

Promoting Human Rights, Inclusion and Religious Harmony Project Regional Forum and Workshop

September 10 – 15, 2018

Colombo, Sri Lanka

This regional activity which consists of a Forum and Workshop is an integral part of the *Promoting Human Rights, Inclusion and Religious Harmony Project*. This regional activity seeks to:

- broaden the understanding of practitioners and activist scholars working on the subject;
- enhance the capacity of human rights actors and those working on the ground to respond to conflicts and tensions at the local and national level; and
- look at opportunities for intervention at the local, national and global levels.

Forum on Freedom of Religion in Divided Societies of Asia: Understanding the Law, Politics and Rights

September 10 - 11, 2018

This one and a half-day forum will bring a group of scholars, practitioners and parliamentarians together to reflect, analyze and understand the state of freedom of religion in select countries in Asia. The meeting seeks to understand the evolving landscape of religious freedom and religious violence in Asia, to map particular flashpoints and patterns across the region, to look at how radical actors are mobilizing, to consider the specific impacts of extremism on women and youth, to understand the role of the clergy, and to explore the responses of law, law enforcement and human rights actors.

Format

The format will be highly interactive with a focus on the politics, laws and interventions

of rights activists and local level actors. It will be divided into three sessions across the three main themes. Each session will consist of two panels with a moderated discussion afterwards.

September 10th Morning: Politics

This session aims to build an understanding of the politics of religious freedom and religious violence in India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. With insights from parliamentarians, human rights actors, and scholars, this session will address the following questions: (1) What are the political factors that might affect policies involving religion? (2) What concrete initiatives have politicians and members of parliament taken to protect and promote freedom of religion? (3) What factors sustain ethno-religious violence in the different countries? (4) What are the challenges on the ground in implementing those initiatives? (5) How do current policies and practices impact women and youth?

September 10th Afternoon: Law

This session will address the issue of how law - manifested in legal regulation, the threat of legal action, and law enforcement – may affect the boundaries of freedom of religion in these societies. In what ways can law promote or inhibit religious freedom, and in what ways can it mitigate or facilitate religious violence? Is the lack of law enforcement critical in promoting religious violence? Does legal regulation and law enforcement have a differential impact on women and youth?

September 11th Morning: Rights

This session tackles the broad issue of the role of activists and civil society actors in protecting and promoting religious freedom and tolerance. How are human rights actors and local groups responding to freedom of religion and violent extremism? What opportunities exist for dialogue, policy advocacy and coexistence? What is the role of the clergy? Are there opportunities for women and youth to engage and dialogue across inter-group lines? Are there shared spaces and practices across the different religious groups that could be explored?

September 11th Afternoon: Launch of the two monographs

- **Chronic and the Entrenched: Ethno-religious Violence in Sri Lanka** by Gehan Gunatilleke
- **State of Freedom of Religion in Myanmar** by Nyi Nyi Kyaw

CAPACITY- BUILDING WORKSHOP: Applying a Human Rights-Based Approach to Conflict Mitigation

September 12 – 15, 2018

This Workshop follows the *Forum on Freedom of Religion in Divided Societies of Asia: Understanding the Law, Politics and Rights*. The Workshop aims to increase the capacity of community leaders and civil society organizations (CSOs) in Sri Lanka and Burma/Myanmar to promote ethno-religious harmony in communities and reduce potential for conflict using a human rights-based approach.

During this four-day Workshop, participants will:

- Build knowledge about human rights
- Develop skills and strategies to mitigate conflict using a human rights-based approach
- Explore strategies for effective participation of women, youth and other marginalized groups
- Develop plans for applying their learning within their community or work environment

Curriculum Model

The participatory curriculum design model of this Workshop is based on principles of adult experiential learning. The underlying principle is that much of the content will come from the participants and that the Program will serve as a framework for drawing out this content. Participants and facilitators commit themselves to engage in a process of mutual teaching and learning. The emphasis is on practical application and on the development of strategies for action.

Continued reflection and evaluation are central to the learning process.

Individual Plan

During the program, every participant is required to prepare an Individual Plan for putting their learning into practice once they return to their home organizations. By reflecting on the content of the Workshop, the Individual Plan helps the participants determine how content is transferable to their own context, resulting in a planned integration of this new knowledge in the future activities of their organization.

Organization and Participant Profile

This Workshop is designed for community leaders and civil society organizations who are involved in the fields of peacebuilding, conflict resolution, transitional justice, and human rights education.

Candidates from qualifying organizations must:

- be active employees / volunteers of their organization for at least two years

- be committed to transferring knowledge and skills gained during the Workshop to colleagues and to others with whom they work
- be sensitive to the issues which arise when working in multicultural groups, and respectful of diversity

Women and members of minority groups are encouraged to apply.

Language Requirement

This Workshop requires participants to actively engage in group work and read extensively. Therefore, all participants must be fluent in English.

Accommodations

Accommodations provided will be on a shared basis, i.e., two participants will be sharing a room.

Application deadline: July 20, 2018



This project is undertaken with support from the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada (GAC).