** As a result, the agenda is dominated by crisis or radical and extreme voices. However, it is possible for the news media to correct course – but representative religious voices must speak out. Many religious leaders don’t have any journalists’ phone numbers, and don’t know which sections or news desks to place their stories with.
4. **Lack of religious and media literacy**
  - a. Media has a lack of religious literacy
  - b. Religious voices and representatives lack media literacy
5. **Economic pressure from own audiences can be a constraint.** News media, like other businesses, respond to market realities. There is less of a market for positive news than negative news, and certainly only interesting stories (whether positive or negative) will sell.
6. **Need for ethical code adherence.** Existing journalistic standards and ethical codes already provide a sufficient framework for reporting on any issue in a responsible manner. These standards must be upheld. For example, many ethical codes call for information about religious affiliation, ethnicity and nationality to be excluded unless it is directly related to the story. Unfortunately, religious affiliation is often only reported in negative scenarios, contributing to stereotypes.
7. **Audience fragmentation.** In a globalized news era, it is difficult to know which audiences are being served, and whose sensitivities to take into account. Even public service media face the question, which public?
8. **Legislation protects some religious communities more than others.** Laws that protect religious communities must be fair and should be fairly implemented.

## **FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF**

When it comes to freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief, participants from the religious leaders’ group had a number of observations:

1. **These rights are “universal and fundamental”.** The ability to discuss and criticize any idea without threat of harm is precious.
2. **Disproportionate attacks on minorities.** Some participants said that some news media use their freedoms to attack minorities, whose fundamental freedoms should be protected.

3. **Greater self-regulation among media and religious leaders.**  
 Participants said there needs to be more discussion of responsibility and consequences for the things that are said and done, and that some fail in their self-regulation.
4. **Deepen discussions.** Rather than discussing freedoms, it would be important to talk about “tolerance and non-tolerance”. People cannot be told not to exercise their freedoms.

The media experts’ group shared their conclusions about freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief, which have been summarized and explained below.

1. **These rights are mutually reinforcing.** Like their counterparts, this group concluded that the rights are not in opposition, but rather complementary. They are only limited when the state intervenes to set boundaries in a way that restricts rights, for example through blasphemy laws, which supposedly prohibit expression in order to protect “freedom of religion”.
2. **Counter-terrorism and blasphemy laws limit freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief.** National security laws can impede the ability of journalists – and any person – to express opinions or even report on facts. Blasphemy laws make it difficult to express beliefs that are contrary to the majority’s religious opinion, or to challenge or criticize religious institutions or beliefs.
3. **Laws should be fairly applied to all religions or beliefs.**
4. **International Law: Right to offend, no right to not be offended.** One media advocate explained that the right to offend, including through satire and mockery, advances democracy and keeps the powerful in check. However, direct incitement to violence is not protected.
5. **Incitement vs. hate speech vs. offensive speech.** These concepts are often misunderstood.
  - a. There is a step between hate speech – which is protected in some societies – and incitement, which is not protected. If someone expresses hate speech, the person who responds by calling for violence is the only one doing the inciting. There is a step between hate speech and incitement.
  - b. **Societies evolve through discussion of highly offensive topics.** These cause society to grow in important ways, and the topics to become less taboo.
  - c. **Solidarity with Charlie Hebdo was in many cases solidarity with their right to work in safety, not solidarity with the content of their publications.** Anyone offended by speech has the right to go to court, but not to take violent action.
6. **The role of journalists and religious leaders is often misunderstood.**  
 Freedom from religion is another aspect of freedom of religion. Also, journalists are sometimes anti-clerical, which they may not perceive to be the same as anti-religious. Freedom of expression is part of freedom of opinion and freedom of conscience. Indeed, religious leaders and media are on the same side, because both must fight to protect their rights to think and express their thoughts. There should be a mutual respect and appreciation.

## BEST PRACTICES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Participants from both groups shared many specific examples and experiences, which were translated into best practices and recommendations to be shared during the final plenary. These are summarized and explained below.

The religious leaders and experts' group had the following recommendations for themselves and for other religious leaders:

1. **More training and engagement is needed.** Media professionals and religious voices need to “go back to school” to learn about the other and build more active relationships.
  - a. Religious leaders need to learn about the interests of news media,
  - b. develop relationships with journalists
  - c. engage with them proactively, inviting them to cover events, and offering information and opinions on areas of expertise;
  - d. Distinguish between different news outlets, and different types of news media – they are not all the same.
  - e. Address negative, inaccurate narratives, always bearing in mind that the media cannot be expected to cover only good news or to put a positive slant on news.
2. **Generate facts and new knowledge** about the reality of media coverage about religion. Media coverage should be factual and not emotional (and so should media criticism).
3. **Use social media to be heard**, because then traditional media will take an interest.
4. **In case of crisis, avoid miscommunication** which might alarm people by issuing statements that “secure and give a safe space”. Eliminate opportunities for speculation. Advise parishioners that only specific spokespersons should speak on behalf of the community, to avoid misrepresentation. Be brief and to the point.
5. **Look for good spokespersons within** communities who can be self-critical, direct and open, and who can “share awareness that any kind of violence is a danger to humanity.”
6. **Religious leaders should use their platforms to address the problems and injustices facing ordinary people**, like poverty, justice and environmental issues.
7. **Work with other religious leaders** – also because joint declarations and actions are more likely to be interesting for the news media. Show solidarity with other religious leaders.
8. **Have an open space for discussion** (such as interfaith councils) so that members of religious communities can speak directly with one another, instead of forming opinions based on news reports or speaking through the media.
9. **Speak plainly, be human.** Religious leaders should rise above narrow divisions and take on larger questions.
10. **KAICIID should feel empowered to focus on the media and creating dialogue** around specific issues in order to resolve and pre-empt crisis.

The media group shared their recommendations for journalists and other media professionals.

1. **Make important stories interesting.** Journalists can strive to explain important matters in a way that captures their audience's interest.
2. **Understand audiences' interests.** Religious communities may also form an important part of the audience, and their news interests should also be considered – it is good business. Explore, if possible, a market survey on audience desires with respect to news about religion.
3. **Religious voices proactively reach the right journalists.** It would be helpful for religious leaders who wish to be heard to cultivate relationships with the news media. It would also be valuable for them to improve their media literacy, and train their community members to deal with the news media. Additionally, they should be confident enough to speak with journalists, and should hold events to educate journalists about their tradition and work. It is important to **provide journalists with resources to reach the right religious leaders and experts.**
4. **Religious literacy training for journalists.** Journalists should have basic knowledge about religious beliefs, traditions and communities. Training is the responsibility of their employers. Journalists would also benefit from more resources that help them identify sources and find information.
5. **Best practices should be shared between self-regulatory bodies in print and broadcast media.** There are multiple national and even pan-European councils and self-regulatory bodies that guide ethical newsroom behavior, which might further coordinate efforts on relevant issues.
6. **Support newsrooms diversity.**
7. **Mainstream media can draw upon religious specialist media as sources.** Journalists from specialist media have particular expertise and can provide background information to help select relevant, well-spoken sources for interview.
8. **Be a good journalist, because journalists have to write and report about everything.** There are ever-fewer specialist beats, and reporters are expected to be able to learn about and report on any issue at all – including religious affairs. Given this reality, adherence to the principles of journalism is particularly important.
  - a. Sources. Seek out representative sources – not just the loudest voice.
  - b. Be accurate and fair, and provide context in stories.
  - c. Adhere to ethical codes. Don't mention religious affiliation when it is not relevant.
  - d. Maintain editorial independence.

## **DISCUSSION**

After each group presented, moderator Prof. Mohammed Abu-Nimer then opened the floor for discussion, which allowed members of each group time to ask and answer questions and concerns from members of the other group. Participants' comments continually returned to a few key areas, and their comments have been grouped by theme below.

### **Media regulation**

One person from the religious leaders' group asked whether there are self-regulatory guidelines in place among news media, and how they are implemented. A representative from the media group replied that in virtually every country there are mechanisms including laws, press councils, journalist unions and editorial guidelines in use by journalists.

One participant said media only care about protecting their own freedoms, and will, for example, refrain from commenting on national security issues if asked to by a government official. A media expert later responded by saying that media do care about how they report because if they don't they will lose credibility. There are many mechanisms in place to ensure this, she said. For example, those who break the law may be prosecuted, while those who violate the ethical code may face complaints made to the self-regulatory body.

A religious participant said media often use terms from religion without having any idea what they mean – and in so doing, give certain individual voices more authority than they should have, for example by calling them “sheikh” or “imam”.

Another religious leader said that the revelations that lead to the Leveson inquiry in the United Kingdom showed the media were willing to use “abusive tactics to gain more and more wealth”. Moreover, he said, the media demonstrate pure ignorance when they refer to so-called ISIS as “salafists”. He said he believes media are educated enough, but rather they wish to manipulate people in order to make money.

### **Right to offend**

Another religious leader asked for clarification on the right to offend. An expert on media and human rights explained that from an international law perspective, there is no freedom of religion or belief without freedom of expression. He said, “If there is no direct incitement that would lead to violence, discrimination or hatred, that would cause imminent violence, there is no obligation in international law to refrain from it.” He stressed that people must be educated to know each other better.

One participant said that religious leaders often speak of their own tradition as part of the solution, but of other religions as being part of the problem – this is reflected in the media and is problematic.

One journalist returned to the idea, mentioned by the religious leaders' group, of “lost opportunities” and said he believed media also miss an opportunity to clarify their “scriptures”. On the other hand, he observed that efforts by religious voices to clarify

scripture to the news media often don't get very far, because there are so many disagreements within religion.

One religious leader said that peace is a common good that is more important than individual liberties, and that governments should regulate to that end. A media expert responded that international law does allow for restrictions on freedom of expression. He explained that one can hold any opinion, but that its expression might be subject to limitations (for example in the case of direct incitement to violence). He said it is important to maintain satire, which keeps the powerful in check.

Another journalist agreed and noted that religion must grow a thick skin. In Western society, religion has been in decline for centuries, and has been lampooned for centuries. There may be no reason for people to try and offend one another, but if someone is offended in the normal course of someone else's expression, they have to live with it.

A third media expert joined this opinion, noting that in a society where everyone has the same freedoms, anyone might choose to be offended by anything because they can believe in anything. If you tried to institute a right to not be offended, the cases would never end. It is impossible to have an open society and right to not be offended, he said.

The moderator asked whether there are any sacred, holy ideas.

One participant responded that satirists have a duty to challenge even sensitive ideas because that is the purpose of satire.

### **Economic constraints on media**

Two participants spoke to the subject of economic pressures. One noted that in the United States it is easy to sell a multi-part TV series on Christianity, but that in the United Kingdom it is nearly impossible. The question, he said, is why is there no market in the UK?

Another defended journalists, saying that media lack money, resources and training. He said there is indeed a lot of bad journalism, but there has also never been more good journalism, because there is just so much of it. He said many journalists are really trying hard. Religious voices should seek out these good journalists and cooperate with them. What is dangerous is state intervention or efforts by the state to decide what is wrong or what is right – there are many countries attempting to limit freedom of expression, which is dangerous.

One religious leader brought up the influence of advertising companies on media, saying this impact should not be overlooked.

Another religious leader observed that he remembered that there used to be many more religious specialists in the media, who have been replaced by generalists.

### **Social media**

The influence of social media on traditional media was also raised by participants, not only because social media is a kind of competition for news media, but also because it influences news media content.

One cleric noted that over time there has been major changes in media technology, sometimes producing seismic shifts in world religions – and said some people believe that the printing press caused the Reformation. We should therefore expect big changes.

Another noted that social media puts more responsibility on traditional media, because now we consider traditional media to contain the “truth”. It’s up to news media to confirm facts.

## **MORNING PLENARY, DAY 2**

The second and final day of the seminar began with a plenary meeting at which two experts described the Istanbul Process, by which states and other stakeholders explore the best ways to implement the 2011 Human Rights Council Resolution 16/18, on “Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief”.

The speakers provided insights into the process from the perspectives, respectively, of an international organization and a civil society organization that have each played key roles in the process so far.

The first distinguished speaker was Ambassador **Ufuk Gökçen**, Permanent Observer of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to the United Nations in New York.

**Ambassador Ufuk Gökçen** offered remarks about the work of the OIC situated within his own personal reflections and learning from involvement in the Istanbul process. He emphasized a pragmatic approach that takes into account common sense, and which would require global awareness-raising and efforts at mediating and seeking reconciliations between opposing views on the matter. He stressed the necessity of upholding fundamental human rights while simultaneously calling for global responsibility. To do this would require navigating the complexity of multiple religious, cultural, ethnic and gender identities. He also spoke of the need to bridge the gaps among political leaders, civil society, religious leaders, media and academics.

