

rights. In all fields of peacekeeping, women peacekeepers have proven that they can perform the same roles, to the same standards and under the same difficult conditions, as their male counterparts. In 1993 women made up 1 % of deployed personnel and in 2014 they constituted 20 % of police personnel in UN Peacekeeping missions. UN Police Division launched ‘the Global Effort’ to recruit more female police officers into national police services and into UN police operations around the world. Striving towards gender parity amongst UN staff is a priority for the UN Secretary-General. Female peacekeepers act as role models in the local environment, inspiring women and girls in often male-dominated societies to push for their own rights and for participation in peace processes. The presence of women peacekeepers can also help to reduce conflict and confrontation, improve access and support for local women, provide role models for women in the community, provide a greater sense of security to local population, including women and children.

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INTER-RELIGIOUS COOPERATION IN A GLOBAL AGE

Eric C. Shafer said: “So many bridges to build. So many walls to break down”.

The collapse of the Soviet Union more than 20 years ago had a better hope for religious freedom to our part of the world.

During the last several years, however, there has been a sharp increase in religious freedom violations. At the same time, Christians in Eurasia are facing growing threats to their freedom. Particularly in Central Asia, raids are taking place, pastors are being detained, Christian literature is being confiscated, and harsh laws are being imposed to restrict the freedoms of churches, particularly Christian churches. And with the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine religious reconciliation efforts are desperately needed to foster peace between Russian and Ukrainian Christians.

Can an answer be given to the question: “If we can have a United Nations Organization, cannot we have a United Religions Organization?” Is the world of religions, spiritual movements and indigenous traditions open to the creation of a permanent, locally rooted and globally connected inter-religious world body with truly world-wide recognition and status? Is world-wide co-operation between diverse religions possible?

The situation today is that large numbers of adherents of diverse religions question the absoluteness and exclusiveness of their own traditions and teachings. Today a significant number of the religious and spiritual leaders see dialogue as an acceptable part of religious life.

But, at the same time, there are now growing tensions in the midst of many religious traditions between the conservative and liberal elements. We believe that dialogue is possible and necessary.

Every 3-4 years in a different part of the world (recently, India, Taiwan and the United Kingdom) IARF's (International Association for Religious Freedom) membership meet in interfaith dialogue, discussions about issues facing religious communities and cultural exchanges.

So, inter-religious Co-operation in a Global Age is possible. It must be based on:

1. Freedom from oppressive interference or discrimination by the state, government or society's institutions on the grounds of religion or belief.

2. Mutual understanding, respect and the promotion of harmony, or at least "tolerance", between communities or individuals of different religions or beliefs.

3. An essential accountability by religious communities to ensure that their own practices uphold the fundamental human rights.

In today's global world of cultures, religions and civilizations, in an emerging world community, innovative efforts and solutions are very much needed, such as solutions of International Association for Religious Freedom.

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

This right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief.

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AUSTRALIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

Australia has been actively involved in peacekeeping activities for nearly 70 years providing military and police personnel to more than 50 United Nations and other peace and security operations. Since 1964, Australian police have served in Cyprus, an island wracked by conflict