

Religious Intolerance: A Threat to World Peace

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ABSTRACT

Religious intolerance has become a significant barrier to global peace and stability, fostering extremism, violence, and conflicts worldwide. This issue involves justifying violence, demonizing others, and rejecting diversity in the name of faith. While religion could ideally serve as a source of moral guidance, compassion, and unity, it is often misused to justify hatred, division, and violence. A clear example of this is the ongoing conflict between Israel and Iran, as well as the previous conflict between Israel and Palestine, which continues to threaten and destabilize global peace. These conflicts demonstrate how religious intolerance, when exploited by political interests, can escalate into threats to regional and international stability. When national policies are guided by religious dogma instead of pragmatic diplomacy, opportunities for negotiation and mutual respect diminish. In the modern era, religious intolerance is considered one of the gravest threats to world peace. This paper examines current trends, causes, and consequences of religious intolerance concerning peaceful coexistence and global harmony. It will also explore how religious differences intensify tensions between Israel and Iran, as well as between Israel and Palestine. The research aims to deepen understanding of this ongoing challenge and propose strategies for building a more inclusive and peaceful world. Furthermore, it highlights that the hatred and fear associated with Islam and the persecution of Muslims stem from religious intolerance.

Keywords: World Peace, Religious Intolerance, extremism, peace and stability

INTRODUCTION

Religious intolerance, defined as the refusal to accept or respect beliefs different from one's own, leading to persecution or discrimination, is recognized as a serious threat to human dignity and peace (Singh, 2015). Throughout history and culture, when a group is specifically denied tolerance or is perceived as an infidel or heretic, the ground is prepared for further atrocities. What begins as prejudice and social exclusion can eventually turn into mass violence when the perceived "other" becomes sufficiently dehumanized (Hayat & Malik, 2022). Modern social psychology supports this evolution: when people feel that their group or beliefs are under threat, prejudice and intolerance increase, giving rise to a defensive worldview that demonizes outsiders. In the religious sphere, this dynamic can be particularly

unstable, since beliefs are often at the Centre of identity and community. When combined with political power struggles, economic pressures, or nationalist fervor, religious intolerance becomes a destabilizing force that can fuel conflict. Religious intolerance has repeatedly led to violence and wars throughout history, undermining global peace and security (DAUDA, 2020). This article examines key historical episodes, from the religious wars between Palestine and later Israel against Iran, to illustrate how religious animosity can fuel large-scale bloodshed. It then analyzes the role of military deterrence, particularly nuclear deterrence, in maintaining the fragile peace in religious tensions (such as between India and Pakistan or in the Middle East), highlighting a paradox: deterrence may prevent all forms of war, but it does not resolve the underlying hatred and creates even greater dangers. The use of powerful military instruments (including nuclear weapons and modern military forces) to intimidate religious minorities is a moral debate, in which arguments of strategic necessity are weighed against moral and humanitarian grounds. Today, this issue is of global importance. Religious hate crimes and sectarian violence are reported on every continent (Hayat & Malik, 2022). Religious nationalism is on the rise in many countries, and extremist groups often use religious rhetoric to justify violence. The sad reality is that wars and conflicts serve as a backdrop for persecution and violence against religious minorities (Zalec & Pavlikova, 2019). These conflicts not only cause immediate human suffering but also sow lasting divisions that hinder peace for generations. Indeed, international reports and human rights organisations have warned that, in societies from the Middle East to South Asia, intolerance towards other religions is perpetuating a cycle of revenge and instability (Ruepke & Veltri, 2023).

Research Objectives

This study examines the impact of religious intolerance on world peace and explores possible solutions. Firstly, it examines historical examples in which religious fanaticism and hatred have led to violence, war or social unrest. These cases reveal recurring patterns and the magnitude of the threat. It then critically analyzes the concept of deterrence, especially nuclear deterrence in regions of intense religious tension. The advantages and disadvantages of using powerful defensive mechanisms (such as nuclear weapons or modern militarism) to protect vulnerable religious groups are discussed. Finally, it argues that unless the root causes of intolerance are addressed, any “negative peace” achieved through deterrence or force will remain fragile. Finally, it argues that genuine world peace requires combating the ideological rigidity, religious extremism, propaganda, and misinformation that fuel hatred, as well as the inequalities that fuel grievances. The discussion is based on real-world consequences and ethical considerations, recognizing the human costs of both action and inaction in the face of intolerance.

Research Methodology

This research work is analytical as well as descriptive in nature. The data was collected by the secondary sources such as books, articles, reports, and newspapers. This qualitative study examines the phenomenon of religious intolerance as a threat to world peace. This study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of religious intolerance and its impact on world peace and stability. A qualitative approach makes it possible to explore the complexity and nuances of religious intolerance, allowing the researcher to identify patterns.

HISTORICAL IMPACT OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

History provides compelling evidence that religious intolerance, if addressed early, can lead to change and even change in the global political landscape. In many cases, religious differences have become entangled in battles for power or resources, turning ideological struggles into devastating wars. Below, the study examines some historical examples:

The European Wars of Religion (16th-17th Centuries): The Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Reformation sparked more than a dozen civil wars across Europe. In conflicts such as the French Revolutionary Wars and the Thirty Years' War, opposing sides fought brutally (Fletcher, 2018). During the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), between 4.5 and 8 million people, both soldiers and civilians, died in battles, famine, and disease. Some regions were completely devastated. Parts of Germany lost more than half of their population. These wars were not caused by theology: the political ambitions and territorial rivalries of the period exacerbated sectarian divisions. After all, religion was a rallying cry that justified extreme violence. The trauma of this long conflict ultimately forced European leaders to find a new principle for coexistence (Morrow, 2020). The Peace of Westphalia (1648) introduced the concept of *cuius regio, eius religio* (each ruler would determine the religion of his state) and presented the concept of more lasting religious tolerance as a practical necessity. It was born not of a sudden enlightenment but of exhaustion after generations of bloodshed. Even absolute monarchs recognized that imposing the "true" faith was less important than ending endless wars. Thus, from this terrible intolerance emerged the early modern principle that religious tolerance was essential to peace (PAJIN, 2018).