Sharing his personal views, he stated that he would not call for the criminalization of blasphemy, nor of any speech or expression that does not amount to incitement to imminent violence, and that this benchmark should be “very high and narrowly defined”.

The ambassador said, “the panacea of hate speech is positive speech”, and noted that, “Cooperation and solidarity among faith-based communities and other segments of the societies, and constructive and peaceful joint action, are among the best ways of dealing with acts of incitement and demonization targeting followers of a religion or a community.”

He added that encouragement and guidance must come from political leaders. Civil society, including the interfaith and faith-based communities, could be better mobilized if political leaders would demonstrate constructive and moral leadership. The media, he said, should be a part of the dialogue. Best practices should be highlighted.

Ambassador **Gökçen** explained the background to UN Human Rights Council resolution 16/18. He said the resolution was a “textbook example of successful multi-lateral diplomacy”, which aims to work through the prism of international human rights law and provide a comprehensive Action Plan that requires the action of governments to counter incitement and religious hatred. “What is unique and important about HRC resolution 16/18 of March 2011 is that it put an end to the international confrontation at the UN fora over the concept of defamation of religions,” he said. Following the adoption of the resolution in 2011, the OIC, the United States and EU initiated a process to “raise awareness about and expedite full and effective implementation of the resolution. Five meetings have been held as part of this process to date, he said. The most recent meeting, held at OIC headquarters in Jeddah, resulted in a few key points, which are summarized below:

1. He noted that “religious leaders, faith-based organizations and local interfaith initiatives could play a constructive role in mitigation of conflict, in peacebuilding and promotion of religious tolerance and respect.”
2. Civil society inclusion in the Istanbul Process is of “crucial importance”.
3. While states should focus on effective implementation and reporting in their own countries, international cooperation is also critical.
4. The political commitment at the highest level of political institution is essential, and leaders must “eschew the opportunistic tendencies to use religious and cultural differences to make political gains.”
5. Implementation should be objective and impartial.
6. Freedom of religion and combating intolerance and hatred based on religion are mutually interdependent.
7. Ensuring freedom of opinion and expression is key to exercising the right to freedom of religion. Prohibition of speech should be exceptional and must conform to the three tier criterion given in article 19 or article 20 of ICCPR.
8. Government and religious leaders/civil society’s responses to acts of intolerance/hate have become quicker and more sophisticated.
9. Unified community response is a powerful approach in deterring against the instigation of hate.
10. There is a need to establish complementary linkage between HRC resolution 16/18 and the Rabat Plan of Action as well as to raise awareness not only on the Istanbul Process but also on the Rabat Plan of Action.
11. Collaborative networks should be strengthened within government, between



government and civil society, and among civil society organizations. Regular contacts should be established between state institutions and community to establish trust and to gather feedback and share information with community that could influence policy.

12. Communities should be engaged early and consistently to reinforce mutual trust which will be helpful when crises arise.
13. Government officials should receive training on religious and cultural sensitivity.
14. Implementation progress should be monitored by the Human Rights Council.
15. Human rights education must remain a priority for the OIC Independent Human Rights Commission.
16. It is important to assess both negative and positive roles of media.

After presenting the above points, Ambassador **Gökçen** sought to address criticism of the latest Istanbul Process meeting, which was held at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah and which was hosted by the OIC General Secretariat. The meeting included human rights organizations and experts who were invited to be on “equal footing” with member states so that they could raise their views, concerns and criticisms, he said. He noted that the Istanbul Process provides a unique space to discuss implementation in an open and informal context. It allows space to identify practices and laws and regulations which are not compatible with 16/18. He noted that a “unique” feature of 16/18 is that “the threshold that it set for criminalization is compatible with the first amendment of the [United States] Constitution, which is incitement to imminent violence.”

**The second distinguished speaker was Mr. David Diaz-Jogeix, Director of Programmes at ARTICLE 19**, a non-governmental human rights organization based in London with the mission to defend and promote freedom of expression and information globally. The organization is named after Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Mr. Diaz-Jogeix emphasized the need to advocate that member states commit to the concrete implementation of all the recommendations. He noted that 16/18 places the emphasis on implementation of positive actions. It focuses far less on creating new restrictions to freedom of expression, instead calling only for implementation of those already grounded in international law.

He explained that the advantage of the Istanbul Process is that it moves the discussion away from a highly politicized atmosphere and focuses on “practical steps” that can be taken “together with civil society stakeholders”. With respect to the next planned Istanbul Process meeting in Chile in 2016, he raised two key issues. The first was the role of civil society in this process, and the second was the need to include a gender perspective.

Chile, he said, does indeed have the intention of bringing these perspectives to the discussion, but that it must be actualized. He said states should seek to follow Human Rights Council recommendations on the Rabat Plan of Action and provide a balanced approach. He called for states to be honest, and to focus on their own

performance – are they practicing what they are preaching?

He called for continuity in the Istanbul Process, and for leadership, which he felt is lacking among members states. He said resolutions are mere “political declarations,” and that member states have not reported back as they should. Among European states, he said, only the United Kingdom had reported back on implementation.

Mr. Diaz-Jogeix noted that the UN Human Rights Council has initiated a series of workshops on how to combat incitement to hatred and that the Rabat Plan of Action was adopted at the last HRC meeting and had received praise from both states and civil society actors because of its usefulness in combatting incitement to hatred.

Mr. Diaz-Jogeix closed by asking participants not to conflate hate speech and incitement, which refers only to direct calls for violence towards an individual or group. The drive to criminalize hate speech has resulted in limits being placed on freedom of expression on the grounds of national security, he said. Hateful voices like those of Geert Wilders or Pastor Terry Jones are a disservice to freedom of expression, but can only be challenged and relegated to the fringe by more speech -- through other openly challenging and disagreeing with them, he said.

## **BREAK OUT SESSIONS, DAY 2**

Following the presentation, participants were divided into two groups that each included religious leaders and media professionals. Each group was presented with the same set of questions, which were built on the premise that both members of the news media and religious leaders are opinion-shapers whose work affects the way that their audiences or followers think.

With this in mind, KAICIID asked how religious leaders and those working in news media can understand and engage with religious identities in ways that are constructive and non-discriminatory. How can members of these groups properly educate people about freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression?

They were asked to translate their ideas into best practices that could be implemented either by religious communities or news media, or by members of both sectors working together.

KAICIID sought mechanisms for improving collaboration and information-sharing about news events, such as training, networks and platforms that could address media, religion, and freedom of religion and belief and freedom of expression.

Finally, participants were asked to make recommendations for government and civil society actors in light of the guidance provided by the Rabat Plan of Action and the report documenting the outcomes of the “Forum on the Role of Religious Leaders in Preventing Incitement that could lead to Atrocity Crimes,” which was organized by KAICIID, the United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention; the Interministerial Delegation of Human Rights, and the Rabita Mohammedia des Oulémas of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Both reports were circulated to participants to review beforehand. The discussions in the mixed groups, as all other seminar discussions, took place under the Chatham House rule.

### **MIXED GROUP 1**

The first mixed group was moderated by Prof. Mohammed Abu-Nimer. During discussions, the question of “Who speaks for whom?” was raised. The discussion dealt with determining the authentic and authoritative religious voices. Some religious leaders felt that media professionals should know it was their responsibility to seek out and find the voices that are truly a reflection of religious presence in society.

However, the great majority of the group indicated that there is only so much that journalists can do because of external pressures and time constraints. The majority emphasized that religious leaders must be more proactive in engaging the news media and be more of their own content producers on social media. One participant, a journalist, spoke about how in his experience many Muslim religious leaders do not

allow journalists to have access to their communities. Very often, he said, journalists cannot find the voices to speak on behalf of religious communities.

One religious leader emphasized that “religious leaders have a responsibility to speak out in times of crisis” – but another participant noted that such efforts are not always successful. He mentioned one effort in which Islamic religious leaders wrote an open letter condemning the leader of the so-called ISIS, but received minimal media coverage, while single acts of violence routinely make headlines. One religious leader spoke to the need for religious communities to create opportunities for encounters to reduce prejudice, especially among youth.

Another cited a best practice example of a project that asked non-Muslims to draw pictures of people named Mohammed, by which was meant not of the prophet, but of people in society who were named Mohammed. Such initiatives help to humanize Muslims. Responding to this, another mentioned that there were already many existing recommendations and examples of best practices initiatives but that they need to be better implemented and expanded.

Journalists said religious leaders could better utilize their presence in communities by improving their communications capacity. They recommended that religious leaders organize events in response to a crisis, be more willing to speak on record, hold background briefings, and generally seek to build relationships with journalists. One cited the example of ambassadors who successfully build relationships by offering regular off-the-record media briefings. Others suggested that religious leaders seek opportunities to speak at media associations where journalists are members.

One participant said, “If you have a relationship with journalists you can get coverage.” Several agreed. One journalist noted how media coverage had improved as more Muslim community leaders developed relationships with reporters after the 9/11 attacks in New York and the 7/7 attacks in the UK. Having relationships increases the likelihood that journalists will attend events and present leaders and their communities in a human way.

While participants called for efforts to increase religious literacy among journalists, they also recognized that religious leaders also require training on effectively engaging the news media. Most religious communities do not have designated spokespersons and do not always provide clear and straightforward ways for journalists to reach them.

Additionally, participants encouraged religious leaders to tap into their own lay networks to put forward other, non-clerical community voices, such as the perspectives of theologians and experts. It was felt that clerics are sometimes seen as filling a public relations role, which might detract from their perceived credibility.

Participants raised the need to reach influential voices on social media and in entertainment media. The Vatican’s practice of reaching out to influential bloggers and social media users was cited as a good example. The Vatican’s efforts provided bloggers who cover religion with an opportunity to learn more about the Vatican

system. Another participant cited a Facebook page that hosts voices that are both for and against the practice of male circumcision in Europe, the site serves as an impartial resource serving journalists covering the issue.

Religious community leaders should seek opportunities to contact influential members of entertainment media and pop culture, such as script writers, to encourage a more authentic representation of religion.

## **MIXED GROUP 2**

The second mixed group was moderated by Prof. Patrice Brodeur. The discussion touched on many of the same themes as in the other mixed group. Participants stressed the importance of self-regulatory mechanisms for the media, called for the decriminalization of blasphemy laws, and emphasized the need for religious leaders to understand how to get their messages out. Ultimately, participants agreed that religious leaders and media professionals should ally themselves with one another in the cause of protecting freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief, which are mutually interdependent.

The session opened with four short presentations by select participants, who shared their personal experiences and reflections as an inspiration for discussions.

The first presenter, an experienced journalist, began by noting that 100 journalists were killed in 2014, and that already 50 had been killed in 2015. He noted the very high numbers of journalists in prison around the world, and said that this is the reality of journalism.

Calls for additional ethical codes, he said, are wrong – existing codes are enough. They serve as a “Bible” for journalists, and good journalists follow the code. In the event that the code is broken, many countries have a media council or other ethics commission that people can turn to. For a journalist, he said, being criticized by your peers is a much worse experience than facing legal action. “I was sued, and it didn’t hurt at all,” he said. “Being told you broke the code hurts.”

He called for all to agree that freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief are the same, and said that religious leaders and media are fighting for the same thing: the right to speak their minds and thoughts. There can be no freedom of belief without freedom of expression, and vice versa, he said.

The second presenter, a Muslim religious leader, began by noting that all are against violence, especially violence against journalists. He said he was grateful to the journalism community for doing an important job. Because of his experience working with news media, he said, his “sympathy and prayers” are with journalists. He realized that there is “no way forward for blasphemy laws,” and that we “cannot have them in this day and age, but in fact they must be wound up wherever they are.” However, he called for laws controlling incitement to hatred that “cover everyone”

equally. He recommended that leaders of religious communities educate its members about freedom of expression. At the same time, news media should be sensitive.

A Christian leader presented next. He noted that religious leaders are often in their “confessional corners” fighting for their interests, but his experience working with the interreligious organization Religions for Peace is that collective action is more effective: “different faiths, common actions.” The first step, he said, is to be self-critical. We all must do a “good job for a peaceful society and a common understanding,” he said.

The final presentation came from a reporter who frequently covers international affairs. She said that religious leaders often seem to lack understanding of how the media work. The criticism from religious leaders is the same as the criticism from everyone else: there is no good news, their stories are not in the headlines, and so on. Unfortunately that is not how the media works, she said. She said that religious leaders will have to learn about messaging, timing, developing themselves as sources in down times so that during a crisis they will be available. She said there is room in the news for positive stories, or stories that provide more depth about what is happening in a community – but indeed she personally had trouble writing good stories about some communities, even when it was in their interest, because she had limited access to voices within them.

