

# THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES (GCR) & THE ROLE OF FAITH-BASED ORGANISATIONS IN REFUGEE PROTECTION

9 February 2021, 14:00 – 16:00

## Background:

The GCR represents the ambitions and will of the international community as a whole for strengthened cooperation and solidarity with refugees and affected host countries. The various pledges made at the December 2019 Global Refugee Forum (GRF), over 300 of which were made in Europe, made it quite clear that the GCR will not be able to succeed without civil society organisations providing complementary services in addition to the commitments of governments.

The GCR calls for multi-stakeholder partnerships between government authorities, the private sector, civil society organisations, humanitarian aid agencies and local actors to address the complex nature of forced displacement, the scarcity of resources for refugee response, and the need to provide comprehensive and integrated solutions for the dignity and well-being of refugees. Now that the GCR has been adopted, it is important to assess the role of various stakeholders in supporting its implementation, both within Europe and beyond.

The GCR makes specific reference to the important role faith-based organisations (FBOs) and faith communities at large play in its implementation. The GCR states that “faith-based actors could support the planning and delivery of arrangements to assist refugees and host communities, including in the areas of conflict prevention, reconciliation, and peacebuilding, as well as other relevant areas”. This reference recognises the role FBOs already play in supporting refugees in countries of origin, transit and destination – for example, resettlement and integration services, faith-sensitive psychosocial support, advocacy against xenophobia, etc.

The GCR and the subsequent pledges that came out of the Global Refugee Forum (GRF), provide an opportune moment for a fuller and more nuanced examination of the role of faith actors, in partnership with others, in developing a more comprehensive, effective and durable response to forced displacement and refugee protection.

The discussions and findings of the event will contribute to “Welcoming the Stranger, Shaping the Future” International Conference, scheduled for March 2022 in Geneva, Switzerland. The main aim of the 2022 International Conference is to highlight the efforts of faith actors, both on the local and national level, that contribute to a coordinated, effective, and impactful international refugee response. Several regional events have been scheduled during 2021 in preparation for this International Conference, and the discussions and recommendations that come out of this “European” event will similarly feed into the design of the 2022 International Conference.

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Register here: <https://bit.ly/2Xh2k9N>

## Objectives:

To enhance awareness of the GCR, assess the state of implementation of the GRF pledges, and discuss the role of FBOs, in collaboration with other partners, in achieving “results that will transform the lives of refugees and host communities”.<sup>1</sup>

## Key questions:

- » What is the impact to date of the GCR and the related commitments made at the GRF?
- » What role(s) have faith-based actors traditionally played in relation to assisting refugees? What are the specific GCR principles and commitments towards which faith actors can contribute as part of a comprehensive response towards forced migration? Has this led to new types of partnerships?
- » Is partnering with faith-based organisations increasing the reach, relevance and depth of humanitarian responses to forced displacement? And if so, what are the reasons for that?
- » From a governmental perspective, what are the challenges and barriers to engagement associated with partnering with faith-based organisations and how these can be overcome?
- » From FBOs’ perspective, what are the barriers to engagement with the humanitarian system and how these can be overcome?

<sup>1</sup> GCR, paragraph 107, Chapter IV.



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# AGENDA

Facilitator: Kékéli Kpognon, Senior Human Rights Programme Officer,  
Quaker Council for European Affairs

**14:00-14:10** **Opening by Margaritis Schinas, Vice President of the European Commission**

**14:10-14:25** **Gillian Triggs, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, UNHCR**

*Assessment of implementation, in Europe and globally, of the GCR and the related pledges made at the GRF*

**14:25-15:05** **Panel I on the “Internal Dimension” – Implementation of GCR and GRF commitments within Europe**

*Refugee Resettlement, Alternative Pathways, and Community-Based Integration in Europe: the Role of FBOs*

Moderation by Anila Noor, Founding Director of New Women Connectors and member of the European Commission Expert Group on the Views of Migrants in The Field Of Migration, Asylum & Integration

- Father Rey, Mexican Missionary working in support of the Caritas managed humanitarian corridor sponsorship programme in Vicenza, Italy
- Sister Karin Johansson, Swedish Lutheran nun
- Nejra Kadic Meskic, Muslim Community of Croatia
- MEP

Q&A

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**15:05-15:45 Panel II on the “External Dimension”**

*Challenges & Opportunities and Way Forward to Engaging FBOs in Support of Refugee Protection, Local Integration and Assistance*

Moderation by Shaza Alrihawi, Chair of the Global Refugee-led Network (GRN)

- Federal Foreign Office, Germany
- Francesco Luciani, Head of Unit, Migration and Forced Displacement, Directorate General for International Partnerships
- Atallah FitzGibbon, Faith & Partnerships Advisor, Islamic Relief Worldwide
- Maria Immonen, Director, Department of World Service, the Lutheran World Federation

Q&A

**15:45-15:55 Concluding Remarks by Ilan Cohn, Director, HIAS Europe**



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