Partition of India (1947): Few events symbolize the deadly clash between religion and nationalism as clearly as the partition of British India. When colonial India was divided into two independent states, a Hindu-majority India and a Muslim-majority Pakistan, widespread religiously motivated violence erupted. Mobs of Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs clashed in passionate bloodshed. Communal riots and revenge killings spread across Punjab, Bengal and other regions. It became the largest human migration in history as people fled in opposite directions for safety with their devotees (GERVERS & POWELL, 2001). An estimated 15 million people were displaced during the collapse, and between one and two million died in the genocide. Trains carrying refugees were attacked, and entire villages were destroyed because of the religion of their inhabitants. The violence of partition left a deep scar on the collective psyche of India and Pakistan, breeding mistrust and hostility that led to further conflicts (including the full-scale wars of 1947, 1965, and 1971). The legacy of 1947 shows how religious intolerance, fueled by fear and rumours, would soon escalate into genocide-like situations. It also shows that political solutions that ignore sectarian tensions or, worse, exacerbate them, can destroy peace on a subcontinental scale.

Sectarian Violence in Modern India: Religious intolerance did not end the divide. Even today it continues to threaten India's peace. Since the Indian invasion, there have been hundreds of religious riots every decade. These incidents are usually carried out by extremists targeting minorities. For example, attacks on Muslims and Christians by some Hindu nationalist groups. In recent years, vigilantes have used religious sentiments to punish people (mostly Muslims) for slaughtering cows or eating beef and committing violence (Kumar & Banerjee, 2023). In 2017, for example, at least 10 Muslim men were killed across India by "cow protection" groups motivated by Hindu nationalist sentiments. These incidents show how religious intolerance spreads at the local level and sometimes results in bloodshed, disruption of social cohesion and internal peace. They also highlight the challenges of upholding the rule of law and protecting minority rights in an environment where extremist ideologies are gaining political influence (Gudavarthy, 2022). The Indian experience suggests that even outside of official war, persistent religious hatred manifests itself in unprecedented violence, discrimination, and fragile peace between communities.

The Bosnian War (1992-1995): The collapse of Yugoslavia led to prolonged ethnic and religious hatred in the 1990s, one of the most violent conflicts in Europe at the end of the 20th century. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, a multi-ethnic republic, the war pitted Orthodox Christian Serbs, Catholic Croats and Muslim Bosnians against each other in a struggle for territory and control (Stojic, 2016). Religious identity was intertwined with race, and nationalist leaders were reluctant to promote intolerance. The result was a campaign of ethnic cleansing that included mass deportations, torture, and genocide. About

100,000 people were killed during the Bosnian War, mostly Bosnians (Bosnian Muslims) who were persecuted because of their faith and ethnicity. The darkest chapter of the conflict came in July 1995, when Bosnian Serb forces captured Srebrenica, a UN sanctuary, and systematically murdered some 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys the largest massacre on European soil since the Holocaust (Ezekoma, 2020). The Bosnian War demonstrated how quickly neighbors can turn on each other when poisoned by sectarian propaganda and fear. Communities that had lived side by side for decades descended into brutality as war leaders weaponized religious and ethnic intolerance. Although the war finally ended with international intervention and the Dayton Peace Accords, Bosnia remains a divided society (Shahzadi & Hashmi, 2020). Even today, deep ethnoreligious divisions persist, and peace feels fragile a stark reminder that hatreds spread by war do not easily fade.

Israel-Palestine War: The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a very complicated issue. It is also the longest-running conflict in the Middle East. This conflict led to the terrible October 7th attacks. A military response followed, and both sides now face serious humanitarian problems. Israel declared war on Hamas and strengthened its blockade of the Gaza Strip on October 9, 2023. As a result, in January 2024, the International Court of Justice ruled that Israel's actions in Gaza could be described as genocide. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a long-standing conflict that has resulted in violence and gross human rights violations (Danfulani, Leawat, & Dinshak, 2024). Israel has launched a large-scale military campaign in Gaza, causing significant loss of life and property. Since October 7, 2023, 63,000 Palestinians have been killed, and nearly one million have been internally displaced. The conflict has created a severe humanitarian crisis, with the Gaza Strip facing famine and a collapsed healthcare system (Lin, 2021). The Israeli blockade has impeded the supply of essential goods such as food, water, and medicine. The UN General Assembly has overwhelmingly supported the call for Israel to withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territory. The International Court of Justice has also ruled that Israel's presence in the territory is illegal and that all states have a duty not to recognize the occupation (Swaraj, 2023). There are concerns that Israel's actions may amount to genocide, with UN experts and human rights organizations citing growing incitement to genocide and evidence of a clear intent to destroy the Palestinian people. The expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including the E1 plan, seeks to fragment Palestinian lands and undermine the viability of a future Palestinian state. The plan would separate East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank and confine Palestinians to more isolated areas. The conflict has resulted in significant civilian casualties, with an estimated 36,000 Palestinians killed since October 2023. Nearly one million Palestinians in Gaza have been internally displaced. The blockade has exacerbated the humanitarian crisis, preventing the delivery of essential humanitarian aid. Currently, the Palestine's Gaza is facing a high risk of famine, with one in five people at risk of dying from hunger (Gherardini, 2024). The World Health Organization has reported that Gaza is "facing one of the world's worst hunger crises, unfolding in real time." The Israeli blockade has blocked the delivery of essential goods, including food, water, medicine and fuel. This has caused widespread hardship, with people having to wait hours for basic items such as water and food. Millions of Palestinians have been forced to flee their homes due to Israeli evacuation orders, with no safe place to go. Since the blockade began, at least 57 children have died of malnutrition in Gaza. The health system is overwhelmed, and essential medical supplies are rapidly running out. Lack of access to bread, milk, medicines, clean water and sanitation facilities has increased the risk of disease outbreaks (Alzou'bi, 2025). The roots of the Israel-Palestinian conflict extend beyond Hamas's recent actions, with the Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank serving as a historical backdrop. Palestinians who support Hamas in Israel question its human rights abuses. Hamas's condemnation of the hostage-taking is tantamount to Israel's imprisonment of thousands of Palestinians, including women and children. The balance of power is clear: Israel bombs Gaza's civilian population, controls the fuel of the war, and restricts aid, acting as both oppressor and patron. Justifying the bombing of hospitals based on suspicions about Hamas, even if justified, raises ethical questions about targeting civilians along with Hamas members. The feud between these adversaries endures. Many

UN resolutions exist and the Security Council and General Assembly passed them. Both sides ignore most resolutions. They choose to follow what helps them most. (Frieden, 2020) . Arab backing for Palestinians appears to have faded. The United States has become a strong supporter of Israel. The Trump administration broke new ground in Israel-Arab ties. This shift seemed to harm the Palestinian cause. The World eagerly await an agreement to bring lasting peace. This deal should also build good ties and growth. It needs to guarantee basic freedoms, rights, and fairness. The road to peace in the region is a long and arduous. This makes finding a win-win solution that will be mutually acceptable and beneficial to both parties must be treaded carefully to ensure freedoms, rights, fairness, peace and dignity (Gherardini, 2024).

