



# Peace building and youth against religious violence extremism in Unguja

## Global Exchange on Religion in Society

This study was designed by  
GERIS Team and Adelina Sambala



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## Executive summary

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Zanzibar is an archipelago off the coast of Tanzania with an estimated population of 1.3 million from 2012 population and census of Tanzania. It is a semi-autonomous state within the United Republic of Tanzania that elects its own president and legislature. Zanzibar law overall is governed by the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, which grants rights to freedom of association and of religion, cultural, and political pluralism. But Zanzibar is almost entirely Muslim (2010 est.), and Islam is the dominant and most-practiced religion in the Island. Religious freedom is understood to be necessary for peace, prosperity, and democracy, yet in Zanzibar and the Coastal Region of Tanzania, peace, prosperity, and democracy are decreasing because of inter-religious conflict. In the recent past years, religious types of conflicts involving Christians and Muslims have taken place. These have included acid violent attacks, religious, Christian's murder, destruction and burning of properties, accusations of favoritism, religious discrimination, religious riots, and disputes about religious vs. national identity. International Religious Freedom Reports indicates several incidence of attack targeting Christian religious leaders has been taking place Zanzibar region. example; 2013, a Catholic Reverend was attacked with acid in the Stone Town area of Zanzibar and critically injured, in 2014 alone, a mob threw explosives at an Evangelist church in Pangawe, a bomb was detonated in the entrance of the Mkunazini Cathedral in Zanzibar. <https://www.churchinneed.org/for-faithful-and-their-priests-in-zanzibar-bitter-memories-of-time-of-terror/>. This study found out that over 39% of the youths still need to establish sustainable forums for youth to voice their opinions in a civil way that promotes the religiously diverse society. 40% still needs knowledge to prevent a relapse into violent conflict perpetuated by religious leaders who exploit youthful willingness to perpetrate violence. , 46% of the participants highlighted that their Enhanced capacity for peace building and reconciliation among youth for both religions for Peace building and youth against religious violence extremism in Unguja, Zanzibar.

This policy brief recommends that community and youth leaders should play the role of education in conflict-affected regions because has received increased attention during the past decade because of its impact on the achievement of the education-related Millennium Development Goals. These goals will only be achieved through successfully accessing youth in conflict-affected contexts, who are among the hardest to reach and transform transition justice and reconciliation.

### **Target Audiences:**

#### **Primary:**

- Decision-makers and actors
- Young religious leaders.
- Development actors influencing peace issue at local level
- Youth leaders and organizations directly engage in youth-related in transition justice and reconciliation.

#### **Secondary**

- Young researchers
- Transitional justice and reconciliation professional at all levels
- EU policy makers and development actors at global and regional level
- Geris team

## Introduction

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In Zanzibar religious leaders has driven interreligious tensions and is believed by local stakeholders to have helped inspire at least eight recorded attacks from 2012 to 2014 on Muslim and Christian leaders and on churches and mosques in Zanzibar. These incidents included the murder of a Catholic priest and the torching of a church in February 2013; an acid assault on two British tourists in Stone Town in August 2013; and an explosion at a mosque in June 2014.<sup>22</sup>

However, whether religious messaging is the primary driver of such attacks is difficult to ascertain. When asked about these incidents, community stakeholders cited a range of possible motivations, including not only provocative messaging by religious leaders but also personal retaliation USIP (2019).

## Approach

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For this study, a quantitative approach was used to design a discussion on questions which were discussed by Youth from different religious background and other institutions including colleges, organisations in Unguja between the ages of 18-28 years. The main discussions was in English and Swahili and it contained questions aimed at assessing (1) the establishment of sustainable forums for youth to voice their opinions in a civil way that promotes the religiously diverse society. (2) The prevention on a relapse into violent conflict perpetuated by religious leaders who exploit youthful willingness to perpetrate violence (3) the impact of capacity for peace building and reconciliation among youth among youth for both religions.

Data was collected through sharing the survey on ground project to youth, religious leaders and youth organizations. Out of 42 participants, about 18 of the respondents identified as male, 24 as female.

## Findings

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Overall findings from this study showed that peace building and youth against religious violence extremism project in Zanzibar must be established and how the impact of capacity for peace building and reconciliation among youth for both religions will be sustainable.

## Policy recommendations

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Capacitating peace building strategies it is therefore necessary to capacitate religious reconciliation mechanisms to enable them to support cross-border reconciliation, as well as to enhance national at the civil society level, there is the need to establish regional civil society networks to facilitate and advocate for religion reconciliation. Such networks could generate shared knowledge, conduct training programs and build the capacity of local leaderships to facilitate cross-border reconciliation. In most contexts, it is also vital that religious leaders play a role in spearheading cross border reconciliation, due in part to the legitimacy they have among the populations they represent.

The Government in collaboration with different stakeholders should develop one youth peace building and transactional justice policy based on religion aspect. This policy should state clearly the link and coordination of other stakeholders and faith based organizations and also can include a strategic objective

of foreign policy, and countries are clearly mandated to develop and implement religious approaches to reconciliation

The policy should explain on how it will be implemented from the local to national level especially starting from the schools.

Develop a digital monitoring and evaluation system to assess the intervention of peace building and youth against religious violence extremism project Unguja.

## References

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