The subsequent discussion generated a number of insights and recommendations.

With respect to the law, religious leaders and media professionals agreed that blasphemy laws should be removed, while laws banning incitement must be fully and equitably enforced. This would require an understanding of what constitutes incitement, as opposed to what merely causes offence – with an understanding that there is no accepted international right to not be offended. One participant mentioned that people tend to hierarchize rights, and that governments, for example, are all too happy to deprioritize freedom of expression. This should not be accepted – it must be recognized that freedom of expression is “of vital importance” for freedom of religion.

Do religious institutions need to work on boosting their public relations? Opinions were divided. Some religious leaders felt that there was a need for communications and external relations officers of religious institutions and interreligious councils to be more proactive, or to perhaps engage in more training.

However, other religious leaders and journalists disagreed. One participant noted that having a national-level spokesperson or P.R. office would require national-level organization within religious traditions, which is often not the case. Another said it was not the job of religious institutions to be professional, strategic communicators the way governments strive to be – encouraging this would lead to an unwanted concentration of power. Of course, a Pope would have a bigger presence than an individual pastor. The participant said that such structures would skew the presentation of religion in the media toward the “big mouths,” with some positive but also many negative effects. That said, existing communicators from within different religious traditions could meet to share best practices and experiences.

Several journalist participants also rejected the notion that enhanced public relations would lead to better or more journalism about religion. As one said, “journalists do not want pampering, and they get nervous when they hear about better PR and communications.” Indeed they actively distrust anything labelled “PR,” he said, because journalists seek to “make the invisible visible,” which they see as being the opposite of the goal of public relations. Instead, journalists called on religious leaders to develop better personal relationships with journalists, and to become media literate – to have a better understanding of journalist needs, codes of conduct and working procedures. The best thing for religious leaders to do is be “available and active” – especially on a very local level. As community leaders, their opinions about a range of social issues are interesting, and they should be ready to share these, the participant said. He recommended that religious leaders try to build relationships with thoughtful journalists who try to reflect on what they are writing about.

All participants agreed that religious leaders should never respond to crisis with silence. As one religious leader said, journalists will wonder why leaders are silent, and silence is often misinterpreted “as something sinister.” Instead, religious leaders should speak up and speak out, and should not be afraid to speak about issue of public interests (rather than just “religious” issues). As one journalist said, “Silence is negative.” He said, “If you are silent on something, people will ask you why.”

The key, all agreed, was better communications with media. Quality rather than quantity. Media communications ought to be timely, relevant and feature meaningful content, one participant said. They noted that communications should add value. Religious leaders should strive to always be honest and transparent. They should also demonstrate solidarity – as one said, he principally doesn’t comment on the behavior of leaders from other faiths except when it is totally unavoidable.

Much of the conversation centered on the need for improved literacy about both the media and about religion. Participants called for religious literacy in newsrooms to be strengthened through seminars, meetings or trainings. At the same time, religious leaders should build their media literacy and communications skills. Several examples were given of instances where literacy would make a difference: the news media would make fewer mistakes when using religious terminology, for example, or religious leaders might have more success in reaching out to the right news desks.

At the same time, simple training in media or religious literacy has its limits. Participants pointed out that face-to-face dialogue must also take place. All must be willing to be self-critical and open. To build understanding, participants needed to have a “lived experience” of the Other.

## REPORTING BACK PLENARY

Over the course of a long lunch break, rapporteurs from each of the two break-out groups worked with the respective facilitators to consolidate two lists of key points and recommendations.

In the afternoon session, a spokesperson from each group presented their group's respective thoughts and recommendations.

Each group's recommendations are presented below in their original form, though with minor edits for grammar and style.

### GROUP 1

### GROUP 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

#### For Media:

1. Increase the links between religious and non-religious media
2. Strengthen religious literacy among journalists and media practitioners, and of their audiences through reporting
3. Train journalists in preventing hate speech/incitement etc. so that comments can be better moderated without being censored
4. Be knowledgeable before using religious terminology

#### For Religious Leaders:

1. Consider how European and national interreligious councils can be sources of expertise for media
2. Strengthen media literacy
3. Explain and challenge use of religious terminology by the media
4. Consider how institutional hierarchies affect the ability of religious voices to communicate with the press. Improve communication within religious institutions, empower local-level voices.
5. Solidarity between religious leaders
6. Understand that media prefer sources (interviewees) who are:
  - a.) Competent
  - b.) Reliable
  - c.) Relevant
  - d.) Confident
  - e.) Available (on short notice)
  - f.) Develop contacts with journalists before there is a crisis – invest time on a regular basis. Don't be a firefighter.
  - g.) Journalists need not just a talking head, but also someone who can speak with them in depth "on background" or "off-the-record"
  - h.) Clarity, humility, transparency best way to deal with sensitive questions



7. Speak up to the media!
  - a.) Silence can be misunderstood and leads to assumptions of the worst
  - b.) Be proactive
  - c.) Understand that religious leaders, also on a local level, are interesting voices because they are influential. Don't only have to discuss religious issues.
8. Understand that media are in competition, so if you are in demand as sources you can be selective
9. Consider creating a "code of conduct" or guidelines for religious voices speaking with media

**For Joint Activities:**

1. Dialogue for mutual understanding:
  - a. Sharing information about each other's mandates, codes of conduct and ethics
  - b. Working procedures and structures
  - c. Build respect
  - d. Exchange expertise and information
  - e. Build an alliance to defend FoE and FoRB, which are mutually dependent.
2. Repeal blasphemy laws, and encourage the enforcement of incitement laws meeting international standards
3. Encourage audiences to have religious literacy and media literacy

**For KAICIID:**

1. Provide media literacy and communications training for religious leaders
2. Provide religious literacy training for journalists
3. Create dialogue between religious leaders and journalists
4. Bring religious media and non-religious media closer together

## PUBLIC PANEL

**Welcome Address:** *H.E. Faisal bin Abdulrahman bin Muaammar, KAICIID Secretary General*

### **Panelists:**

- *Moderator: Prof. Mohammed Abu-Nimer, KAICIID Senior Adviser*
- *Metropolitan Emmanuel of France*
- *Dr. Mohamed Bechari, Secretary General of the European Islamic Conference*
- *Radkha Betcheva, Senior Project Manager, European Broadcasting Union*

The seminar concluded with a public panel discussion to discuss the outcomes of the conference. It was held before an audience of conference participants and diplomats.

**KAICIID Secretary General Faisal bin Muaammar** opened by remarking that KAICIID’s role is one of convener and impartial facilitator of dialogue, which does not aim to influence the discussion. However, he said he would share his “personal thoughts about the issues of freedom of expression and freedom of religion”.

He said European civilization and society advanced by securing fundamental human rights. However, he believes that tensions have arisen from differing understandings of freedom of expression and freedom of religion.

How can these tensions be addressed, beyond making statements? The difficulty, he said, is in implementation. Follow-up action must be taken. He also called for understanding that in many countries, religion is the basis of the nation. “Acknowledging the significance of religion and religious belief is needed when we enter into dialogue about these two fundamental freedoms,” he said.

The Secretary General spoke of the need for KAICIID to build bridges and trust between religious leaders and the media through workshops and training.

Lastly, he stressed the role of ethics, and called for the careful exercise of rights to ensure civility. He said it was a “great source of pride and honour” for KAICIID to have organized the forum, and expressed his desire for continued work together.

The floor was then given to **Radka Betcheva**, who presented the full list of recommendations from the preceding two days (please see Chapter Seven).

**His Eminence Metropolitan Emmanuel** followed with his personal remarks on the gathering, which he described as a group of co-workers with a common cause and a common aim: a co-existence where religion is not viewed as an obstacle but the vehicle for achieving peaceful coexistence.

He indicated that currently religion and freedom of expression are perceived by some as being in opposition to one another. He cited the issue of blasphemy and injury to feelings as a crystallization of the oppositional framing of two viewpoints on the issue.

His Eminence proposed three limitations for the discussion of freedom of religion and freedom of expression.

The first was fundamentalism, which he said is a global phenomenon affecting Christianity and other religions, and a reaction to the principles of modernity and secularism. He said fundamentalism is experienced as the possession of absolute truth. In this sense, he said, it is the “ultimate secularization movement” because it is cut off from historical and cultural roots, and negates any possibility of dialogue. Fundamentalism, he said, is opposed to both freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression.

His second point was on limits on expression, which is interpreted differently in different places. While the law bans speech in which people call for murder and violence, there are different interpretations for protecting persons from slander. He said that in trying to protect people’s dignity and integrity, there arises a complex tension with the cultural liberalism that is entirely detached from the religious and the sacred.

Lastly, he said that freedom of religion and freedom of expression coexist through the contact points of their respective limits.

Speaking from an Orthodox theological perspective he suggested that dialogue comes from God himself, through the *logos*, the word. God reveals himself through the word, the prophets, and nature, and when God speaks, hearts are converted.

He spoke to the unique treasure in each individual that arises from the imprint of God. He concluded by saying that religion and religious commitment means drawing close to the other, make the other our neighbor. Freedom of expression and freedom of religion should therefore be used for one’s relationship with God and the other, he said.

**Dr. Mohammed Bechari** began his remarks by pointed out that there is misunderstanding because an unhealthy climate is being created when economic and political problems are being conflated with religious identities.

In this current context he felt that there are attacks against religious practices or symbols.

On the first day of the forum, he said, participants found themselves on different sides. Neither were willing to bargain or accept attacks on what they consider holy scriptures or on what they consider the sacred legacy of the Enlightenment, human rights.

There is an apparent tension between the sacred and the freedom of expression and the press, he said, and a fight against incitement in the name of religious principles.

Each country has its own way of interpreting freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief. In France, the case is at a standstill, he said. Dr. Bechari said that at one meeting, the Minister of the Interior had said that Freedom of Expression is sacred.

He noted that at the Avicenne Institute for Humanities [where he serves as President-Rector] they have cooperated with ISESCO to discuss these issues at great length.

They provided training to journalists in order to avoid the stereotyping of Islam and Muslims.

He asked whether the media is, in its treatment of Islam, exercising freedom of expression or simply pursuing commercial objectives. He said that beyond looking at a legal approach, it was important to strengthen the dialogue of religions and cultures to end xenophobic and populist attitudes. In Europe, he said, people of different cultures and religions must meet in a way that is mutually respectful and that ensures the freedom and sanctity of each individual.

### **Audience Discussion**

The first respondent addressed the issue of discrimination against Muslims, asking if other communities have faced such discrimination. He said that Muslims throughout the world are questioning themselves as much as is necessary, and called for people to question themselves before questioning others. He also emphasized his view that Islam is a unified universal religion that cannot be considered in isolation, even in its national expressions.

Dr. Becahri responded saying that Muslims must always question themselves and ask for legal opinions. He said fatwas change over time and space. For example, after events of so-called ISIS, two conferences of over 500 religious leaders were held in Mecca, along with conferences in many other locations, in which Muslims discussed fundamentalism and questioned themselves.

As to the question of there being a French Islam or a European Islam, he said he cannot import the fatwas of other countries, and that one must think of a French Islam.

Another audience member mentioned that Muslims must be self-critical. She raised the issue of Islam and gender citing that she cannot enter through the same door of the mosque as the men do. She cited the connection between freedom of expression and freedom of religion, stating that if she wishes wear her hijab wherever she goes, then both her freedom of religion and expression should allow to do so. She also indicated that Muslims have grown weary of continuing to discuss issues of dress, and that wish to be heard on other issues as well.

Another participant asked about the relationship between Islam and the prohibition of pictures. She said that so called ISIS relies on this interpretation to justify the destruction of art and asked how this was dealt with in Islam?

Another respondent, a diplomat in attendance, expressed appreciation for KAICIID tackling such a complicated issue in a place like France, which adds a layer of complexity [because of recent events]. She greeted, welcomed and supported the initiative, and said it was part of a long-term strategy to make religious leadership and media more responsible. She asked whether a proper effort was made to understand what happened at the time of the Danish cartoon crisis [when cartoons satirizing terrorists' misinterpretation of Islam provoked angry demonstrations among Muslim

communities, and threats of violence against cartoonists]. She said that there should be more lessons drawn from that time, in order to be better prepared for the future.

Additionally she raised the need to include non-believers, who represent an important part of society in such discussions and highlighted the importance of including the voices of women and young people.