Israel-Iran War: Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution transformed its relationship with Israel from a strategic alliance to vehement opposition. The Iranian government views Israel as a colonial outpost promoting Western interests, while Israel views Iran's nuclear ambitions and its support for anti-Israel militant groups as existential threats. Iran's nuclear program is a major controversy, as Israel considers a nuclear-armed Iran an unacceptable threat to its security. Iran's uranium enrichment activities have been the subject of international scrutiny and sanctions (Service, 2025) .The two countries wage a proxy war, supporting opposing groups in regional conflicts. Iran supports Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Gaza, and Shiite militias in Iraq and Syria, while Israel counters Iranian influence through covert operations and military strikes (Alzou'bi, 2025). In April 2024, Israel carried out a precision strike on an Iranian military base in Isfahan in response to Iranian drone and missile attacks. Israel launched "Operation Rising Line" to target Iranian military and nuclear facilities. Iran responded with ballistic missile attacks, causing significant damage and casualties In June 2025. The conflict has increased tensions, with both sides engaging in direct military cyberattacks and confrontations. The conflict between Israel and Iran escalated when Hamas attacked southern Israel on October 7, 2023. Israel considers Iran's nuclear program an existential threat and has launched a military campaign to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons (Strategy, 2025) . Israel has carried out airstrikes against Iranian military and nuclear facilities, killing senior military officials and nuclear scientists. The attacks targeted the Fordow uranium enrichment plant, the Natanz nuclear facility, and the Isfahan Nuclear Technology Centre. Iran has responded by firing hundreds of missiles and drones at Israel, some of which penetrated the country's air defenses. Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has warned that any US military intervention would have "irreparable consequences." The United States has supported Israel in the conflict, and President Donald Trump ordered airstrikes against Iranian nuclear facilities in June 2025. The United States and Israel conducted joint military exercises in March 2025, seen as a warning to Tehran. Russia warned the United States against direct military aid to Israel, claiming it would destabilize the situation in the Middle East. The United Nations condemned the violence and called for diplomacy to resolve the conflict. It has caused countless casualties and material losses on both sides. (Strategy, 2025). The humanitarian situation is dire, with fears of possible retaliation and terrorist threats. This conflict ended with a ceasefire brokered by US President Donald Trump after 12 days of fierce fighting. Israel and Iran agreed to a mutual ceasefire, in which Israel halted attacks on Iranian nuclear facilities and Iran halted its missile attacks on Israel. The ceasefire was negotiated through US-led diplomatic efforts, with Qatar playing a key role in persuading Iran to accept the terms. Both countries claimed victory, and Israel claimed to have achieved its objectives of curtailing Iran's nuclear program and weakening its military capability. Iran demonstrated its ability to retaliate and inflict damage on Israel, while suffering heavy losses (Alzou'bi, 2025) . The ceasefire has held, with occasional minor incidents reported but no major escalation. Diplomatic efforts are ongoing to ensure a lasting peace and potentially resume talks on Iran's nuclear program. The conflict has raised security concerns and regional instability, with potential repercussions for global oil supplies and maritime security. The international community is turning to diplomacy to resolve the conflict. However, the situation remains volatile, with no signs of de-escalation by either side. The conflict could escalate further, involving other countries and leading to a wider regional war (socradar, 2025).

These cases, not detailed here (such as the Crusades of the medieval period or sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland during the late 20th century), demonstrate a consistent truth: religious intolerance is a source of conflict and an obstacle to peace. Often, it does not act alone; it is connected to political, regional, or ethnic grievances. For instance, in European wars and the Bosnian conflict, religious rhetoric provided a convenient justification for violence, which was also driven by power politics and nationalism. Similarly, the Partition of India was influenced equally by colonial politics and sectarian insecurity as by theological differences (Service, 2025). Yet in each situation, it was the depiction of the "other" as a dangerous infidel or heretic that enabled ordinary people to commit or accept extraordinary atrocities. Consequently, history clearly shows that when religious intolerance is unchecked, it can sometimes tear the social fabric beyond repair.

NUCLEAR DETERRENCE AND PEACE IN RELIGIOUSLY TENSE REGIONS

The nuclear deterrence strategy is the most controversial. Deterrence theory states that when each adversary is capable of inflicting unacceptable destruction (especially through nuclear weapons), both sides are deterred from initiating a war due to the threat of devastating retaliation. This principle of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) is often credited with preventing direct superpower confrontation during the Cold War. It is a key element of strategic stability in many unstable regions (Hayat & Malik, 2022). However, the role of deterrence in maintaining peace amid religious and ideological conflict is complex and contradictory, as seen in regions such as South Asia and the Middle East. Proponents of nuclear deterrence argue that it has established a high-stakes balance that maintains peace (Lillis & Suleman, 2018).

