

Subject: 2021 Zayed Award for Human Fraternity: Letter of Endorsement for Nomination of Religions for Peace Myanmar

30 November 2020

To the Esteemed Judges:

It is my great honour to nominate [Religions for Peace Myanmar](#) for the 2021 Zayed Award for Human Fraternity, in my capacity as Secretary General of the *Religions for Peace* International Secretariate. *Religions for Peace* Myanmar, affiliated to *Religions for Peace*, is an independent, self-led national action-oriented interreligious body that works on reconciliation, peacebuilding and development.

Religions for Peace Myanmar has exemplified, through its historic and current work, the transformative power of human fraternity, bridging religious and ethnic divides to restore a promising future cultivated by all stakeholders, with harmony and mutual respect. *Religions for Peace* Myanmar has forged new and thriving networks of religious leaders, women, and youth that serve to connect the most grassroots level activists with the highest level of institutional leadership; established multi-stakeholder mechanisms for the promotion of reconciliation and peace during the Rohingya refugee crisis; and enacted an immediate response to the global pandemic of COVID-19 for the protection of Myanmar's most vulnerable communities.

I have witnessed the power of interreligious engagement in Myanmar, where optimism for peace and development has been marred by communal conflict and outbreaks of violence. *Religions for Peace* Myanmar recognises that the root problems in Myanmar are exacerbated by a critical lack of "open space" in which to safely meet, dialogue, and discern a consensus on necessary action. To respond to the critical lack of "open space" for dialogue and cooperation among all stakeholders, *Religions for Peace* Myanmar has launched and sustained a unique multi-religious and multi-stakeholder mechanism for dialogue and action entitled the "*Religions for Peace* Advisory Forum on National Reconciliation and Peace in Myanmar."

The Advisory Forum was inaugurated in Nay Pyi Taw in November 2018, bringing together over 300 participants, with key stakeholders from religious organisations, Myanmar government and the military, parliament, ethnic organisations, foreign governments, UN agencies, international and national NGOs, and civil society groups. What *Religions for Peace* Myanmar demonstrated through this process of peaceful reconciliation was its commitment to holding a seat at the table of peace for all stakeholders. The Advisory Forum has now garnered the support of H.E. Daw Aung Sun Suu Kyi and over 20 foreign governments, has brought together military leaders and Rohingya representatives to share common concerns and forge a path forward, and has become the only mechanism that connects the highest level of Myanmar leadership with grassroots initiatives for dialogue and collaboration.

Religions for Peace Myanmar has further engaged grassroots communities from Myanmar's diverse ethnic groups, building individual and communal peacebuilding capacity, promoting education and action for the protection of our environment, and fostering the leadership and participation of women and youth actors on a village and township level. It is based upon this legacy of outstanding interventions, with recognition of their indefatigable work of fostering ongoing human fraternity, that I proudly nominate *Religions for Peace* Myanmar for the prestigious 2021 Zayed Award for Human Fraternity.

With Respect and Appreciation,



Prof. Azza Karam PhD.
Secretary General, *Religions for Peace* International