Another audience member rose to ask what the good experiences for France have been. The participant said that it is not enough to speak with journalists, there must also be religious education, even though France is a secular country. Teachers should be taught what it means to be Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish or Agnostic.

The discussion returned to the podium for responses. Metropolitan Emmanuel stated that youth are certainly being addressed through KAICIID's programmes [which include an entire Youth theme]. He said that the question of gender should not be forgotten, and indeed is key in dialogue. He also said that religious legislation must be respected. With respect to non-believers, he said that we must understand this to be within the framework of interreligious dialogue. He said KAICIID's messages are addressed to every person on earth who has good will and is willing to cooperate. "Dialogue does not mean a submission to others' principles, but rather an open forum where everybody has to express his views," he said. The Metropolitan said this forum was a good practice of dialogue with the media for religious people, and vice versa. Addressing the question about religious education, he said that all need to "go back to school" – learning about the other will allow us to tear down the walls between us.

Dr. Bechari responded to the question about pictures, saying that he could not answer theologically, but could say that Al-Qaida was fully condemned when they destroyed the Buddhist statues [in Afghanistan]. Muslims have condemned so called Isis and its destructive ways. He noted that in Islamic countries, ISIS is called Da'esh, while in other places they are referred to as the "Islamic State". He said they are not Muslims, but terrorists, and as such have killed thousands of Muslims too.

Prof. Abu-Nimer noted that Al-Azhar University in Egypt has issued a paper on sculptures and pictures.

KAICIID Board Member Dr. Sayyed Ataollah Mohajerani spoke next. Responding to the discussion on Islam and art, he said there is a hadith saying that God is the best painter. With regard to the cartoon controversy, Dr. Mohajerani said the problem is not with there being a picture, but with showing the Prophet Mohammed as a terrorist. He asked why people clapped for Salman Rushdie, or put him on a pedestal.

The final input from the audience came from Imam Mohammad Ismail, the Muslim Chaplain of Sheffield University in the United Kingdom. He said that when he initially joined the seminar, he was concerned about interacting with the media but now has made good contact with others. He thanked KAICIID for organizing the conference. Islam is no different from other faiths, he said. He called for a session to answer some of the questions about Islam from a theological standpoint.

## SECTION 5: FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

### General recommendations: Engage in Dialogue and Bridge Building

Generally, there was recognition that there needs to be increased dialogue specifically among and between religious leaders and media professionals and, at times, with the inclusion of policy makers and human rights actors.

Specific recommendations given are:

1. To engage in dialogue for mutual understanding to fill the various gaps in knowledge by:
  - a. Sharing information about each other's mandates, codes of conduct and ethics;
  - b. Learning about working procedures and structures;
  - c. Building respect;
  - d. Exchanging expertise and information on past and current developments of topical issues;
  - e. Building an alliance to defend freedom of expression and freedom of religion and belief, which are interdependent of one another;
2. To build a lasting and constructive cooperation and action among religious leaders and media professionals and beyond;
3. To engage EU, UNESCO and other regional international organizations in these dialogues;
4. To work towards ensuring that incitement laws are in line with international standards; and
5. To work towards rescinding blasphemy laws.

Important Issues:

- There is a need for religious terminology to be correctly used in the news media, with explanation if necessary. The use of appropriate language and terminology needs to be considered seriously.
- There is a need to distinguish between social problems within religious communities from religious identities and beliefs.

### Recommendations for the media professionals

Generally there were recommendations to make the coverage of religion in media more accurate and avoid bias and stereotypes.

Specific recommendations given are:

6. To strengthen religious literacy among journalists and media practitioners;
7. Media should seek to build their audience's religious literacy;

8. To train journalists and media practitioners in preventing hate speech/incitement etc. so that comments can be better moderated without being censored;
9. To be knowledgeable about using religious terminology.

### Recommendations for religious leaders

Religious communities need to take responsibility for engaging the media more effectively by:

10. Considering how European and national interreligious councils can be resources for media;
11. Strengthening media literacy;
12. Explaining and challenging the use of religious terminology by the media;
13. Considering how institutional hierarchies affect the ability of religious voices to communicate with the press. Improve communication within religious institutions and empower local-level voices;
14. Promoting solidarity between religious leaders;
15. Understanding that news media prefer sources (interviewees) who are:
  - i.) Competent
  - j.) Reliable
  - k.) Relevant
  - l.) Confident
  - m.) Available (on short notice)
  - n.) In regular contact with journalists (i.e. initial contacts before a crisis; avoid firefighting)
  - o.) Journalists need not just a talking head, but also someone who can speak with them in depth “on background” or “off-the-record”
  - p.) Clarity, humility, transparency best way to deal with sensitive questions;
16. Being proactive with various forms of media, as well as producing their own news, otherwise silence can be misunderstood because it often leads to negative assumptions or suspicions;
17. Understanding that religious leaders, also on a local level, are interesting voices because they are influential, have knowledge on both religious and social issues.
18. Understanding that news media must prevail in a highly competitive environment, so if religious leaders are approached by several media at once, they can be selective;
19. Considering creating a “code of conduct” or guidelines for religious voices speaking with media.

Religious communities need to improve their communications capacity by:

1. Improving the capacity of religious leaders to better understand how media works;
2. Developing web sites and tools that make their information more accessible;
3. Designating spokesperson;
4. Developing more effective messaging and story-telling;
5. Giving background briefings to journalists;
6. Developing relationships with journalist;;
7. Providing qualified lay-experts who will interest journalists (not just clerics);
8. Linking religious representatives to journalist associations;
9. Inviting regularly media professionals to events and celebrations;
10. Making more effective use of social media (bearing in mind both its risks and opportunities);
11. Increasing religious communities' private and public acknowledgements of accurate, positive or fair coverage to leadership of media outlets;
12. Organizing interreligious initiatives that demonstrate solidarity in real time response to crisis.

Religious communities need to take a proactive and innovative approach for generating events of public interest (i.e.: thinking outside of the box) by:

- Organizing events with bloggers and social media actors that cover religious and social matters;
- Engaging with popular culture, celebrities, comedians, actors, story-tellers, etc. (ex. Soap opera script writers).

### Recommendations for KAICIID

Specific recommendations for KAICIID were to:

13. Provide media literacy and communications training for religious leaders;
14. Provide religious literacy training for journalists;
15. Create dialogue between religious leaders and journalists;
16. Create rapid response mechanism for interreligious initiatives and media to collaborate at times of crisis in particular;
17. Bring faith-based news media and non-religious and mainstream news media closer together;
18. Convene an international meeting of bloggers and social media experts;
19. Convene an international meeting of religious broadcasters;
20. Become a facilitating entity in the Istanbul Process (ex: KAICIID needs to organize a media panel to Santiago, Chile, where the next Istanbul Process meeting is taking place);
21. Create a handbook for journalists about sensitive terminology in religious reporting, first highlighting existing resources to avoid duplication and then adding any missing dimensions;
22. Ensure that events include more women and youth, as well as take into account non-believer communities.



## ANNEX 1: FULL TEXT OF SELECT SPEECHES

### **H.E. Faisal bin Muaammar, Secretary-General, KAICIID:**

#### **Opening Address**

I am very pleased to be with you this morning for this important forum focusing how freedom of religion and freedom of expression coexist in Europe.

Let me begin by thanking you all for your presence here and your willingness to discuss these complex issues. Your contribution will help ensure that this forum can offer ideas that will enrich the broader European discussion.

Supporting effective dialogue was the reason why we at the International Dialogue Centre or KAICIID were determined to host this event.

We are acutely aware that freedom of expression and freedom of religion are subjects that, in recent times have sparked increasingly emotive and heated debates.

We at KAICIID are convinced that dialogue is the only true and effective mediator.

As a starting point, we believe that initiating dialogue between religious leaders and media professionals is crucial. And I am very pleased to be able to welcome you all, representing these important stakeholders in our society.

We at KAICIID take pride in our commitment to facilitating dialogue. We strive to provide a safe and non-judgmental forum for all parties to share and discuss their experiences and opinions. And most importantly, to listen.

We are committed to bringing together and connecting people of different religions and cultural backgrounds. Our goal is to promote equal, open and unbiased dialogue and I encourage your open and frank discussion.

Dialogue is encoded in KAICIID's DNA. Our organization is engaged in daily dialogue between politics and religion. Our two governing bodies are the multi-religious Board of Directors, and the governments of the Council of Parties.

The Board of Directors, which consists of nine eminent religious leaders, designs and supervises the Centre's programmes, ensuring our credibility across many religious communities. And that credibility is a guarantee for fair and respectful dialogue.

Our work requires a multilateral approach. Since our inception two years ago, we have partnered with UNESCO, ISESCO, the OIC, the UNDP, and the UN Office on Genocide Prevention. We also train UN staff and civil society partners such as Religions for Peace, the Scouts Movement, Search for Common Ground, and the United Religions Initiative in the use of interreligious dialogue.

One of our key focuses is peacebuilding where religious extremism has been used to justify violence and conflict. In the Central African Republic we have been involved in supporting a radio station that is helping to counter radicalization through Muslim/Christian dialogue.

In April, in Fez, Morocco, we worked with the UN Office for Genocide Prevention and religious leaders from several religions and religious minorities to initiate an action plan to counter incitement to violence and radicalization.

And this May, in Beirut, we held the first follow-up event to the groundbreaking conference we organized in Vienna last November, entitled 'United Against Violence in the Name of Religion'.

KAICIID trainers work with religious leaders and the media to reinforce the importance of press freedom. They support religious leaders who wish to use the media to promote the value of a diversity of opinions, cultures and beliefs.

Moderate religious leaders and peacebuilders tell us the media over-represent extremist viewpoints. The majority of the world's religious leaders are moderate and their views are shouted down. On the other hand, the media tell us it is difficult to identify the moderate majority's religious leaders under deadline pressure. Today, we hope to take a positive step towards bringing these sides closer together.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is now my pleasure to declare the 2015 European Media Forum open and I look forward to vibrant discussion in the upcoming sessions.

**Dr. Miriam Diez Bosch, Director, Blanquerna Observatory for Media, Religion and Culture**

**Remarks to Opening Panel, 15 June 2015**

Thank you. I am grateful for the opportunity to address this key issues with you, and I hope that the experience we have gained at our Blanquerna Observatory could be both useful and inspiring.

I am a journalist. I have studied both Journalism and Theology, and I have spent 22 years covering religion in the news. 10 years of my career as a Vaticanologist in Rome, and the other ones in Barcelona where I run the Blanquerna Observatory on Media, Religion and Culture for 4 years.

I have learnt a lot dealing with religion in the media sphere. I know how difficult it is for a journalist to get religion in the right way. I know how discouraging is for religions to deal with journalists that are always in a hurry and catch only folkloristic aspects of deep realities.

I like the catholic word pontifex, that is attributed to the Pope. Pontifex means constructor of bridges. And I think both religious leaders and journalists need to be pontifexs one way or another.

Religion is troubling and in Europe particularly it creates problems. We are gathered here and we do not see Religion in the light of conflict, but our neighbours do. We are concerned and want to build peace and dialogue. But our colleagues, even families, students, people around us see religion as a troubling aspect of society. And it is desirable to have still more forums like this one, but we have to be aware that out there, things are complicated.

I would like to explore briefly with you 3 aspects. First, How media, religion and society see religion and religious freedom and freedom of speech.

First I will highlight some difficulties coming from media, from religion and from society. Later, I will share 2 experiences from our Observatory.

The media have three perspectives on religion: A.) Religion is a problem; B.) Religion is news and not only bad news; and C.) Religion is not an issue.

Media owners have discovered that is good to have good coverage of religion if they want to avoid misunderstandings and protests coming from religious communities.

Religious communities have a number of views about society and the media: A.) Society does not accept us; B.) Society welcomes us C.) Media are biased; D.) Media have no knowledge about us; E.) Media are against us or F.) Media do not understand our beliefs and practices.

Society has four general views of religion:

- A. Radical vision: religions are not beneficial, are a threat, are place where extremism is hidden. Religions have to be out of the public sphere and relegate to a private realm, where no harm is done to society.
- B. Moderate vision: religions are part of society, have brought peace, rights, freedom, mercy, help to the most poor and people in need. Religion also fulfils a part of a human dimension. Religion is part of culture and identity
- C. Positive vision: religions are good, they have to be promoted, they help society to cover areas where other welfare societies do not arrive. Religions are needed.
- D. Indifferent vision: Religion is not an issue, it does not exist, is residual, only few people, not important

This is one of the Key issues in Freedom of Expression and the collision with freedom of religion.

Increasingly there are Islamophobic public discussions about Islam and Muslims as a threat to security, liberal democracy, gender equality, human rights etc. And this could be extended not only to Islam but to other religions as well.