The nuclear deterrence strategy is highly contentious. The deterrence theory states that when an adversary can cause unacceptable damage, particularly with nuclear weapons, both sides avoid initiating conflict because of the threat of retaliation. The concept of mutually assured destruction (MAD) is often cited to prevent superpower conflicts during the Cold War. It remains a crucial element of strategic stability in many volatile regions (Pajin, 2021). However, the role of deterrence in maintaining peace during religious and ideological conflicts is complex and sometimes contradictory, as seen in South Asian and Middle Eastern contexts. Proponents of nuclear deterrence argue that it has fostered a greater balance of power that encourages peace. During the Cold War, for example, the United States and the Soviet Union amassed vast arsenals but refrained from using them against each other. By threatening "unacceptable costs" essentially the destruction of entire cities, nuclear weapons established a grim balance that neither side was willing to challenge (Clarke, Powell, & Savulescu, 2021). This logic also applies to regional rivalries with religious undertones. In South Asia, India and Pakistan have fought several wars since their independence. However, since both acquired nuclear capabilities (India in 1974, Pakistan in 1998), they have avoided another full-scale war. Despite frequent border skirmishes and crises, neither country has dared to escalate to full invasion, indicating that nuclear deterrence keeps them in check. In fact, after their 1998 nuclear tests, conflicts have largely remained localized, such as the 1999 Kargil conflict in Kashmir, which was contained before escalating into a larger war (Ge, 2025). This pattern suggests that when the cost of war could mean nuclear catastrophe, rational leaders tend to step back from the brink. Similarly, in the Middle East, Israel, a nation born from the ashes of the Holocaust and surrounded by historically hostile neighbours, is widely believed to possess around 90 nuclear warheads for deterrence purposes. Israel's undeclared nuclear arsenal functions as the ultimate safeguard of its survival in a region marked by religious and ideological conflicts. Some analysts believe this deterrent has discouraged neighbouring countries from attempting another full-scale invasion, as occurred in the major Arab-Israeli wars before Israel's nuclearisation. In theory, then, nuclear weapons act as a form of insurance: they defend against existential threats by making any potential aggressor think twice. Advocates also highlight

an “indefinable additional diplomatic clout” associated with nuclear status, which can enhance a nation’s negotiating position and dissuade opponents from intimidation (Limon, Ghanea, & Power, 2025).

However, the reality of nuclear deterrence in religiously charged conflicts is far more problematic than the theory suggests. First, deterrence may prevent large formal wars, but it does nothing to resolve the underlying religious animosities or territorial disputes that fuel tensions. The case of India and Pakistan is illustrative: nuclear weapons did not erase the bitter feud over Kashmir or reduce communal hatred; they simply forced the rivals to seek limited, proxy, or sub-conventional ways of hurting each other without crossing the nuclear threshold. The result has been a persistent state of low-grade conflict and a series of dangerous brinkmanship incidents (such as the 2001 Parliament attack crisis, the 2019 Pulwama/Balakot strikes, and a major scare in 2025) that could *accidentally* spiral out of control. Deterrence has thus produced a tense peace, but not a trusting peace (Service, 2025). In the Middle East as well, Israel’s nuclear deterrent has not brought harmony with its neighbours; war and violence short of an existential invasion from intifadas and insurgencies to sporadic conflicts like the Lebanon and Gaza wars continue unabated. The acquisition of nuclear weapons cannot solve issues such as the statelessness of the Palestinian people or the sectarian power struggle in the region. At best, some aspects of society are paralyzed by fear (Alzou’bi, 2025).

Moreover, the policy of deterrence presents serious risks and ethical problems. By its very nature, deterrence relies on trust; leaders must fear mass destruction in a way that prevents war. This means that peace can only be maintained through violence, which is always dangerous. It is a “bad peace,” based not on reconciliation or justice but on fear and fragile security. Such peace is impersonal and affects the mind. As one study notes, a world under nuclear siege is like a city about to collapse under the shadow of a rampart. Everyone is safe until the siege collapses, at which point nothing catastrophic happens. And history has shown that there is no such thing as a failure: the risk of accident, recklessness, or irrational decision leading to nuclear war is never zero. Many experts warn that it “denies the credibility of the notion that nuclear weapons will never be used,” whether by mistake or by design, if it remains stagnant (Hayat & Malik, 2022). The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 and the many close calls that followed have shown how easy it is to avoid disaster. In areas of religious extremism or weak command and control structures, the prospect of nuclear weapons falling into the hands of interested parties or being violently disposed of is a real nightmare (Ruepke & Veltri, 2023).

The nuclear deterrent is of no value in preventing the current threats posed by religious intolerance. Interception is fundamentally a state-centric concept it assumes a rational governmental enemy with a return address. It is largely “ineffective against religious persecution, social violence, or the actions of violent non-state actors.” Nuclear weapons cannot stop suicide bombings, mass killings of a majority against a minority in a country, or terrorist groups inciting sectarian violence. The “threat of city destruction” on which nuclear deterrence is based has no deterrent effect on fanatical militias or mobs, and the use of such weapons in these circumstances would be unthinkable (Alzou’bi, 2025). For example, Pakistan’s nuclear weapons have done nothing to deter extremist groups from attacking religious minorities in Pakistan, and cannot be used to retaliate against such internal violence. Similarly, Israel’s nuclear weapons cannot protect Israeli citizens from terrorist attacks or sectarian violence. In these cases, the solution must come from intelligence, police, political reform and social welfare, not from the army at great expense (Hayat & Malik, 2022).

Finally, moral and humanitarian criticisms of nuclear deterrence are growing, especially from religious and moral leaders. The strategy essentially holds civilian populations hostage: peace is not maintained by the threat of destroying cities full of innocent people if a ceasefire fails. This runs counter to the principles of just war and international humanitarian law, which prohibit the targeting of civilians (Ruepke & Veltri,

2023). Some religious institutions have begun to openly question whether the mere possession of nuclear weapons can be morally acceptable. For example, the Catholic Church, after decades of strict tolerance for their purchase, has moved in recent years to strongly condemn nuclear weapons. Pope Francis has said that not only the use but also the possession of nuclear weapons is “immoral,” breaking with previous positions that saw deterrence as a temporary necessity on the path to disarmament. This reflects a deep understanding that deterrence theory requires its practitioners to live in a morally grey zone, always ready to wreak havoc (Zalec & Pavlikova, 2019). Moreover, today’s nuclear weapons far exceed what is required for deterrence. So-called “weapons of mass destruction” could destroy humanity many times over, raising many ethical questions about the proportionality and quantity of such destructive power. Beyond ethics, the security problem is whether deterrence by one nation threatens another. In fact, distrust between adversaries perpetuates an era in which each side is forced to maintain or expand its arsenal out of fear of the other’s intentions. This dynamic could be particularly dangerous in regions of religious and ideological hostility; as mutual suspicions grow. The Indian, Pakistani, Israeli, and Iranian situations illustrate how a lack of trust and communication and historical grievances make it difficult to move away from deterrence, even if doing so would enhance long-term security for all parties (Ruepke & Veltri, 2023).

