

## Terms of Reference for the *2025 Women of Excellence in Multi-Religious Action Award*

### Background

Women of faith are the backbone of all faith communities and religious institutions and are often at the forefront of social transformation, leading multi-religious efforts that promote shared human flourishing. In 2000, *Religions for Peace* conducted a study of 300 religious institutions worldwide and concluded that approximately 90% of those delivering services within and through the institutional religious infrastructure of healthcare, education, nutrition, sanitation, and general services, were women. Similarly, a 2025 report from OCHA concurs that women's leadership is crucial in times of crisis, taking on leading roles to uplift and support their communities, advocating for change and building powerful support networks. Recognising and amplifying their contributions is essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ensuring that no one is left behind.<sup>1</sup>

However, with only five years left to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, SDG 5 (gender equality) remains off track, and the work and contributions of women remains largely obscured or even deliberately unrecognised. In a global context where the rights of women and girls are facing unprecedented challenges, the need to amplify the recognition of their indispensability in realising a just, peaceful, and sustainable world has never been greater.<sup>2</sup> Through the Second Call for Nominations for the *Women of Excellence in Multi-Religious Action Award*, *Religions for Peace* aims to recognise and highlight the vital efforts spearheaded by women of faith in service of human rights, peace and security, and sustainable development at the grassroots level.

The *Women of Excellence in Multi-Religious Action Award* has been made possible with the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other partners. The award will be presented at a ceremony in New York in the last quarter of 2025, to honour the contributions of grassroots women of faith and elevate the media visibility of the awardees, enabling them to find new partners and supporters, and inspire others to learn from their work.

### The Award

The Second Call for Nominations for the *Women of Excellence in Multi-Religious Action Award*, will highlight the indispensable role of women of faith in achieving the six [Strategic Priorities of Religions for Peace](#) and invite individuals and *Religions for Peace* Interreligious Councils (IRCs) to nominate outstanding women of faith who are making a tangible impact at the grassroots level. The Award Selection Committee – composed of members of the World Council (*Religions for Peace* governing board), members of *Religions for Peace* Standing Commissions, women of faith, youth, representatives from partner organisations, and academics working on research relevant to *Religions for Peace* priority areas – will nominate one grassroots woman of faith from any of the following regions: Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, and North America. The nominated women of faith will be showcased through a coordinated media campaign to elevate their profile and the impact of their work. Three recipients - chosen by the Award Selection Committee - will be invited to attend an Award Ceremony wherein they will receive

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<sup>1</sup> UN, [The Gender Snapshot 2024](#)

<sup>2</sup> UN Press Release, [‘Patriarchy Is Regaining Ground’, Secretary-General Warns, while Women’s, Girls’ Rights Face Unprecedented Threat](#)

# Religions for Peace

a cash prize (1<sup>st</sup> Place = \$7,000; 2<sup>nd</sup> Place = \$5,000; 3<sup>rd</sup> place = \$2,500). This award money will be utilised to expand the scope of the recipients' work. The award will also strengthen the capacities of interreligious networks by providing a platform for nominees to serve as trainers for other women of faith and share best practices across the *Religions for Peace* movement which consists of over 90 Inter-religious Councils (IRCs)<sup>3</sup> and their Women of Faith Networks and Interfaith Youth Networks, operating at local, national, regional and global levels.

## Award Criteria and Process

With this Second Call for Nominations, *Religions for Peace* invites individuals and organisations to nominate grassroots women of faith - religious leaders and non-traditional faith actors - who have contributed to the six Key Strategic Priority Areas of *Religions for Peace* ([Promoting Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies](#); [Advancing Gender Equality](#); [Nurturing Sustainable Environment](#); [Championing Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion](#); [Strengthening Interreligious Education](#); [Fostering Multi-religious Collaboration and Global Partnerships](#)) through multireligious collaboration at the grassroots level. Nominated women of faith must be affiliated with a *Religions for Peace* Interreligious Council at the regional, national, or subnational level. Members of the selection committee are not eligible for nomination for the award. Self-nominations are not accepted.

The launch date for the second call of the *Women of Excellence in Multi-Religious Action Award* is set for **20 March 2025**. The submission process is detailed in the attached nomination packet. The final deadline for award submissions is **30 April 2025**.

## Evaluation and Selection

Members of the Award Selection Committee will evaluate initiatives based on established criteria, nominating one grassroots woman of faith from any of the abovementioned regions and identifying the winners.

The Selection Committee members will review the dossiers on women of faith collated by the *Religions for Peace* International Secretariat. They will evaluate nominees using established criteria, which include active engagement and leadership of women of faith, strong multi-religious collaboration, and impact on interfaith social cohesion at the grassroots level. Selection committee members will convene virtually in June 2025 to evaluate the dossiers on women of faith and vote to determine the winners. The recipients will be announced in **July 2025**, and *Religions for Peace* will coordinate a multi-pronged media campaign to shine a spotlight on them and their work.

## Award Ceremony

The recipients will be invited to the Award Ceremony that will take place in the last quarter of 2025.

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<sup>3</sup> Each interreligious body affiliated with *Religions for Peace* is self-led, but also part of the global *Religions for Peace* movement. These action oriented councils and women and youth networks are multi-religious and "public" in character. They are led by the representatives of diverse religious communities and are designed to provide a platform for cooperative action throughout the different levels within these religious communities, from grassroots to the senior most leaders. Successful *Religions for Peace* bodies serve as bridges between diverse religious communities that can help build trust, reduce hostility in areas of conflict and provide a platform for common action.