Ignorance on religions are not part of ignorant groups in society. Also illustrated intellectuals, scholars and people coming from high cultural spheres are reluctant to religion.

It is not easy to separate atrocity from religion, even if for us it could be so clear. Terror uses religion as an excuse, and it has to be said until the end of time that this is not a religious problem.

But it is not enough. We have to admit that within religions public statements against violations of human rights have not always been clear, and I can speak for Catholicism, which I know well. It is not possible to call for peace when there is no internal harmony. It is not coherent to call for openness from secular media when religious leaders do not put efforts in promoting religious media and helping them granting interviews or facilitating material.

Part of the problem is inside the house. We are, as journalists, as faithful, as society, as religious leaders... part of the problem.

This is the landscape. What we do in our Observatory facing this reality. Ours is an interdisciplinary center focused on research and dissemination of information about activities and reports in the field of media and religion.

The Observatory follows trends in religious information, the presence of religion in the media and specially in new technologies. We explore the links between popular culture and the spiritual aspects of society. We organize and participate in activities linking religion to social cohesion. We run projects on religion and identity, gender and new technologies, missionary work and social contribution of religion to society, virtual reality on online religion etc

We are interested in naturalizing religion in increasingly complex societies.

Our priorities are the dissemination of information, internationalization and research.

We are interested in projects that improve society through the inclusion of religious dynamics in the debate. The center is at the University and we have a pool of scholars coming from Media, Journalism, Sociology, Theology, History, Art etc.

The center is in the heart of Barcelona, in a very central and stimulating intercultural and interurban space.

Two recent activities could bring light to our current discussion: One is the workshop and book on Blasphemy. The second one is the Techno-religious lab uniting religious leaders with journalists around digital sources of information.

With regard to blasphemy, we organized a workshop one year before the dramatic events here in Paris of Charlie Hebdo. We invited experts in Law, in Media, in Vignettes and we discussed the Muhammad Cartoons, the Global Map of Blasphemy or Religious Advertsing.

We conclude that self-regulation is the best solution and not more laws in Blasphemy. We concluded also that identity, cultural battles have to include believers and not believers, and that the criteria to limit the freedom of expression has to be very precise. The limit is not the offense, but the incitation for hate or discrimination.

We centered part of our discussions in discussion about the thin skin of religions when it comes to accepting criticism, and we observed how certain religions such as Judaism have certainly a lot to teach to other religions in terms of sense of humor.

A second example of an activity that aims to overcome prejudices is the Techno-Religious Lab

The Techno-Religious Lab is a new form of engaging Journalists with Religious Leaders. It aims to be a dialogue forum –close to the public- where different points of view could be shared. The topics to be shared are mainly sources of information and how news are produced.

Our hypothesis is that very often religions are not happy because they feel unrepresented and part of this problem is that Journalists do not know exactly the proper sources of information they would need to elaborate a good religious piece.

And also viceversa: Journalists are not satisfied when they have to cover a religious event because they do not have the proper sources and have no access to religious leaders.

The result is a poor religious information and a lack of trust from both collectives involved.

We have created the 1<sup>st</sup> Techno-Religious Lab with these objectives:

- Explain to the Religious Leaders the importance of knowing their own religious sources of information, and the need to share this with specialized Journalists
- Analyse what Big Data and the Internet of Things is and communicate it to a broader public (Religious Leaders and Journalists that cover Religion)

- Explore if religious messages have place in a digital world, and which are the right times, formats and supports for them
- Place religious leaders and Journalists in a jointed session where sources of information will be displayed in a screen in order to understand:
  - a) the sources used by the religious institutions
  - b) the tasks performed by PR from religious organizations
  - c) the tools that religious leaders use in order to inform themselves
- Shares sources and see best practices and anomalies. For instances: if someone informs himself about Catholicism but does not consult the official Vatican Website, here we can have a misunderstanding and a lack of proper coverage.

## **Ambassador Ufuk Gokcen, Permanent Observer of the OIC to the UN in New York**

### **Open Panel Discussion, 16 June 2015**

Your Excellency Dr. Faisal bin Muaammar,  
 Distinguished board members of KAICIID,  
 Distinguished participants,

I wish to express my gratitude to KAICIID for the kind invitation and allowing me to share my perspectives on a very important subject matter with you. I highly respect the increasing role of KAICIID at the global level in confronting extremism in the name of religion and in promotion of faith based peace efforts. I am particularly impressed with the research capacity being developed by KAICIID.

What I am going to talk about is not only related to institutional efforts of the OIC but it is also quite personal. It is also about a personal journey of reflection, and learning.

I will try to highlight importance and merit of intellectual - pragmatic approach against focused activist approach which may tend to see the cup half empty instead of half full.

Grey areas and limits between where one's freedom starts and where another's ends, as well as technicalities and academic studies all aside, I believe that the borderline between freedom of speech and hate speech should be what your heart, conscious, wisdom and commonsense tell you.

After years of involvement in the debate around freedom of expression, freedom of religion and incitement to hatred, I have come to the conclusion that we need a

mobilization of global level awareness raising, even efforts of mediation or reconciliation at the global scale to foster a common understanding to deal with the challenge. In this regard, this gathering organized by KAICIID is of extreme value as we have been suffering from disconnect among political-diplomatic course, civil society, religious leaders, media and academicians.

As a result of my personal journey I have also come to a point of conscious whereby I can easily and proudly say, I am a Turk and I am a Sunni, but I am also anything and everything else. This is a journey from assuming having one identity to developing a realization of ownership of multiple identities including the identity of being a responsible member of the global society. As a result of such a self-reflection, I assume one comes to conclude that there is an overwhelming necessity to uphold fundamental human rights and treat every human being with respect and acceptance.

I believe not only individuals but societies and nations are all on similar journeys but maybe with differing paces.

As for individuals inciting hatred, I would not call for their criminalization unless their acts and statements amount to incitement to imminent violence. I believe the benchmark for criminalization should be very high and narrowly defined.

For me the panacea of hate speech is positive speech, like the Flower Speech/ Panzagar campaign in Myanmar or No Hate Speech campaign of the Council of Europe. From my own personal perspective, US. Muslim community's reaction to the misguided pastor in Florida and to the controversial video "innocence of Muslims" that was released on YouTube could be considered a source of inspiration. Cooperation and solidarity among faith based communities and other segments of the societies and constructive and peaceful joint action are among the best ways of dealing with acts of incitement and demonization targeting followers of a religion or a community.

Indeed blasphemy laws and criminalization are not the solution. Fostering culture of peaceful and harmonious coexistence requires encouragement of more speech, more dialogue, more intercommunal and across the fault-lines interaction.

Promotion of inter-communal trust, empathy and a sense of togetherness among followers of different sects, different religions and between believers and non-believers is crucial. When it comes to establishing the existence of an act of incitement to imminent violence, the judiciary should have the last say based on the laws upholding universal values.

However there is a need that encouragement and guidance should come from the political leaders. Civil society, including the interfaith and faith based communities could be better mobilized if the political leaders exhibit constructive and moral leadership. Highlighting best practices from around the world and training government officials are also important. Media should be a part of the dialogue.

These are exactly what the UN Human Rights Council resolution 16/18 and the Istanbul Process are all about.

What is unique and important about HRC resolution 16/18 of March 2011 is that it put an end to the international confrontation at the UN fora over the concept of defamation of religions.

Resolutions on Combating Defamation of religions were presented and adopted at the UN level since 1999, as a response to rising trend of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiments. In 1999 and 2000 the resolution was adopted by the UN Human Rights Commission without a vote. From 2001 to 2010 it was adopted by vote. It was introduced and adopted first time at the UN General Assembly in December 2005, at a time when the Danish cartoon crisis had started to simmer or boil. Actually, it is the reason why this resolution attracted comparatively more political and media attention than others.

After years of bickering on various aspects of this complicated theme, a ground breaking development became possible in March 2011, when the Human Rights Council adopted its Resolution 16/18 on the subject, by consensus. This important resolution deals with the subject purely from the prism of international human rights law and outlines a comprehensive Action Plan, which needs to be implemented by governments to effectively combat the menace of incitement and advocacy to religious hatred that leads to violence and discrimination. It has shifted the focus to the protection of the rights of individuals. The resolution was accordingly been dubbed as a textbook example of successful multilateral diplomacy.

In July 2011, following the adoption of this milestone resolution, representatives of the OIC, United States and EU got together in Istanbul under the leadership of then the OIC Secretary General Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu and then the US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton to initiate a sturdy process to raise awareness about and expedite full and effective implementation of this important resolution. This process has come to be known as the Istanbul Process. So far five meetings of this process has taken place where different stakeholders discussed various aspects of the Action Plan contained in this resolution.

The last one was held at the OIC Headquarters in Jeddah and KAICIID was among the participating institutions. Some points that were highlighted in the last meeting of the Istanbul Process meeting could be summarized as follows:

While provocations and exploitation of religious sentiments could exacerbate and complicate conflicts, there are many examples that religious leaders, faith based organizations and local interfaith initiatives could play a constructive role in mitigation of conflict, in peacebuilding and promotion of religious tolerance and respect. OIC's support to the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers as well as OIC's briefing to the Religions for Peace global interfaith network on the merits and nature of resolution 16/18 were mentioned.



Participants welcomed the inclusion of civil society in the Jeddah meeting and underlined the crucial importance of further involvement of the civil society in the Istanbul Process meetings and in initiatives aiming at raising awareness about and implementing HRC resolution 16/18.

While each state should focus on the effective implementation and reporting in its own country, nature and implications of acts of religious intolerance and incitement to violence necessitate international cooperation.

The political commitment at the highest level of political institution is essential for the full and effective implementation of HRC resolution 16/18. Political leadership has to play an important role in setting the tone and tenor of the discourse. The politicians have to show the way, define the issues and eschew the opportunistic tendencies to use religious and cultural differences to make political gains.

Double standards in the implementation should be avoided and implementation should be objective and impartial. This would help preserve the international consensus and encourage effective implementation at all levels.

It is crucial that freedom of religion is promoted while out-rightly combating intolerance and hatred based on religion, which are mutually interdependent.

Ensuring freedom of opinion and expression is a key to exercising the right to freedom of religion. Proscription of speech should be exceptional and must conform to the three tier criterion given in article 19 or article 20 of ICCPR.

It was noted that Government and religious leader/civil society responses to acts of intolerance/hate have become far quicker and more sophisticated and many examples were cited.

Unified community response is a powerful approach in deterring against any potential to instigate hate to the detriment of one of the communities. Examples were given of commendable unified community initiatives

There is a need to endeavour to establish complementary linkage between HRC resolution 16/18 and the Rabat Plan of Action and to raise awareness not only on Istanbul Process but also on Rabat Plan of Action.

Further study and consideration of informal institutionalization of the Istanbul Process would be helpful to coordinate a 'roadmap' of future meetings.

It should be ensured that Istanbul Process meetings are source of sharing experience and good practices among various stakeholders.

Chile's offer to host the next meeting of the Istanbul process was welcomed. It is important to further widen participation in the Process and consider organizing meetings in Asia, Africa and other parts.

Collaborative networks should be reinforced not only within the government but also between the government and civil society and among civil society too.

Regular contacts should be established between state institutions and community to establish trust and also to get feedback from the community to relay information to incorporate in policy.

Communities should be engaged with at an early phase and at normal times to reinforce mutual trust which would be helpful at times of crisis, as communities are known to be reluctant to initiatives launched after an incident has occurred.

It was necessary that government officials should be educated and trained about religious and cultural sensitivity.

Importance of progress in Implementation to be monitored by HRC reporting systems such as through High Commissioner reports.

Consider making HRC reporting on implementation of different parts of the 16/18 action plan, based on state responses to tailored questionnaires to be sent by the OHCHR

Importance of human rights education. It was highlighted that human rights education is among the main four areas of priority for OIC IPHRC.

Importance of assessing both negative and positive roles of media,

Among exemplary Positive speech campaigns, Panzagar/Flower Speech Campaign from Myanmar and Council of Europe's No Hate Speech Movement Campaign were cited as best examples.

I would also like to clarify some points to counter criticism addressed by some quarters to the Istanbul Process meeting held at the OIC headquarters in Jeddah.

The host and organizer of the meeting was the OIC General Secretariat. Human Rights organizations and experts were invited and able to take the floor on equal footing with member states. They were able to raise their views, concerns and criticisms.

At the same time, the very fact that many international human rights organizations were able to attend and make remarks at an international meeting in Jeddah should be seen as a remarkable development.