Overall, a ban on nuclear weapons in religiously charged areas offers a fragile and costly peace. It may prevent the worst-case scenarios of direct superpower war or major international aggression, but it "increases the potential for fear, instability, and destructive conflict" in the long run. The peace it upholds is negative, an absence of war, rather than positive the presence of justice and reconciliation. And crucially, it leaves untouched (or even exacerbates) the root causes of religious hostility. As the next section discusses, relying on sheer military power to protect people from religious violence addresses the symptoms rather than the disease.

DEBATING MILITARY POWER AS PROTECTION FOR RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

When faced with acute episodes of religious persecution or the threat of genocide against a minority group, the international community often grapples with a wrenching question: Should powerful defence mechanisms be used to protect the vulnerable? In extreme cases, this could mean military intervention by advanced armies or even the threat of nuclear retaliation by a guarantor state to deter aggressors (Oluyemi, 2021). The ethical and strategic calculus here is complex. On one hand, there is a moral imperative to save lives and stop atrocities; on the other hand, employing massive force (especially nuclear weapons) can carry immense costs and risks (Levy, 2020). The study outlines the main arguments for and against the use of overwhelming military power to protect religious minorities:

Arguments in Favor of Using Strong Defense Mechanisms

Deterrence of Aggressors: A robust military defence or the backing of a powerful ally can deter hostile majorities or extremist groups from attacking a minority community. Advocates note that many genocides and pogroms occur precisely because perpetrators assume their targets are weak and no outside power will intervene. The presence of peacekeeping forces or an external security guarantee (a “protector” state) raises the potential cost of aggression. For example, during the Bosnian War, the eventual involvement of NATO’s advanced military (through airstrikes in 1995) helped halt the ethnic cleansing and forced the parties to the negotiating table. The implicit message was that continued mass violence would be met with superior force. Similarly, one could argue that had a credible military threat existed, atrocities like the Rwandan genocide of 1994 might have been prevented or curtailed (Angeletti, Medda-Windischer, & Wonisch, 2021). In a nuclear context, some analysts have posited that a nuclear umbrella provided by a superpower can protect threatened populations by deterring state-level aggression. For instance, NATO’s

doctrine during the Cold War extended the U.S. nuclear umbrella to European allies, which not only deterred Soviet invasion but also indirectly safeguarded Western Europe's diverse religious communities from the imposition of an alien ideology. The overarching idea is that a powerful defence can buy time and security for minorities while diplomatic or longer-term solutions are pursued (Chapman, 2020).

Emergency Rescue Operations: Proponents also argue that advanced militaries can be used in a more surgical way to physically save victims of religious persecution. This includes humanitarian interventions or "responsibility to protect" missions, where military force is used to create safe corridors, enforce no-fly zones, or liberate areas under genocidal siege (Guth & Nelsen, 2025). For example, in 2014, as the Islamic State (ISIS) massacred the Yazidi religious minority in Iraq, an act of extreme religious intolerance a US-led coalition launched airstrikes and provided military assistance that helped break the ISIS siege of Mount Sinjar, saving thousands of Yazidi lives. In such situations, the use of force is presented as morally justified and necessary to prevent an imminent atrocity (Alzou'bi, 2025). Advanced militaries have the logistics, training, and firepower to carry out rescue missions that weaker forces could not: they can airlift besieged people to safety, deliver aid under enemy fire, and pursue perpetrators. The argument here is fundamentally moral: if we have the power to stop mass evil, isn't it our duty to use it? Under this approach, powerful countries and alliances should act as protectors of last resort for vulnerable religious minorities, enforcing international norms against genocide and ethnic cleansing (Limon, Ghana, & Power, 2025).

Arguments Against or Limitations of Using Strong Force

Escalation and Collateral Damage: Critics have warned that the large-scale deployment of military force, even for ostensibly humanitarian reasons, can lead to a wider war and unnecessary suffering. Military interventions often escalate violence in the short term. They can provoke reprisals by perpetrators or their allies and prolong the conflict. In the Bosnian example, while NATO's intervention played a significant role in ending the war, it also resulted in civilian casualties from airstrikes and had to deal with the failure of previous UN peacekeeping missions (such as the Srebrenica tragedy) (Hafeez, 2023). Furthermore, the introduction of external force can sometimes internationalize the conflict, with rival great powers or neighbouring states engaging in proxy wars. We see this in Syria, where what began as an internal sectarian conflict has turned into a multi-front war with the participation of foreign militants, making the path to peace much more complicated. The use of nuclear weapons, of course, would be even more catastrophic – deploying nuclear arms to protect a minority is virtually unthinkable because it would kill countless innocents in the process (Cohen, 2023). Any deterrent threat to use nukes on an aggressor's cities means accepting the massacre of that country's civilian population, which presents an untenable moral trade-off. Thus, opponents argue that, however noble the intention, wielding overwhelming force can make a bad situation worse, and the collateral damage might outweigh the lives saved. Even high-precision modern militaries cannot guarantee the safety of civilians caught in the crossfire.

Legitimacy and Long-Term Efficacy: There are also serious concerns about political legitimacy and the long-term effectiveness of protecting minorities through force. Military interventions often lack broad international approval or consensus, especially when undertaken by coalitions of the willing rather than a U.N. mandate. They can be seen as neo-imperialist or meddling in the affairs of sovereign countries, which can fuel further resentment and unnecessary propaganda (ironically, sometimes exacerbating their suffering in the long run by portraying minorities as "agents" of foreign powers). Moreover, when the immediate problem is over, foreign troops eventually withdraw (Grzebyk, 2020). But if latent hatreds in society are not addressed, violence can flare up again. Post-intervention stories from places like Iraq or Bosnia show that true peace cannot be achieved by military force alone. Without reconciliation efforts, power-sharing agreements, and justice for past crimes, intense military conflict can lead to chaos after the

troops withdraw. Critics point out that protecting people with guns is a temporary solution. It does nothing to protect people once the weapons are gone (Bohigas, Brunet, & Camps-Febrer, 2023). Furthermore, the excessive use of force can allow the international community to gracefully avoid the difficult task of negotiating and peacemaking. For example, a ban on nuclear weapons may deter attacks but can also create rigidity and divert attention from discussing the underlying conflicts (Hafeez, 2023). In some cases, the threat of external force even gives extremists a recruitment tool they rally support by claiming their religion or sovereignty is under attack by foreign “crusaders,” thereby perpetuating the cycle of intolerance and conflict (Alzou’bi, 2025).

