



# The Roles of Religious Leaders and Communities

## CHAPTER 10

*This chapter discusses the role of religious leaders and faith-based communities in supporting and improving the effectiveness of the work of the ICC.*

### 10.1 Key roles

The religious leaders that attended the Nairobi Expert Meeting in May 2005 found that because of the special positions they hold and their abilities to represent and to communicate with their respective communities, religious leaders can play a key role in the work of the ICC. In particular, the following roles were highlighted.

*In relation to the ICC, the religious leaders can:*

1. raise awareness of the ICC;
2. assist victims;
3. advocate for fair and effective prosecutions of the ICC;
4. monitor human rights and provide information to the ICC;
5. take a lead in reconciliation efforts.

Each of these areas was discussed and the opportunities for action are set out below:

#### ***Raise awareness of the ICC***

Working within their communities, religious organisations and leaders can:

1. preach and speak about the ICC at gatherings of religious leaders, in mosques, temples, churches, etc. Provide factual information on the ICC, and simplify the statutes of the ICC;





2. highlight the role of the ICC by using the media: the religious papers, newspapers, radio and television. Using a mixed-media approach, combine mainstream media and traditional media of folklore ideas that are culturally specific;
3. conduct “Train the Trainers” workshops about the ICC for religious leaders and others in our religious organisations, and workshops for community leaders (to include women and youth leaders);
4. produce pamphlets summarising the ICC in local languages. The pamphlets should be user-friendly and show awareness of the local context;
5. raise awareness about the ICC using inter-faith collaborative action and outreach;
6. emphasise the mobilisation of women and youth in this work.

### ***Assist Victims***

1. Provide a trusted and secure environment for victims.
2. Offer psycho-social support, i.e. counselling, trauma-healing and confidence-building.
3. Provide basic technical, legal and practical guidance (filling out the forms), to help understand the process and to minimize expectations, particularly about reparation.
4. Provide material assistance, such as food, clothing, access to medical care, and shelter. Also, provide rehabilitation for victims.
5. Appoint a person, within faith-based organisations, to coordinate and manage assistance for victims.
6. Organise victims into support-groups.
7. Accompany victims through the justice and reconciliation process.



### ***Advocate for fair and effective prosecutions of the ICC***

1. Target groups for advocacy efforts:
  - a. ICC
  - b. Assembly of State parties
  - c. Governments
  - d. Civil society organisations.
2. Take a lead in discussing and defining the justice and reconciliation process and see how the ICC fits in with that. Clarify the advantages and limitations of working with the national courts and the ICC. Set out clear advantages and disadvantages of a legal prosecution taken by the ICC in order to avoid unrealistic expectations.
3. Highlight and advocate for the rights of women and children.
4. Network effectively with existing organisations at the local, national and international levels.
5. Influence the timing for prosecutions and investigation through the prosecutors and judges at The Hague.

### ***Monitor human rights and provide information to the ICC***

1. Evidence gathering: statement taking from witnesses – sets out a case; however, it is not ‘binding’ in court
2. Develop indicators to monitor the human rights situation.
3. Link with human rights organisations locally, nationally and internationally.
4. Establish a database of violations. Link with existing organisations to ensure the safety of the documents and records.
5. Link with human rights organisations to train religious volunteers to monitor human rights violations, train on international human rights standards and human rights documentation.



### ***Take a lead in reconciliation efforts***

1. Emphasise justice with mercy.
2. Integrate reconciliation efforts with approaches which embrace acceptable traditional, religious and national approaches.
3. Justice is important, reconciliation is important - therefore, the two need to be linked. Reconciliation initiatives should involve truth and the healing of memories.
5. Start the reconciliation process from the religious leadership level. Religious leaders lead by example, by engaging in inter-religious dialogue and collaborative action.
6. Religious leadership and faith-based organisations should target reconciliation efforts at three different levels – political, social and personal. Liaise with the political leaders so that they can contribute to the reconciliation process.

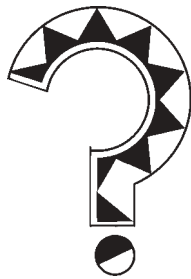
## **10.2 Guiding principles**

When undertaking this work, the following guiding principles are suggested.

- Have an inter-faith approach.
- Use special days, e.g. national days, day of international justice, women's days.
- Have a good representation of women and men in the process.
- Be sensitive. Take into consideration security, traditional leaders and governing authorities.
- Provide a long-term approach in dealing with victims.
- Each context is different and strategies must be developed along local and national needs.



- In severe security situations, there may be a need to work discretely through local structures.
- Work sensitively and protect evidence as well as those persons providing it.
- Be relevant to the situation where we are working and for the target groups with whom we are working, and understand their needs.



### 10.3 Key questions

1. What roles can religious leaders and faith-based communities play in engaging with, and supporting the work of the ICC in your context?
2. What *advantages* are there in supporting the ICC, and what *difficulties* could be experienced in playing such roles?
3. How could such activities best be implemented – what support, resources and other assistance would you require, and from whom?