As was agreed by the U.S. Administration, the EU and many human rights organizations, the UN HRC resolution 16/18 is a rare achievement of multilateralism as it represents international consensus and common understanding on a very sensitive issue. Istanbul Process provides a unique space to discuss implementation in an open and informal environment, by citing best practices but also the laws and regulations which are not compatible with 16/18. One of the uniqueness of the 16/18

is that the threshold that it set for criminalization is compatible with the first amendment of the US Constitution, which is incitement to imminent violence.

## **H.E. Faisal bin Muaammar, Secretary General, KAICIID Introduction to Closing Session**

Ladies and Gentlemen, as we reach the end of our two-day seminar, it is my great pleasure to be addressing you once again.

I thank the religious leaders, journalists and media professionals who have generously devoted their time to discuss this very complex topic.

I also give my sincere thanks and appreciation to the KAICIID Board of Directors for their contribution and invaluable support.

And I am especially grateful to Metropolitan Emmanuel who has co-hosted this event. His leadership in France and his commitment to intercultural and interreligious dialogue, makes his support here particularly valuable.

I would also like to extend a special welcome to the representatives of the Council of Parties,

Her Excellency the Ambassador of Austria to Spain, Madame Ursula Plasnik,

His Excellency Ambassador Ziad Aldrees of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to UNESCO.

His Excellency the Representative of the Holy See to UNESCO, Monsignor Francesco Follo.

Her Excellency the Ambassador of Greece to UNESCO, Madame Katherina Daskalaki.

And also I warmly welcome all members of the diplomatic corps today.

As KAICIID Secretary General of KAICIID, it is my role to promote and organize dialogue, but not to influence this discussion in any way. As we have reached the conclusion of this seminar, I would like to share with you my personal thoughts about the issues of freedom of expression and freedom of religion.

European civilization and society has advanced by securing fundamental human rights. However as Europe advances, we also see tension arise. These tensions arise from differing understandings of freedom of expression and freedom of religion.

When these tensions occur here in Europe, they have led to violence. Globally, the consequences of a lack of understanding can have potentially even more serious consequences.

What can we do? Do we simply make statements and resolutions? Or, do we proactively seek to find real and lasting solutions that are fair to all?

When we talk about separation of state and religion we must recognize and appreciate that there are many success stories. However we have to also accept and respect the fact that in many countries religion is the foundation upon which the nation is founded. There is not one formula that fits all. Acknowledging the significance of religion and religious belief is needed when we enter into dialogue about these two fundamental freedoms.

For KAICIID, I see our role as enhancing opportunities for dialogue, building bridges and building trust between religious leaders and the media through workshops and training.

Before I conclude, I cannot stress enough the role of ethics. In this past two days, I think it is fair to say, that we all have recognized that these rights should be carefully exercised to ensure civility.

It has been great source of pride and honour for us at KAICIID to organize this forum. It is part of our ongoing commitment to serving humanity through dialogue. We have already achieved so much but there is still much more that remains for us to do. You can gain a closer insight into our work by visiting our website or visiting us if you have the opportunity to be in Vienna.

Once again I sincerely thank you for your support.

**Le Métropolitain Emmanuel, de France : « « Comment liberté d'expression et liberté de religion ou de croyance coexistent-elles en Europe ? » »**

**Remarks on Closing Panel Discussion, 16 June**

Monsieur le secrétaire général du KAICIID, Monsieur Faisal bin Muaammar,

Eminences,  
Excellences,  
Mesdames et Messieurs,  
Chers amis,

Le sujet que nous abordons aujourd'hui est d'une importance cruciale, non seulement parce qu'il intervient après les événements tragiques qui ont touché Paris en janvier 2015, mais aussi parce qu'il semble qu'aujourd'hui religion et liberté d'expression s'opposent inéluctablement. Je tiens à remercier très chaleureusement le Centre de dialogue KAICIID et notamment son secrétaire général d'avoir accepté d'organiser une telle réflexion dans un contexte de grande attente.

En préparant cette communication, je me suis demandé dans quelle mesure nous pourrions tirer les leçons des profondes évolutions qui transforment le monde et qui semblent avoir tracé un mur de séparation infranchissable entre la liberté de croire et celle de s'exprimer. La question du « blasphème » ou de « l'atteinte au sentiment religieux » cristallise, bien qu'artificiellement, l'opposition entre ces deux acceptions de la liberté. Mon propos consistera à proposer quelques pistes de réflexion, quelques clés de lecture nous permettant, je le crois et je l'espère de renouer avec indispensable dialectique. Aussi, je vous propose un cheminement en trois temps qui décrira trois limites : a. le fondamentalisme comme liberté à la liberté de religion ; b. les limites éventuelles de la liberté d'expression ; et c. des limites qui permettent le dialogue. Ce troisième point me servira de conclusion.

## 1. Le fondamentalisme et l'impossible liberté de religion

Le fondamentalisme est un phénomène global qui touche aussi bien le christianisme que d'autres religions et qui sert trop souvent à qualifier, non seulement le retour du religieux en politique, mais aussi le conservatisme inhérent à ce retour.

Ce phénomène est donc symptomatique d'une dynamique transreligieuse qui constitue une réaction aux principes de la modernité et à son corollaire, la sécularisation. Aussi, le fondamentalisme se caractérise aujourd'hui non seulement par un attachement aux fondements du religieux, mais aussi à un puritanisme moral, devant s'appliquer dans le cadre sociétal et politique, ainsi qu'à un prosélytisme décomplexé. Le fondamentalisme est vécu comme la détention d'une vérité absolue, cloisonnant l'espace théologique et social à partir d'un religieux anhistorique. Olivier Roy parle même de religion « hors sol », coupée de ses racines culturelles.

Ultime mouvement de sécularisation, en ce sens qu'il sépare le religieux de lui-même par la négation de toute possibilité de dialoguer, le fondamentalisme s'oppose aussi bien à la liberté de religion et de croyance qu'à la liberté d'expression. D'ailleurs, médias et minorités, l'un et l'autre garantissant l'existence du pluralisme, sont directement attaqués.

## 2. Quelles limites pour la liberté d'expression

À l'article 19 de la Déclaration universelle des Droits de l'Homme, de 1948, nous pouvons lire : « Tout individu a droit à la liberté d'opinion et d'expression, ce qui implique le droit de ne pas être inquiété pour ses opinions et celui de chercher, de

recevoir et de répandre, sans considérations de frontières, les informations et les idées par quelque moyen d'expression que ce soit. »

La lettre du droit est extrêmement ouverte. Cependant, il existe trois attitudes concernant la liberté d'expression : l'une libertaire qui n'entend pas poser de limites à la liberté d'expression. C'est souvent sous cet angle qu'est lu le premier amendement à la Constitution des Etats-Unis d'Amérique. La deuxième attitude est celle d'une régulation de la liberté d'expression par prise en considération de la personne. Le droit permet de se protéger contre la calomnie publique, etc. Enfin, l'état de droit condamne les discours de haine qui appellent au meurtre, à la violence et au trouble à l'ordre public. La liberté d'expression ne s'applique pas dès lors que l'intention est de nuire à l'intégrité d'une personne ou d'un groupe de personnes.

Si nous sommes d'accord que la liberté d'expression n'en revient pas à dire tout ce que l'on veut, il est facilement compréhensible que son horizon d'application soit le respect de l'intégrité et de la dignité de la personne. En parlant ici de dignité, nous approchons de nouveau la difficile question de la caricature et blasphème. Il s'agit alors ici d'une tension extrêmement complexe entre un libéralisme culturel détaché non seulement du religieux, mais aussi de tout rapport au sacré, et d'autre part d'une réaction inversement proportionnelle à la première plaçant le sacré dans le champ de limitation de la liberté d'expression.

### 3. Liberté d'expression, dialogue de conversion et vivre ensemble

Mesdames et Messieurs,

J'en arrive à mon troisième point.

La liberté de religion et la liberté d'expression coexistent à travers les points de contact de leurs limites respectives. Car l'aporie de la liberté semble créer les conditions nécessaires d'un dialogue de conversion et de vivre ensemble.

Tout dialogue tire son origine, en théologie orthodoxe, de Dieu lui-même, qui se donne à connaître par le Logos. Pour Saint Jean Chrysostome, cette caractéristique du dialogue divin doit avant tout être reçue tel un don qui nous est accordé par Dieu lui-même. Car Dieu se donne par la parole : à travers les prophètes, les apôtres, les saints, la prière et la nature. Dieu parle et convertit les cœurs. La conversion est alors assimilée au repentir comme la seule voie pouvant faire accéder à la promesse, non seulement d'une levée de la malédiction divine, mais de l'entrée dans une période de joie et de richesse. La conversion est réconciliation, un retournement aussi appelé *métanoïa*. Ce retournement de la logique permet d'appréhender la nécessaire liberté d'expression par le silence, et l'indispensable liberté de croyance pour le dialogue.

Considérant que le trésor unique de chaque personne se trouve dans l'empreinte de Dieu laissée en nous, tout acte raciste constitue une négation de la dignité humaine et un crime contre l'Esprit-Saint. Devant la recrudescence de tels actes,

l'exclusion sociale des minorités nationales d'Europe s'est accentuée et leur besoin de protection se fait des plus accrus. Aussi, dialogue, nous réconcilier, vivre ensemble, en reviennent à reconnaître la dignité et la liberté de notre prochain. Pour moi, l'engagement du religieux et des religieux consiste à faire de l'autre indéterminé un être proche de nous, à faire de lui notre prochain dans le respect de ses spécificités personnelles, de faire de notre liberté l'horizon de notre relation à l'autre.

Par conséquent, si la liberté d'expression et la liberté de religion sont bien l'espace de notre liberté, traitons-la comme un don précieux au service de la relation que nous tentons de nourrir avec Dieu et avec notre prochain. Ce n'est qu'à cette seule condition que nous serons capables de respecter l'autre par une liberté aimante.

**Dr. Mohammed Bechari, Secretary General of the European Islamic Conference, President of the National Federation of Muslims in France: "Comment liberté d'expression et liberté de conviction se conjuguent au quotidien en Europe ?"**

### **Closing Panel Discussion, 16 June 2015**

La liberté de conscience et la liberté d'expression ont toutes deux été érigées en tant que libertés fondamentales. Elles sont d'ailleurs intrinsèquement liées : sans liberté de conscience, on ne pourrait être libre de s'exprimer. Inversement, une liberté d'expression bafouée amène à restreindre la liberté d'exprimer sa religion ou ses convictions. La Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen, la Convention Européenne de Sauvegarde des Droits de l'Homme et la Déclaration Universelle des Droits de l'Homme les érigent en principes inaliénables, et les articles concernant ces deux libertés se suivent dans les trois déclarations, preuve encore de leur forte interdépendance.

Ainsi, la liberté de religion et de conscience implique la liberté totale de croyance : elle permet à tout un chacun de croire librement et de « manifester sa religion ou sa conviction individuellement ou collectivement, en public ou en privé, par le culte, l'enseignement, les pratiques, et l'accomplissement des rites ».

De la même façon, la liberté d'expression implique que nul ne doit être inquiété pour ses opinions et pour la manifestation et la diffusion de ses dites opinions. Cela implique ainsi la non-ingérence des autorités publiques dans la diffusion des informations et des idées.

Néanmoins, nous nous retrouvons, depuis quelques années maintenant, à voir s'élever des débats et des polémiques concernant la visibilité de la pratique religieuse -en particulier celle de l'Islam, ne nous le cachons pas- et de sa compatibilité avec une société dite « laïque », où l'on remet en cause la manifestation publique de sa conviction religieuse. Parallèlement, l'on assiste à un acharnement médiatique sur la

religion sous couvert de la liberté d'expression. L'exemple le plus symbolique reste la publication des caricatures du prophète Mohammed, lesquelles ont donné lieu à un débat sur les limites de la liberté d'expression. Car en effet, Il convient de préciser que nous sommes totalement d'accord sur le principe de la primauté de la liberté d'expression. Mais une liberté ne permet pas tout.

Ainsi, l'article 9 de la Convention Européenne des Droits de l'Homme précise que la manifestation de la liberté de religion et de conviction est garantie tant qu'elle ne trouble pas la « société démocratique, la sécurité publique, la protection de l'ordre, de la santé ou de la morale publiques, ou à la protection des droits et des libertés d'autrui ».

De la même façon, il serait malhonnête de nier que la liberté d'expression a des limites et se doit d'avoir des limites. En effet, dans l'esprit même des rédacteurs de la Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen, l'exercice d'une liberté ne pouvait se concevoir sans que des limites soient posées. Cette conception des libertés, est également consacrée dans les articles 22 à 27 de la Déclaration Universelle des Droits de l'Homme, laquelle prévoit que des limites doivent être posées à l'exercice des droits et ce en vue d'assurer notamment « la reconnaissance et le respect des droits et libertés d'autrui ». Il existe donc bien des limites à l'exercice de la liberté d'expression, et celles-ci sont inhérentes à son existence.