Moral and Legal Dilemmas: Finally, from a moral standpoint, the use of massive military power raises the question: Do ends justify the means? Is it acceptable to violate state sovereignty and engage in warfare, with all the suffering it brings, to stop some other evil like ethnic cleansing? International law does permit intervention under certain conditions (e.g. the Responsibility to Protect doctrine), but these criteria are often contentious and selectively applied (Alzou’bi, 2025). If great powers invoke humanitarian reasons as a pretext, it can erode the credibility of genuine interventions. On the nuclear front, threatening to unleash nuclear devastation even in retaliation for genocide violates fundamental humanitarian principles. The Vatican view (which represents the main voice of religious morality) insists that the “threat of mass destruction” inherent in the prohibition of nuclear weapons is incompatible with genuine peace. Peace achieved by silently intimidating a potential aggressor is unjust and undermines the morale of the defender. Moreover, military action can undermine the resolve of others (Bohigas, Brunet, & Camps-Febrer, 2023). Once the bombs start falling, it becomes increasingly difficult to reach a consensus or resolve serious issues, as trust is lost and positions are exacerbated. Critics, therefore, call for greater caution in the use of force: while it may sometimes be necessary to prevent genocide, failure to prevent often sows the seeds of future conflict.

Weighing up these arguments, it is clear that there are no easy answers. Strong protective measures can indeed save lives in emergencies and deter attackers, but they come with significant costs and limitations. They treat the symptoms (stopping the violence in the meantime) but not the disease (the intolerance and hatred that fueled the violence) (Hafeez, 2023). As one analysis succinctly noted, military might can create space for diplomacy, but it cannot replace the need for it. Ultimately, protecting religious minorities and achieving any semblance of lasting peace will require engaging with the deeper issues at hand. The next section turns to those root causes and long-term strategies, recognizing that without curing the underlying malady of intolerance, humanity will be stuck applying one violent Band-Aid after another to its wounds (Hafeez, 2023).

ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

If religious intolerance is a primary fuel for conflict, then quelling that intolerance at its source is essential for building a durable peace. Military deterrence or interventions, as we have seen, may stop a war or a massacre, but they cannot extinguish the mindset of hatred. That task requires social, educational, political, and spiritual remedies. This section explores the deep-rooted causes of religious intolerance and outlines strategies to address them, thereby attacking the problem preventively rather than reactively (Bohigas, Brunet, & Camps-Febrer, 2023). It is a multifaceted challenge, as intolerance is woven from theological, psychological, and socio-economic threads.

Ideological Rigidity and Exclusivist Theologies: A significant root cause of intolerance lies in certain interpretations of religious doctrine that leave little room for pluralism (Alzou’bi, 2025). Many religions preach peace and love, yet when adherents believe “only one God...should be worshipped; all other gods should be damned” (a sentiment historically present in some strains of Judaism, Christianity, Islam and

others), it can breed a zeal to *correct* or eliminate those deemed to be in error. To address this cause, religious thought itself may need to evolve. Scholars and progressive theologians often call for reinterpretation of exclusivist tenets, finding within each faith a theology of inclusivity or at least a humility that acknowledges the rights of others to differ. Promoting interpretations that emphasize common humanity over doctrinal differences can undercut the “us vs. them” mentality (BARNAS, 2023). Of course, such shifts cannot be imposed from outside; they must come from within religious communities through introspection and dialogue. Nonetheless, it is clear that so long as large groups remain convinced that those of other faiths are damned or evil, true peace will remain elusive. Encouraging a more pluralistic mindset one that says “*my faith is true for me, but I accept that others find truth in theirs*”, is a challenging but crucial long-term project.

Social Psychology: In-Group/Out-Group Dynamics and Fear: Humans have a natural tendency to form in-groups (people like “us”) and out-groups (“others”). Religion often provides a powerful in-group identity. While this can foster community and solidarity, it can also lead to prejudice against outsiders, especially when communities feel threatened. People may “improve their standing within the group by looking down on other groups”, seeking a positive self-image by denigrating the “other”. Political leaders and demagogues frequently exploit these tendencies: by stoking fear that another religious group aims to harm or dominate, they rally their base and distract from other issues (Hafeez, 2023). For instance, in many conflicts (from the Balkans to the Middle East), rumours and propaganda paint the other side as an existential threat to one’s religion and way of life, activating a defensive intolerance that can justify pre-emptive violence. Additionally, when societies undergo crises (economic hardship, rapid change), people are more prone to seek scapegoats; often, a religious minority becomes the target of blame for misfortunes, as tragically happened to European Jews in various periods culminating in the Holocaust. Efforts like interfaith dialogues (discussed more below), community exchange programs, and public campaigns that humanize minority groups can chip away at stereotypes. When members of different faiths interact in everyday life on equal footing, the “dialogue of life” becomes harder to demonize each other. Breaking down social segregation is key; diverse schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods can foster familiarity and friendships across faith lines. Governments and civil society should also actively combat hate speech and disinformation (Bohigas, Brunet, & Camps-Febrer, 2023). For example, enacting and enforcing laws against incitement to religious hatred and promoting responsible journalism that fact-checks and debunks sectarian rumors, can reduce the spread of toxic narratives. The core idea is to address the fear and ignorance that feed intolerance: when people no longer see those of other religions as a frightening “other” but rather as neighbors and fellow citizens, the psychological groundwork for peace is laid.

