

ROUNDTABLE

Interfaith Leaders Collaboration for Public Service in Myanmar Crisis

Coordinator

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Roundtable Description

As Myanmar's political fragmentation, armed conflict, displacement and social polarisation deepen, local communities are increasingly turning to informal and community-based actors to sustain trust, communication and social stability. In many parts of the country where formal systems of governance have collapsed or are unavailable, religious leaders and faith-based networks are often some of the only players who still have access, legitimacy and moral clout in diverse communities. The panel will explore how engagement of faith actors can move from dialogue to practical collaboration and locally led action in response to current humanitarian, social and conflict related challenges in Myanmar.

The discussion will explore how religious leaders and networks work in highly sensitive and fragmented environments while remaining service providers to communities experiencing violence, displacement, and uncertainty. Instead of viewing religion simply through the prism of identity politics or conflict narratives, the panel examines the daily civic and social roles played by religious actors at the local level: mediating community disputes among families, supporting humanitarian coordination, education and health and keeping community trust in times of instability.

Today in Myanmar, a number of different systems of authority exist side-by-side. In such hybrid settings, religious actors often act as intermediaries, able to bridge divides that political actors find it harder to access. In the past, monastic networks have played a role in social welfare and mediation in Buddhist-majority communities, while Christian churches in ethnic areas continue to offer education, psychosocial support and humanitarian assistance to displaced populations. Muslim community leaders and interfaith advocates have been involved in local trust-building programs and dialogue initiatives in urban and mixed communities, while Hindu leaders and networks continue to promote social resilience and intercommunal engagement in diverse local contexts.

The panel will include grounded experiences from practitioners and religious actors working directly with communities across Myanmar. Due to security considerations and the sensitivity of the current environment, some contributors will not reveal their identity yet. Its aim is to ensure that participants are safe, while engaging in open and practical discussion based on real-life experience, rather than abstract analysis.

Keyword: Interfaith, Public Service, Myanmar Crisis