La conciliation entre les droits humains, la liberté d'opinion et d'expression, et en particulier la liberté religieuse est une mission ardue, et ne peut aboutir que par l'élaboration d'une loi qui protège et garantit leur cohésion. En l'absence de réglementation, la liberté religieuse et les droits humains seront enfreints d'une façon inconséquente/irréfléchie par le pouvoir de la liberté d'opinion et d'expression ainsi que la prépondérance des médias.

Le Conseil des droits de l'Homme a assisté à un vif débat entre ses membres sur la notion d'abus de la religion et de sa relation à la liberté d'expression dans l'année 2008, en particulier après la publication des caricatures dégradantes du Prophète Muhammad paix soit sur lui dans certains journaux danois et français. Ainsi lors de l'examen du rapport sur la question au conseil de le Rapporteur Spécial des Nations Unies sur les aspects de la discrimination raciale, il a proposé de remplacer le concept de « diffamation des religions » par la notion d' « incitation à la haine » et a obtenu une scission entre le centre des membres du Conseil qui voit la nécessité d'une loi pour protéger les religions, et rejette la justification que cela peut conduire à une réduction de la liberté d'expression.

Le débat sur ce sujet n'est pas encore mature, car il est également à ses débuts au sein de l'Organisation des Nations Unies, sur le phénomène croissant de l'exagération de certaines religions, notamment l'Islam. Cependant, il est nécessaire, à l'échelle européenne, de procéder de la même façon et d'impulser une réflexion sur le sujet.

D'un regard commun, les deux directions sont d'accord sur la nécessité de lutter contre l'incitation à la haine. D'un côté, l'un insiste sur la revendication de protéger les religions, même si cela conduit à la réduction de la liberté d'opinion et d'expression,



tandis que le second s'attache à défendre cette liberté d'expression même si elle ouvre la voie à la critique et de l'abus des religions. La discussion a été reflétée chez les deux groupes dans la résolution adoptée par l'Assemblée générale en 2011 sur la lutte contre la critique des religions.

L'Assemblée Générale des Nations Unies a ratifié le 11 Avril 2011 en vertu de cette décision sous le n ° 65/224. La décision a évoqué divers efforts reproduits à cet égard depuis l'émergence de l'Organisation des Nations Unies jusqu'au moment de son émission à l'examen des différentes conventions internationales, et les déclarations et les décisions liées aux thèmes de la non-discrimination sous toutes ses formes, en particulier la discrimination religieuse et la haine contre l'islam et les musulmans en premier lieu, puis le judaïsme et le christianisme. La décision du paragraphe 9 a confirmé que l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies déplore l'utilisation de la presse écrite, audio-visuelle et électronique d'inciter à des actes de violence, à la xénophobie, et l'intolérance. Elle déplore aussi la discrimination contre toute religion, le ciblage des livres sacrés, lieux de culte, les tous symboles religieux et la violation des sanctuaires. Par conséquent, cette décision réaffirme la recommandation générale n°15 du Comité sur la cessation de la discrimination raciale, qui prévoit l'interdiction de la diffusion de toutes les idées fondées sur la supériorité ou la haine raciale en ligne avec la liberté d'opinion et d'expression, sans tomber dans l'exhortation à la haine religieuse. L'Assemblée Générale des Nations Unies invite tous les pays sur la base du texte de cette résolution, à l'obligation d'appliquer les dispositions de cette déclaration sur l'abolition de toutes les formes d'intolérance et de discrimination fondées sur la religion ou la conviction. Elle sollicite instamment la même chose de ses États Membres à œuvrer dans les systèmes juridiques et constitutionnels pour fournir une protection adéquate contre tous actes de haine, de discrimination, d'intimidation et de coercition résultant de discréditer les religions et leurs statuts.

Le débat sur la frontière entre liberté d'expression et incitation à la haine est donc un débat de fond dont l'Union européenne doit se saisir, au lendemain d'attentats qui ont secoué l'un de ses membres et ont remis sur le tapis la question d'imposer ou non des limites à la liberté d'expression.

Loin de moi l'idée de penser qu'il faudrait céder à de quelconques pressions de la part de fanatiques qui souhaiteraient imposer leur conception de la liberté d'expression et d'opinion. Seulement, un tel événement doit être pour nous l'occasion de prendre du recul et de se poser la question sur l'impact que peut avoir une liberté d'expression sans limites sur une frange de la population qui se sent constamment insultée et dénigrée.

Nous avons, au sein de l'institut Avicenne et en partenariat avec l'ISESCO et d'autres organisations, longuement discuté cette problématique, en particulier le traitement médiatique de l'Islam et des musulmans. A travers des modules de formation, nous avons proposé aux journalistes d'aborder la question des images stéréotypées de l'Islam et des musulmans au sein des médias, et de leur permettre de disposer de moyens efficaces et de connaissances solides afin d'éviter ces dits stéréotypes et de traiter l'actualité quant à l'Islam de manière plus mature et plus professionnelle.

Car en effet, il convient de se poser la question de la finalité d'un tel traitement médiatique sur l'Islam, et sur les religions de façon plus générale. Relève-t-il désormais de la liberté d'expression ou répond-il à des objectifs mercantiles ? Toute la question autour de la rentabilité de la presse sur les questions de religion -et en particulier de l'Islam, soyons honnêtes- est à se poser. Un rédacteur en chef a même avoué que son magazine publiait des images choc de l'Islam car les recettes étaient conséquentes. De quoi soulever des interrogations déontologiques sur la liberté d'expression et d'opinion, garant d'une presse libre et indépendante.

Enfin, au-delà de l'approche juridique et de ses finalités, qui pourrait permettre la mise en place d'un cadre spécifique régissant la liberté d'expression, comme ce fut le cas pour la liberté de conscience à travers le principe de neutralité religieuse des instances gouvernementales, nous nous devons à tout prix de renforcer le dialogue des religions et des cultures, et ce afin d'enrayer le repli communautaire et de mettre fin aux attitudes xénophobes et populistes. L'Union Européenne n'échappe pas à la mondialisation et à l'explosion des flux matériels et humains. Ainsi, dans un espace où se rencontrent désormais toutes les cultures et toutes les religions, il est essentiel de participer à la rencontre des uns et des autres, dans une démarche à la fois sociale et politique, avec pour finalité le respect mutuel, garantissant de facto la liberté et le caractère sacré de la vie de chaque individu.

A ce titre, l'institut Avicenne des Sciences Humaines de Lille réunit, les 25 et 26 juillet 2015, des constitutionnalistes et des juristes sur la question de les libertés d'expression et de religion et aborderont notamment les thèmes suivants :

- La liberté d'opinion et d'expression entre le droit des médias et les principes des droits humains
- Les stéréotypes et la haine mutuelle et de l'intolérance : les risques et les méthodes de traitement
- Comment concilier la liberté d'expression et le respect des droits de l'homme dans la couverture médiatique de l'islam et des musulmans et des symboles religieux.

Ce rendez-vous permettra ainsi de faire toute la lumière sur le sujet aussi bien en termes juridiques que dans son approche pratique, et il donnera des pistes de réflexion et des orientations, que nous souhaitons par la suite aborder lors d'une rencontre au Parlement Européen en présence des responsables et leaders des trois grandes religions ainsi que des responsables politiques.

## ANNEX 2: CONFERENCE DOCUMENTS



### Programme

**United Against Violence in the Name of Religion:  
 How do Freedom of Religion and Freedom of Expression Coexist in  
 Europe?  
 Hotel Intercontinental, Le Grand  
 Paris, 15 -16 June 2015**

#### Day 1: 15 June 2015

<b>9:00 – 11:00</b>	<p><b>Opening Plenary (<i>Chopin Meeting Room</i>)</b>          -MC: Fahad Abualnasr, KAICIID</p> <p><b>-Welcome Remarks:</b> KAICIID Secretary General Faisal bin Muaammar</p> <p><b>-Experts panel: How do we understand the relationship between freedom of religion and freedom of expression?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rabbi Moche Lewin, Executive Director, Conference of European Rabbis</li> <li>• Dr. Ahmad Al-Dubayan, Islamic Cultural Centre (UK)</li> <li>• Dr. Miriam Diez Bosch, Blanquerna Observatory on Media, Religion and Culture</li> <li>• Brian Pellot, Religion Newswriters Foundation</li> <li>• Moderator: Peter Kaiser, KAICIID</li> </ul> <p><b>-Introduction to the seminar topics and methodology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prof. Patrice Brodeur, KAICIID Director of Research</li> </ul>
<b>11:00 – 11:30</b>	<b>COFFEE BREAK</b>
<b>11:30 – 13:00</b>	<p><b>Breakout Sessions Part 1</b>(media experts/religious leaders)  <i>Chopin (Group A)/ Gounod (Group B)</i></p>

Exploring recent events relating to FoE and FoRB –  
 Responses from religious communities and news media  
 coverage.

*- Participants will be provided with case studies ahead of  
 time, but are encouraged to bring their own material and  
 examples to share\*\**

**13:00 – 14:30 NETWORKING LUNCH**

**14:30 – 15:30 Breakout Sessions Part 2**(media experts/religious  
 leaders):

*Chopin (Group A)/ Gounod (Group B)*

Strengthening roles and identifying gaps

**15:30 – 16:00 COFFEE BREAK**

**16:00 – 18:00 End-of-day Plenary:**

*Chopin Meeting Room*

Reporting back and discussion: Answering questions and  
 finding common ground promote a constructive discourse on  
 FoE and FoRB

*- Rapporteurs elected from the working groups will report  
 back to the entire group*

**FREE EVENING**

**Day 2: 16 June 2015**

**9:00 – 10:00 Morning Plenary -- *Perspectives on Human Rights  
 Council Resolution 16/18: Potential and Role in  
 European Society***

*Chopin Meeting Room*

- H.E. Ambassador Ufuk Gokcen, Organization of  
 Islamic Cooperation Permanent Observer to the  
 United Nations
- David Diaz-Jogeix, Director of Programmes, Article  
 19

**10:00 – 11:30 Mixed Working Groups (Part 1)**

*Chopin (Group 1)/ Gounod (Group 2)*

Agreeing on best practices of news media and religious  
 leaders for understanding each other and exercising FoE  
 and FoRB

**11:30 – 11:45 COFFEE BREAK**

**11:45 – 13:00 Mixed Working Groups (Part 2)**

*Chopin (Group 1)/ Gounod (Group 2)*

Collaboration and recommendations for addressing challenges and opportunities, and implementing best practices

**13:00 – 14:00 NETWORKING LUNCH**

**14:00 – 15:30 Final Plenary: A way forward – proposals and recommendations**

*Chopin Meeting Room*

- Panel comprised of 2 volunteers each from the working groups

**15:30 – 16:30 COFFEE BREAK**

**16:30 – 18:00 PANEL DISCUSSION**

*Ravel Meeting Room*

***How do freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief coexist in Europe?***

- Seminar participants present their outcomes to a small invited audience of diplomatic representatives, media and experts

- **H.E. Faisal bin Muaammar**, KAICIID Secretary General
- M.C.: **Fahad Abualnasr**, KAICIID Chief of Staff
- Panelists: **Metropolitan Emmanuel**; **Dr. Mohamed Bechari** (European Islamic Conference); **Radka Betcheva** (European Broadcasting Union) Moderator: **Prof. Mohammed Abu-Nimer**, KAICIID

**18:00 – 19:30 RECEPTION (*Veriere – Ground Floor*)**

## List of Participants

***UNITED AGAINST VIOLENCE IN THE NAME OF RELIGION:  
 How do freedom of religion and freedom of expression coexist in  
 Europe?***

**15—16 June 2015, Paris, France**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>ORGANIZATION</b>
<b>Abazovic, Dino</b>	Faculty of Political Sciences, Journalist and Professor, Bosnia and Herzegovina
<b>Achtelstetter, Karin</b>	WACC global, Headquarters in Toronto, Canada, General Secretary of WACC Global, United Kingdom
<b>Ahmed, Aaqil</b>	BBC, Commissioning editor, United Kingdom
<b>Al-Dubayan, Ahmad</b>	Islamic Cultural Centre, Director-General, United Kingdom
<b>Abd al-Wadoud Gourau, Jean</b>	Educator La Grande Mosquée de Lyon
<b>Bechari, Mohamed</b>	European Islamic Conference, Secretary General, France
<b>Betcheva, Radka</b>	European Broadcasting Union, Senior Project Manager, Switzerland
<b>Bhondoe, Radj</b>	Hindu Forum of Europe, President, Netherlands
<b>Carbajosa, Ana</b>	El Pais Newspaper, Foreign Reporter, Spain