Religious Fundamentalism and Extremism: Religious fundamentalism, the strict, literal adherence to perceived “fundamentals” of a faith, is strongly linked to intolerance. Studies have found that a fundamentalist orientation correlates with higher prejudice and authoritarian attitudes. When an individual believes their scripture is infallible and must be applied in totality to modern life, they may also believe that *anyone* who diverges from those dictates is not just different, but wicked or dangerous (Limon, Ghanea, & Power, 2025). This mindset is evident in extremist groups that insist on imposing a singular religious law over society, violently if necessary. Fundamentalism is often associated with a sense of self-righteousness and a rejection of pluralism. It can also create a sense of siege. Fundamentalists often feel that their pure faith is under attack from religious intolerance or other religions, suggesting a defence of intolerance. Countering religious fundamentalism is subtle. It is not the same as attacking the religion itself, but rather encouraging a more nuanced, contextual, and sensitive interpretation of the faith. Education also plays an important role: Research suggests that when religious education teaches critical thinking and a practical understanding of Scripture, believers are less likely to become extremists. Encouraging a shift from literalism to a more symbolic or historical reading of Scripture can reduce the

arguments that can be used to justify intolerance. In addition, supporting moderate religious leaders who speak out against extremism can influence followers. Around the world, many imams, priests, rabbis, and monks actively promote messages of tolerance and coexistence rooted in their traditions these voices need amplification (Hafeez, 2023). Simultaneously, it is important to address the appeal of fundamentalism: often it thrives in environments of social upheaval, identity crisis, or political voids. Offering young people alternative pathways for meaning and community (for instance, through civic engagement, arts, sports, etc.) can reduce the lure of extremist sects. The fight against fundamentalism is partly a battle of ideas and partly about improving the socio-economic conditions that make extremist ideologies attractive to the disenchanted.

Political Manipulation and Institutionalized Intolerance: Another root cause is the deliberate manipulation of religion by those seeking power. History provides many instances of leaders who stoke religious divisions to “consolidate political control or suppress dissent”. By turning a conflict into a holy cause, they galvanize support and distract from other grievances. This dynamic was observed in the Yugoslav wars, where nationalist politicians resurrected historical religious grudges to justify modern territorial ambitions. It is also seen in some authoritarian regimes that align themselves with a dominant religion and cast minority faiths as subversive or aligned with foreign enemies (for example, labelling a minority as traitors or extremists to justify crackdowns) (Limon, Ghanea, & Power, 2025). Moreover, institutionalized intolerance, such as state religions with discriminatory laws, or education systems that promote one faith to the denigration of others, entrenches social divisions. Governance must be addressed to eliminate intolerance. Secular states or pluralistic legal frameworks are more conducive to religious peace. This does not mean eliminating religion from public life, but rather ensuring that no group is officially supported or persecuted (Alzou’bi, 2025). Equal citizenship, regardless of faith, should be a cornerstone. Legal reforms could include abolishing blasphemy and apostasy laws that criminalise religious dissent, and implementing stronger protections for freedom of religion or belief. When citizens see that the state will protect their rights and hold perpetrators of religious hate crimes accountable, it builds confidence in peaceful coexistence. On the other hand, political leaders who exploit sectarian divisions should be challenged at the national level (through democratic pressure and civil society activism) and at the international level (by exposing and condemning hate speech). Conflict prevention diplomacy can also focus on this angle: for example, in countries at risk of sectarian conflict, mediators can work with power brokers to help them build inclusive governments and address grievances that would otherwise be exploited by demagogues. In short, disarming the political weaponization of religion is vital (Bohigas, Brunet, & Camps-Febrer, 2023). As long as it remains politically profitable to inflame religious passions, some will do so. Changing those incentives through education, democratization, and accountability can reduce the frequency with which religion is twisted into a tool of war.

Socio-Economic Inequality and Grievances: Although religious intolerance often appears driven by ideology alone, it usually has material underpinnings. Poverty, lack of opportunity, and inequality between groups can exacerbate tensions. If a minority is seen (fairly or not) as controlling wealth or jobs, it can become a target of resentment. Conversely, if a minority is economically marginalized and segregated, that isolation can breed mistrust and radicalization. Many conflicts that wear a religious mask are also fights over land, resources, or political representation, with religion marking the divide between “haves” and “have-nots.” Therefore, any sustainable solution must include a development and justice component. Addressing systemic inequalities and grievances removes the soil in which hatred grows (Limon, Ghanea, & Power, 2025). This could mean affirmative inclusion policies for historically persecuted groups, equitable economic investment in regions dominated by minority communities, and power-sharing arrangements in government. For example, peace processes in places like Northern Ireland and Lebanon have included agreements to ensure that all religious groups have a voice in governance and fair access to public resources. Reducing youth unemployment and improving education in

disenfranchised communities also cuts off recruitment pools for extremist movements. Another socioeconomic factor is the funding of violence; many religious extremist groups are bankrolled by sponsors exploiting local frustrations. International cooperation to “block the flow of money and weapons” to such groups is a concrete step toward peace (Bohigas, Brunet, & Camps-Febrer, 2023). Ultimately, a society that is more equal and just will be less prone to internal conflict, because citizens have fewer reasons to rally against each other along religious lines. As one report concluded, intolerance is often “exacerbated by or intertwined with underlying economic, territorial, and political issues,” so those issues must be part of the cure.

Education and Interfaith Dialogue: If there is one theme that resonates across all root causes and solutions, it is the transformative power of education and dialogue. Education not just formal schooling, but public enlightenment in the broadest sense, is perhaps the most powerful antidote to intolerance. Quality education can impart critical thinking, empathy, and an accurate understanding of one’s own and others’ beliefs. In many divided societies, communities have shockingly little knowledge about each other, breeding mistrust. Introducing inclusive religious studies or ethics curricula can change that (Limon, Ghana, & Power, 2025). For instance, teaching children about multiple faiths – their histories, values, and contributions can cultivate respect and “religious literacy”. When students learn about different traditions in an open-minded environment, stereotypes begin to dissolve. They see that each religion has internal diversity and that most ordinary believers, regardless of faith, share common human values. Evidence suggests that such critical religious education “provides the tools to critically analyse one’s belief system while cultivating respect for others”, thereby reducing prejudice. Beyond schools, public awareness campaigns and cultural exchanges can serve a similar role for adults. Interfaith dialogue programs are especially crucial in conflict-prone areas (Hafeez, 2023). These initiatives bring together leaders or members of different faith communities for sustained conversations, joint projects, and relationship-building. The goal is not theological debate or conversion, but understanding. Regular interfaith forums can defuse tensions during crises by providing channels of communication. On a grassroots level, communities have engaged in “twinning” their institutions, e.g., a mosque and a synagogue partnering for service projects to build solidarity (Alzou’bi, 2025). According to peacebuilders, interfaith engagement can “challenge stereotypes, reduce prejudice, and foster mutual understanding”. It is much harder for extremists to vilify a group that you know and respect. Interfaith networks have, in some cases, acted as early warning systems and mediators when hate crimes or conflicts loomed, stopping violence before it exploded. Importantly, such dialogues need to be ongoing and widespread to truly shift societal attitudes; one-off events are not enough. Over time, however, these efforts can nurture what might be called a culture of dialogue, an expectation that differences will be worked out through conversation and compromise, not force (Limon, Ghana, & Power, 2025).

