



International Panel of
Parliamentarians
for Freedom of Religion
or Belief

SARAJEVO DECLARATION

Whereas the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is a universal, non-derogable human right that is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other core human rights treaties within the United National human rights protection system as well as under treaties under regional human rights protection systems and constitutions;

Whereas discrimination based on religion or belief is prohibited under international human rights treaties;

Whereas state parties to the above-mentioned international human rights instruments have undertaken significant obligations to guarantee the protection of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion within their jurisdictions;

Whereas despite comprehensive and clear international human rights standards the protection of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion lags behind;

Whereas “notwithstanding the importance of international human rights treaties, case law, custom and norms, the domestic and local levels are where human rights become relevant for most rights holders” (UN SR Report 2023);

Whereas severe violations of freedom of religion or belief continue to occur around the world, perpetrated by both governments and non-state actors;

Whereas studies indicate an increase in restrictions on the free practice of religion or belief, with the majority of the global population living in countries where their freedom to peacefully practice their faith could be restricted;

The signatories REAFFIRM

Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which declares “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to

change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”

Freedom of religion or belief is a multi-faceted human right, embracing individual, collective, institutional, educative, and communicative dimensions as expressly recognized in OSCE commitments;

Freedom of religion or belief is part of the broader human rights framework and is linked to other universal human rights and fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and association, and the right to non-discrimination;

RECOGNIZING the commitments in the [Oslo charter](#) and the [Nairobi declaration](#)

The unique role parliamentarians play in ensuring that legislation in their countries is in line with international human rights law. This is an essential part of protecting freedom of religion or belief domestically.

The signatories COMMIT to

Promote freedom of religion or belief for everyone everywhere through their work and respective institutions.

Enhance global cooperation by endeavouring to work across geographical, political, and religious lines.

Undertake efforts to jointly promote freedom of religion or belief, share information, and mobilize effective responses.