<b>Corpas Aguirre, Maria de los Angeles</b>	Spanish Catholic News, Spain
<b>Clark, Bruce</b>	The Economist, Religion and Public Policy Blog Editor, United Kingdom
<b>Diaz-Jogeix, David</b>	Article 19, Director of Programmes, United Kingdom
<b>Diez Bosch, Miriam</b>	Blanquerna Observatory on Media, Religion and Culture, Media and Religion Expert, Spain
<b>Dickey, Christopher</b>	The Daily Beast, Foreign Editor, France
<b>Ejdersten, Marianne</b>	World Council of Churches, Communication Director, Switzerland
<b>Figueras, Amanda</b>	Freelance Journalist, Egypt
<b>Grabus, Nedzad</b>	Islamic community in Slovenia, Mufti, Slovenia
<b>Green, Erin</b>	Conference of the European Churches, Communications, Belgium
<b>Griffen, Scott</b>	International Press Institute, Director of Press Freedom Programmes, Austria
<b>Goldschmidt, Pinchas</b>	Conference of European Rabbis, Chief Rabbi, Russia
<b>Haanes, Kjetil</b>	NETT NO, Editor, Norway

<b>Heneghan, Tom</b>	Religion Editor, Reuters, France
<b>Hansbauer, Sylvie</b>	Buddhist Community of Austria, Teacher for Religion in Buddhism, Austria
<b>Ismail, Mohammad</b>	Muslim Chaplain, Sheffield University, United Kingdom
<b>Lah, Peter</b>	Gregorian University in Rome, Professor of Media, Italy
<b>Lewin, Moché</b>	Executive Director of the Conference of European Rabbis, France
<b>Melchior, Jair</b>	Chief Rabbi, Head of Copenhagen Jewish Community, Denmark
<b>Pellot, Brian</b>	Religion News Service, Director of Global Strategy, United Kingdom
<b>Pesonen, Tuomo</b>	The Evangelical Church of Finland, Director of Communications, Finland
<b>Rhouma, Hanan Ben</b>	Saphir News, Chief Editor, France
<b>Roucou, Père Christophe</b>	National Service for Relations with Islam SRI, Director, France
<b>Spillmann, Markus</b>	Former NZZ editor and Vice-Chairman International Press Institute (IPI), Journalist and Media Manager, Switzerland
<b>Tailor, Bharti</b>	Hindu Forum of Europe, Executive Director, United Kingdom
<b>Ueberschär, Ellen</b>	The German Lutheran Church, Secretary General, Germany



<b>Versi, Ahmed J.</b>	Muslim News, Editor and Publisher, United Kingdom
<b>Wakelin, Michael</b>	Coexist Programms, Director, Religion Expert and Media Consultant, United Kingdom
<b>Wipf, Thomas</b>	Religions for Peace ECRL, Moderator, Switzerland

### KAICIID Board

<b>NAME</b>	<b>ORGANIZATION</b>
<b>Swami Agnivesh</b>	President Emeritus of World Council of Arya Samaj, KAICIID Board Member
<b>Ayuso, Miguel</b>	Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue at the Vatican, KAICIID Board Member
<b>Metropolitan Emmanuel</b>	Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, KAICIID Board Member
<b>Niwano, Mitsuyo Kosho</b>	President-Designate Rissho Kosei-kai, KAICIID Board Member
<b>Al- Majed, Hamad</b>	Faculty Member, Imam Muhammad Bin Saud University, KAICIID Board Member
<b>Mohajerani, Sayyed Ataollah</b>	Religious Researcher and Writer, KAICIID Board Member
<b>Rosen, David</b>	American Jewish Committee, International Director of Interreligious Affairs, KAICIID Board Member
<b>Sammak, Mohammad</b>	Secretary-General of the National Committee for Christian- Muslim Dialogue, KAICIID Board Member

### KAICIID Delegation

<b>NAME</b>	<b>ORGANIZATION</b>
<b>H.E. Faisal Bin Abdulrahman Bin Muaammar</b>	<b>Secretary General</b>
<b>Abualnasr, Fahad</b>	<b>Chief of Staff and Director of Finance and Administration</b>
<b>Abu-Nimer, Mohammed</b>	<b>Senior Advisor</b>
<b>Brodeur, Patrice</b>	<b>Director of Research and Interim Director of Programmes</b>
<b>Kaiser, Peter</b>	<b>Director of Communications</b>
<b>Acevedo, Fonsi</b>	<b>Head of Events and Protocol</b>
<b>Waltner, Mike</b>	<b>Head of Initiatives</b>
<b>Hunt, Naomi</b>	<b>Programme Officer</b>
<b>Jayarajan, Nayana</b>	<b>Media Officer</b>

Speaker and Facilitator Bios

***UNITED AGAINST VIOLENCE IN THE NAME OF RELIGION:  
 How do freedom of expression and religion coexist in Europe?***

**15—16 June 2015, Paris, France**

**SPEAKERS**

**H.E. Faisal bin Abdulrahman bin Muaammar, KAICIID Secretary General**



Faisal Bin Abdulrahman Bin Muaammar was appointed Secretary-General of KAICIID in October 2012. Prior to this appointment, he held a number of senior positions in the Saudi Arabian administration and various nonprofit organizations. Among the highlights of a distinguished career, the Secretary-General has served as Vice Minister of Education of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Advisor to the Royal Court of the then-Crown Prince Abdullah bin

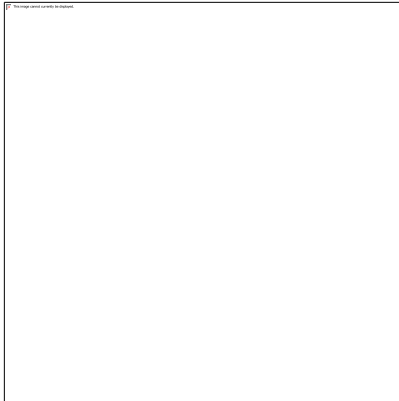
Abdulaziz Al Saud, and Deputy of the National Guard for Cultural & Educational Affairs.



**Dr. Nedžad Grabus, Grand Mufti of Slovenia**

Nedžad Grabus, born in 1968, has been the Grand Mufti of the Islamic Community in Slovenia since 2006, and was approved by the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the same year. He is also chairman of the Meshihat of the Islamic Community in Slovenia. In 2008, in Sarajevo, the former Master of Science Nedžad Grabus successfully defended his doctoral thesis and became Doctor of Science in the field of Akaida. He worked for the religious-educational service of the Riyaset of the Islamic Community in BiH, and was a lecturer at the Faculty of Islamic Studies. He also worked as a reporter and the producer for the Radio BiH and was an editor of the religious program on the national radio station BH Radio 1.

**Dr. Mohammed Bechari, Secretary General, European Islamic Conference**



Dr. Mohamed Bechari, born in 1967 in Oujda in Morocco, has been president of the National Federation of Muslims of France since 1992, and was Vice Chairman of the Muslim Council of France from 2003 to 2006. He serves as a coordinator at ISESCO, and Secretary General of the European Islamic Conference. He is the author of an Arabic-language book entitled *The Image of Islam in the Western Media*.

**David Diaz-Jogeix, Director of Programmes, Article 19**



David is Director of Programmes at ARTICLE 19 since 2013, covering the programmes of work on Europe and Central Asia, MENA and Asia region. David has 20 years of professional experience on human rights with UN, IGOs and INGOs. Before joining ARTICLE 19, David worked for Amnesty International for ten years, mainly as Deputy Director for Europe and Central Asia covering the OSCE region. He worked in the Balkans region for 7 years, mainly for the OSCE Missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Serbia. David lived and work for 4 years in Africa, notably Rwanda, Liberia and Burkina Faso.

**Dr. Miriam Diez Bosch, Director, Blanquerna Observatory for Media, Religion and Culture**



Dr. Miriam Diez Bosch is the director of the Blanquerna Observatory on Media, Religion and Culture in Barcelona. Professor Díez is also the Experts Director at the portal Aleteia.org, in Rome.

A journalist, she is also licensed in Sacred Theology and holds a PhD in Social Sciences (Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome). She is Project Coordinator of Riseci.eu (Religion in the Shaping of European Cultural Identity), a two-year programme co-funded by the EU. and the Museum of Christianity in Slovenia. She also manages various other projects relating to intercultural dialogue, gender and culture, and recently edited the volume "On Blasphemy" (2015).

### **His Eminence Metropolitan Emmanuel**



During his service to the Church, His Eminence Metropolitan Emmanuel has become an advocate for peace and dialogue.

He has served as Metropolitan of France, Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate since 2003. Previously, he was President of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the Assembly of Orthodox Bishops of France. He is co-president of World Conference of Religions for Peace, Director of the Liaison Office of the Orthodox Church to the European Union in Brussels, and in charge of interreligious dialogue with Judaism and Islam on behalf of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

### **H.E. Ambassador Ufuk Gokcen, Permanent Representative of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to the United Nations**



Ambassador Gokcen was appointed as OIC Permanent Observer to the UN in New York in 2010. He previously served as Political Adviser to the OIC Secretary-General in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and at Turkish Embassies in Riyadh, Muscat and Damascus. He also worked at the Middle East Department of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### **Rabbi Moche Lewin, Executive Director of the Conference of European Rabbis**



Moche Lewin has been Executive Director of the Conference of European Rabbis since 2013, and serves as a special advisor to the Chief Rabbi of France, Haim Korsia. He is the Rabbi of Raincy and was the spokesperson of the Grand Rabbi of Frances, Gilles Bernheim, until April 2013. He participated in the creation of the interreligious Conference of Worship Leaders.

**Brian Pellot, Director of Global Strategy, Religion Newswriters Foundation**



Brian Pellot is director of global strategy at Religion News Service and Religion Newswriters Foundation. He speaks and writes regularly about religious freedom and freedom of expression. Brian is currently based between London and Cape Town.

**KAICIID FACILITATORS**

**Fahad Abualnasr, KAICIID Chief of Staff**



Since 2013, Fahad Abualnasr has been with KAICIID as Chief of Staff and Director of Finance and Administration. From 2004 to 2006, Abualnasr was an advisor to HH Prince Faissal bin Abdullah bin Mohamed Al-Saud. He chaired the founding committee and successfully established the Al-Aghar Group as a leading think tank in Saudi Arabia. He worked on co-organizing the First Saudi “Knowledge Economy Conference” in Jeddah in 2008. In the same year, he also helped organize the “the Multi-faith Scientists in Islamic Civilization” exhibit at the United Nations HQ in New York. Abualnasr is also the founder and chairman of MAQASID consultancy and is on the Board of Directors of i2Institute. He managed the project titled “Building Saudi Arabia’s National Innovation Ecosystem,” in close cooperation with KACST “King Abdul Aziz City for Science and Technology”. He has a Master’s degree in Comparative Politics and a Bachelor’s degree in Political Science from the American University in Washington D.C.

**Prof. Mohammed Abu-Nimer, Professor, School Of International Service, American University & KAICIID Senior Advisor**



Mohammed Abu-Nimer has conducted interreligious conflict resolution training and interfaith dialogue workshops in conflict areas around the world, including Palestine, Israel, Egypt, Northern Ireland, the Philippines (Mindanao), and Sri Lanka. In addition to his articles and publications, Dr. Abu-Nimer is the co-founder and co-editor of the Journal of Peacebuilding and Development. At American University, Professor Abu-Nimer is also Director of the Peacebuilding and Development Institute. Professor Abu-Nimer also serves as Senior Advisor to KAICIID.

**Prof. Patrice Brodeur, KAICIID Director of Research and Interim Director of Programmes**



With over thirty years of experience in the area of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, primarily as an academic researcher and educator, the highlights of Patrice Brodeur’s career include the development of an interdisciplinary research team on Islam, pluralism and globalization at the University of Montreal (Canada), focusing on past and present intra- and interreligious, as well as inter-civilizational and inter-worldview forms of dialogue.

**Peter Kaiser, KAICIID Director of Communications**



Peter Kaiser was appointed KAICIID communications director in January 2014. As an on-air TV/radio correspondent and bureau chief, he has 11 years of experience producing daily analyses, reports and features in English and German for BBC World Service, NBC Nightly News, n-tv, Deutsche Welle and CNBC-Europe. He covered current affairs, science, financial news, and began his career in news with the Romanian revolution.

He has also led intergovernmental communications teams at the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.