When these various approaches are pursued together, theological openness, social integration, combating extremism, just governance, economic inclusion, and education/dialogue, they reinforce each other to gradually drain the poison of religious intolerance. This is undeniably a long-term endeavour. It may take decades or generations to see full results. Yet, as many scholars and activists have pointed out, this is the only path to a *positive peace*, one that is sustained by the presence of harmony and justice, not merely the absence of war (Bohigas, Brunet, & Camps-Febrer, 2023). In the interim, maintaining security through deterrence or intervention might sometimes be necessary, but those measures must be paired with proactive peacebuilding. As one analysis summarized, “focusing on societal transformation, institutional strengthening, and human development are essential complements to, and ultimately more sustainable than, military deterrence” (Hafeez, 2023). In other words, to truly safeguard religious minorities and indeed all of society, soft power solutions (education, dialogue, law, development) need to do the heavy lifting that hard power cannot.

CONCLUSION

The evidence and arguments presented in this paper lead to an unequivocal conclusion: religious intolerance constitutes a profound and enduring threat to global peace. Time and again, intolerance rooted in faith-based animosity has ignited violence from pre-modern wars and persecutions to contemporary acts of terror and ethnic cleansing. We have seen that while powerful defence mechanisms (like nuclear deterrence or military intervention) can sometimes prevent or contain conflict in the short term, they offer, at best, a precarious “negative peace”. Such peace is devoid of trust and stability, maintained only by fear of retaliation or the temporary presence of troops. It is inherently unstable, as underlying tensions remain unresolved and can flare up as soon as the deterrent weakens or the forces leave. Moreover, military-centric solutions often carry moral and practical limitations. Nuclear weapons are useless in addressing domestic persecution and pose an existential risk to humanity, while even well-intentioned humanitarian interventions can backfire or fall short of rebuilding a just peace. In contrast, true and lasting peace what peace researchers call *positive peace* cannot be achieved without confronting the deep-seated root causes of religious intolerance. These root causes include ideological exclusivism (the belief that only one absolute truth must prevail), which fosters a mindset incapable of coexisting with difference. They include the fundamentalist impulse that breeds hatred and violence in the name of purity. They include the propaganda and misinformation that demonize the other and justify inhumane acts. And they include the socio-economic and political inequalities that allow demagogues to exploit religious divisions. Ignoring these underlying drivers is not a viable option; doing so would “condemn humanity to a cycle of conflict”, where episodes of fragile peace are merely pauses between resurging violence. History clearly shows that peace is built on sand whenever these causes are not addressed. A society may enjoy fighting, but if intolerance, fear, and perceptions of injustice persist, the provocation of a sympathetic hate preacher, an economic shock, a political catastrophe can quickly destroy peace. Therefore, the international community and national leaders must move from a path of peace to a practical, preventive strategy. What is most important is a fundamental shift: Instead of relying solely on weapons and deterrence, we must invest in building a global culture of peace and tolerance. This involves a multifaceted approach, combining preventive measures with profound social change. Key components of this approach include:

Strengthening the Rule of Law and Human Rights: All countries must ensure equality before the law and religious freedom for all. Strong legal protections must ensure that minorities are protected from discrimination and persecution. Governments must prevent and punish hate crimes, incitement to violence and discriminatory policies against any religious group. If necessary, constitutional amendments may be required to eliminate state bias and create a national system that respects all beliefs. A robust justice system that holds religious offenders accountable is a powerful deterrent to future intolerance. It demonstrates that society as a whole will not tolerate intolerance.

Prioritizing Education and Religious Literacy: Global education programs should include components that promote interfaith tolerance, critical thinking, and respect for diversity. By teaching about different religions with truth and compassion, schools can dispel myths and reduce the fear of the unknown that often breeds prejudice. Education should also promote the universal values of human rights, compassion, and critical examination of extremist narratives. This investment in youth is a long-term vaccination against the poison of hate. As today’s children grow up learning about peace and respect, tomorrow’s societies will be more vulnerable to violence.

Fostering Interfaith Dialogue and Empathy: More platforms for meaningful dialogue between different religious communities are needed. Governments, NGOs, and religious organizations can conduct exchange programs, joint community service projects, and dialogue at local, national, and international levels. These interactions foster personal relationships that humanize the “other” and help find common

ground. When trust grows, communities are less likely to believe satanic propaganda and more likely to stand up for everyone's rights. In short, the establishment of interfaith harmony looks like a peace treaty at the very least – a signature of hearts and minds rather than paper.

Addressing Socio-Economic and Political Grievances: Peace efforts must be comprehensive they must address the political, economic, and social inequalities that are intertwined with religious conflicts. This includes brokering just solutions to territorial or governance disputes that are often framed in religious terms (such as the status of Jerusalem or the sharing of power in pluralistic societies). This includes empowering marginalized communities through development initiatives, so that no group feels hopeless or abandoned. It also includes fighting corruption and promoting good governance, so that people do not lose faith in peace politics and do not resort to sectarianism. By healing these old wounds, we deprive extremists of fertile ground for recruitment and reduce the desperation that fuels fanaticism.

Achieving these goals is undoubtedly a difficult task. It requires collective efforts, from international institutions like the United Nations to local religious councils in small towns. It also requires patience and unwavering commitment, as results may be slow to emerge. But the stakes are high. This is a universal norm.

In conclusion, world peace is not simply the absence of war, but the presence of justice, understanding, and goodwill among people. Such peace cannot be imposed by armies or secured by stockpiles of weapons. It must be built into people's perceptions of their neighbors and the values that guide their societies. Religious intolerance is a poison that erodes these foundations of peace, but it is not incurable. Through enlightened education, compassionate interaction, and equitable development, humanity can overcome even its deep-rooted differences. The idea of harmonious coexistence among all religions need not be utopian. Indeed, it is the only sustainable path to security in our diverse and interconnected world. By eradicating intolerance, we move closer to a future where no community lives in fear because of what it believes, and where differences in religion are respected rather than perceived as threats. Our moral duty is to secure for present and future generations a future that we ignore at our own peril, but which we embrace for the sake of our collective progress.

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