

## **Kenyans paint churches and mosques yellow as a symbol of dialogue**

*Nine places of worship have been painted across Kenya thanks to the project “Colour in Faith”, uniting both religious communities. “We want to transform those buildings into symbols of unity and pluralism”*



*Kenya - One of the mosques participating in the “Colour in Faith” project is painted yellow.*

**LORENZO SIMONCELLI, VATICAN INSIDER, 29 OCTOBER 2016**

**Churches and mosques have been painted yellow in an attempt to fire up interreligious dialogue** in a predominantly Christian Kenya where jihadist infiltration by Somali militant group Al-Shabaab is making it increasingly risky to profess one’s faith.

The “**Colour in Faith**” project as it is called, is co-ordinated by Colombian artist Yazmani Arboleda and Nabila Alibhai, founders of Nairobi-based civic group **inCOMMONS** . A total of nine places of worship (**five churches and four mosques**) have been painted across **Kenya, uniting both religious communities**. Muslims painted church walls, while Christians did the same with the African state’s traditional white-green mosques.

“Our aim is to **transform these sacred places into symbols of unity and pluralism,**” Arboleda told *Quartz*, “we sought to dig deeper into these religions and find some common ground in order to create a space for reflection”. “**Kenya has a history of pluralism and religious co-existence but in the past ten years things have got worse** and we find ourselves at a crucial crossroads,” says Nabila Alibhai, one of the brains behind the project. “It wasn’t easy changing the traditions of local imams who were initially hostile to the idea of seeing their mosques repainted yellow.”

**Next year, Kenya will go to the polls** in what is going to be one of the most eagerly awaited events in Africa, especially in light of the violent clashes that marked the presidential elections in the last election round. In addition, **Islamic extremism threatens to leave its own mark**. **Projects such as inCOMMONS, which embrace communities across the entire country are crucial in their attempts to guarantee peace and dialogue in the Horn of Africa.**