

Freedom of Belief is Good for Peace and Security

2 Drama

Amir watches news footage of recent violent unrest in his home country as his mother washes dishes. Angry, he snaps at his mother and storms out of their apartment. Layla overhears and is worried. Amir stalks to a nearby school where Nate shoots baskets. He throws the ball to Amir, but Amir lets it fall to the ground. There is tension as Nate waits to see what Amir will do. Finally, Amir picks up the ball and they play aggressively, pushing and shoving under the basket. Layla and Mia join them, concerned, but the game ends well. Layla, Amir, Nate and Mia share snacks at the park afterward.

Discussion Questions:

Mariya Dostzadah Goodbrake states, "Religion-based conflict has steadily increased worldwide."

* **It is difficult to experience religious-based conflict in your country or community. Did you relate to how Amir felt in any way?**

* **Do you know someone who is dealing with similar unrest? What is the hardest part?**

The film shared several statistics from recent research: (1)

"88% of international religious terrorist groups originate in "one-religion" or religiously restrictive countries."

"Countries with religious restrictions experience 13 times as many religious terrorist attacks as more free countries."

"States that enforce blasphemy laws experience almost six times as many terrorist attacks as states where such laws don't exist."

Rev. Daniel L. Mode. "The Intersection of U.S. National Security Strategy and Religious Freedom." Religious Freedom Institute. 25 April 2019.

*** What does this data reveal about the correlation between religious restrictions and violence?**

*** In what ways does a religiously restrictive country encourage discrimination or violence?**

*** Have you seen or experienced this in your country or community? Or do you know someone who is dealing with religious-based conflict? What can you share about their experience?**

"When a person's beliefs are restricted, it can alienate them, so they go underground. They lose connection with the rest of the community who can correct them if necessary... The more you try to control beliefs, the more it can lead to people becoming violent and pushing back. Violence breeds violence."

-- Ed Brown

"In open, religiously free societies, extremists will have their views challenged and they'll have to defend them in the marketplace of ideas instead of with violence."

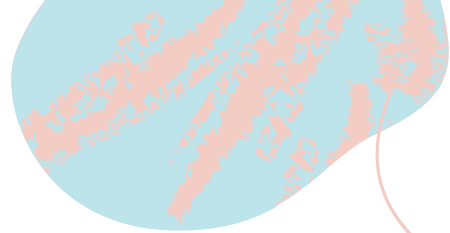
-- Hussein Aboubakr

*** Based on the quotes above, how might a more open, religiously free society discourage a person or group from turning to violence?**

*** What are some practical steps to take to encourage freedom of religion and discourage violence?**

*** What are some tools that need to be put in place to ensure greater peace and security for all members of society?**





Mariya Goodbrake concluded:

"We need to help people when they feel their identity is threatened and encourage them to discover our common humanity. We may come from different worlds, religions, and experiences, but we have similar human stories."

Reflection Time:

What is one big idea you received from this film?

Reach out to a colleague or friend who originates from a different religion and ask them to share their story.

What are their thoughts on pluralism and/or multi-faith living? What are the challenges? What are the benefits?

To Explore Further:

Read the Forb Booklet, p. 20-25:

<https://d3lwycy8zkggea.cloudfront.net/1510921391/forb-booklet-2017-english.pdf>

Watch some short film testimonials:

<http://empowerwomen.media/film-competition-winners-and-finalists/>