

2nd Conference of Hope for the Realization of a Heavenly Unified World Declaration in Support of Fundamental Human Rights and Human Dignity

Overcoming Threats to Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion

This declaration raises awareness of the growing threats to human rights, particularly the rights to freedom of religion, conscience, and thought, and asks all people to stand together to overcome threats to these basic freedoms.

*The Declaration builds on the foundation of the “**Peace Charter**” which was affirmed during the Universal Peace Federation’s World Summit 2022, convened in February, and, subsequently, during the Summit 2022 and Leadership Conference convened in August, and which advocated for a world culture of peace, a world of interdependence, mutual prosperity, and universal values. In addition, during the first Conference of Hope, held in November 12, 2022, a **Declaration and a Call for Freedom, Justice and Fairness** was affirmed and serves also as a foundation for the following declaration:*

Understanding that the freedoms of thought, conscience, and religion are fundamental rights that derive necessarily from the recognition of the dignity and value of each human being; and,

Recognizing that violations of these freedoms are growing throughout the world, impacting the lives of billions of religious believers, ordinary citizens and persons who dissent from majority opinions, who are often victims of prejudice, reputation damage, discrimination, persecution, selective prosecution, hate crimes and even violence; and,

Knowing that Article 1 of the *Charter of the United Nations* affirms “human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion”; and,

Acknowledging that Article 18 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, states that: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion”; and,

Noting that the United Nations *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, in its Article 18 (1), states that: “Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion”; and,

Appreciating that the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) has a Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief to identify and take action against violations of freedoms of religion or belief; and,

Knowing that many national constitutions affirm freedoms of thought, conscience and religion as essential to human dignity and human flourishing; and,

Recalling, that despite these protections written into law, human history is tainted by a tragic history of violations of these ideals, evidenced in a shameful record of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, anti-Catholicism, hate crimes, media bias, textbook bias, and persecution of minorities; and,

Recognizing that violations of these basic rights and freedoms are often closely linked to xenophobia, ethnocentrism, racism, cultural imperialism and ideological extremism; and,

Observing that violations of basic human rights and freedoms are increasing around the world due to a rise in the number of authoritarian governments, theocratic states and extremist ideologies; and

Understanding that Marxist and communist ideologies have been particularly hostile to freedoms of thought, conscience and religion, and have frequently used the instruments of the state to control its populations without respect for basic freedoms; and,

Noting that these violations may derive not only from governments but also from civil society, the media, educational institutions, the corporate world, and among the cultural elite, who, out of ignorance or malice, seek to suppress or punish those who hold opinions or beliefs with which they disagree; and,

Witnessing most recently the rise of religious intolerance in Japan, where members of the Family Federation are currently being targeted unfairly by the media, by communists and left-wing ideologues, and by powerful political interests; and,

Recognizing that there exist forces within Japan, such as the Communist Party, that seek not only to promote intolerance toward religion, but also to weaken Japan's relationship with democratic nations, on the one hand, and strengthen its relationship with communist nations; and

Seeking a world where prejudice, bigotry, hate and violence, toward others have no place, we hereby resolve to:

Encourage all peoples, all multilateral organizations, and all governments to uplift and protect the right to freedoms of conscience, thought and religion for each and every individual;

Educate citizens to practice tolerance and mutual respect toward those who may be of different religious, cultural, ethnic, or national backgrounds; and

Call upon governments to affirm and protect the right of each individual to follow their conscience in matters of faith and belief;

Reject the persecution of religious believers, including members of minority traditions or new religious movements;

Avoid the use of language or terminology, by governments, the media and the general public, that demeans, mocks, ridicules, disrespects or slanders the worldviews, values, ideals or beliefs of other citizens;

Educate youth in our homes, our classrooms, and our places of worship to be respectful of all people; and,

Appeal to governments to live up to their constitutions and laws in protecting citizens from slander, discrimination, and violence.

In closing, and with utmost sincerity, we call upon all people throughout the world to affirm this declaration and to uphold the universal right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, and to stand firmly against all forms of intolerance, prejudice, slander, and hate toward others. Furthermore, we call upon all people to affirm this declaration and to honor longstanding traditions of fairness and mutual respect, and to put an end immediately to the unjustified persecution of the members of the Family Federation in Japan, a persecution that has included 4,300 cases of forced confinement and kidnapping, noting that such violations of human rights, rooted in prejudice, religious intolerance, and one-sided, extremist allegations, must have no place in the great nation of Japan.

We call for an end to persecution and oppression through means such as unfairly initiating the right of inquiry for the dissolution of the religious entity and ignoring the freedom of religion mentioned in the constitution of Japan. The current steps by the Japanese government amount to religious persecution and are in direct violation of the universal declaration of human rights and the principle of non-interference by government into religious matters. We also call for an end to religious persecution by the media that has resulted in more than 20,000 negative articles following the death of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

**Affirmed this day of December 17, 2022, by 512 Parliamentarians from 193 nations
representing 5,000 Parliamentarians from the International Association of
Parliamentarians for Peace**