

Human Rights



Topic B: “Freedom of Religion: Protecting Belief and Expression”

UNDERSECRETARY:

Mariana
Armada

MODERATOR:

Sofía
Montes de Oca

CHAIR:

María José
Carmona





Welcoming letter

Delegates,

We are pleased to have you all here, at the Human Rights committee of this eleventh edition of our Colegio Fontanar Model of the United Nations.

As well, we are excited to see you work in team and develop all those new abilities and skills a Model of the United Nations can bring.

Remember to not be afraid of making some mistakes, it is part of this learning stage!

We are all here to learn and acquire new experiences, it is challenging but it worth it.

We hope you learn and enjoy a lot this event.

Sincerely,

Sofía Montes de Oca and María José Carmona
Moderator and Chair of Human Rights

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I. Committee Background

The Human Rights committee, was established between 1946 and 2006 to support the Economic and Social Council.

It is focused on promoting and protecting civil and political rights worldwide.

Initially comprising 50 UN member states, it was tasked with overseeing the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The Commission monitors compliance, reviews reports, addresses violations, and has driven significant changes in national laws and policies to align with international human rights standards. Its efforts have positively impacted issues like freedom of expression, equality, and freedom from discrimination.

Despite these achievements, the Commission remains committed to its mission: advocating for universal civil and political rights as a core part of the broader human rights agenda.

II. Introduction to the Topic

The recent events of religious intolerance that have been taking place worldwide, are a reminder of the need of respecting all human rights.

The religious and belief freedom get stronger together with the freedom of opinion and expression, this allows people of any (or not at all) belief to express freely defending the religious tolerance and respect, and to contribute to achieve it at their society.

States must defend religious tolerance as a human right, any act of discrimination, hostility, or violence due to religious intolerance must be prohibited by the law.

The governmental and religious leaders play a key role at the moment of not permitting hate actions to the people because of their beliefs, and they need to remain strong on defending their people, because no mattering the beliefs, we are people. (United Nations., 2023).

III. Evolution of the Topic

Religious persecution worldwide is an actual crisis for all the humanity that is growing more and more, it is a tragedy that affects people of all the beliefs globally.

Discriminating people due to their beliefs is unacceptable, and it breaks the relation we all have as people, we are all citizens of the world.

Nowadays religious persecution still occurs, today millions of believers have to face with discrimination, injustice, the need to flee from their country, oppression, violence, and even death just because of practicing their religion.

According to the “Religious Freedom Report” at 2023, 2/3 of the people lived in countries where either religious freedom is highly restricted, or did not exist at all.

Some of the religious minorities are suffering under the hands of extremist governments. (Vatican News., 2024).

IV. Relevant Events

A. Panorama

- 82 countries are vulnerable talking about the respect of the religious freedom right.
- More than 50 million of people are persecuted due to their beliefs globally.
- At the 42% of the countries, religious freedom does not exist.
- At 26 nations, the situation is getting worse, getting at the point that the believers of any specific religion put their lives at risk in case of doing any public manifestation of their religion.
- The situation of 20 countries is medium or highly worrying, some more, are lowly worrying.
- The situation of the influence of the extreme Islam, related to the religious persecution is present at 14 countries. (Universidad de La Sabana., 2015).

IV. Relevant Events

B. Points of View

United States: The U.S. counts with protection for the not persecution due to the religion, such as “the Free Exercise Clause of the Constitution”, which avoids government to act targeting religious conducts. (United States Department of Justice (.gov)., n.d.)

China: China is officialy atheist and Communist Party members are banned of believing and from practicing any religion, there is concerned that the communism government use this just in their favor. (Human Rights Watch., n.d.).

United Kingdom: The law prohibites the incitement to religious hatred, as well as the discrimination due to the beliefs, at England and Wales the hate speech due to the religion is prohibited. (U.S. Department of State (.gov)., n.d.).

IV. Relevant Events

B. Points of View

France: At this country the religion and the state remain separated, their citizens are allowed to believe, practice, or even change the religion of their election, unless it disturbs the public order. (U.S. Department of State (.gov)., n.d.).

Russia: Russia is a secular nation, and there is religious freedom according to the constitution, as well all the people have the same rights without matter their faith profession. The prohibition of activity of a religious association just may happen in case they violate public order or are considered extreme. (U.S. Department of State (.gov)., n.d.).

V. UN and External Actions

The United Nations have established August 22nd as the “International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief”.

As well, the UN has a Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, and a Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide, both joined with 54 other mandate holders to condemn the growing situation of the abuse of religion or belief as a tool of discrimination, hostility, and violence.

They called states to act in order to help the victims, highlighting the importance of the collaboration between State and non-State actors to prevent all this type of cruel violence.

The United Nations honor the victims, their dignity and rights, and they are working to eradicate this terrible situation. (United Nations., 2023).

V. UN and External Actions

EXTERNAL ACTIONS.

The European Union have guidelines on freedom of religion or belief, to which the EU is committed to promote and protect them for all.

The European Union condemns persecution, discrimination and violence against the believers, also they defend the right of people to manifest their religion or belief, as well as the right to leave it or change it.

The EU raises concerns for the apostasy and blasphemy criminalization, and of the legislation that hinders the religious groups' official registration.

The European Union is committed to avoid intra and inter-faith violence, and to promote the dialogue between the different faith professions.

They have some initiatives that help to achieve these goals. (Strategic Communications., 2021).

VI. Conclusion

The religious freedom is a human right that needs to ensure that people are not attacked due to their believes nor religious professions, people must never be persecuted by anyone due to these reasons.

The United Nations, and by it this committee, do not seek to impose which religion must be practiced worldwide, but we just seek to protect people and to fight for the respect of their dignity.

All the people in all types of conditions must be respected and valued, violence is never the answer, the committee should find a way to achieve the peace worldwide.

VII. Committee Focus

- What are the main factors that provoke religious persecution globally?
- Which people are the most vulnerable to experience religious persecution? How to help them to get out of there?
- Which actions that have been taken around the world have been effective and in which measure?
- What specific measures can be taken to completely eradicate religious persecution depending on each of the country's situation?
- Which solution centers at the human dignity and seeks for the respect of every person without exception?

VIII. Participation List

- Dominican Republic
- French Republic
- Islamic Republic of Iran
- Islamic Republic of Mauritania
- Japan
- Kingdom of Spain
- Lao People's Democratic Republic
- People's Republic of China
- Plurinational State of Bolivia
- Republic of Colombia
- Republic of Ecuador
- Republic of El Salvador
- Republic of Equatorial Guinea
- Republic of India
- Republic of Mozambique
- Russian Federation
- State of Eritrea
- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- United Republic of Tanzania
- United States of America

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