



International Association for Religious Freedom

Our Vision for the Future

The new International Council, meeting in Tokyo, wish to share with you our vision for the future of the IARF.

The IARF is a grass roots organisation where we promote and support the work of individuals in the cause of religious freedom. We wish to foster personal commitment to action in everyone.

We are proud of our history as the world's oldest international interfaith organisation; we would like to record our deep gratitude to those who have contributed so much in the last century to our work.

We will always respect the position of any individual and the traditions of our member groups and faith groups worldwide.

Therefore, we encourage all our members to work together towards the following objectives:

1. Minority Religions

It is fundamental to the objectives of the IARF that we support members of religions who have become an oppressed minority in the own society. To this end, we wish to compile and maintain a record of all such situations and then take steps to address the needs of such people.

2. Youth

The young people of the world will be tomorrow's leaders, so it is important that they are helped to understand the responsibilities that we all have in any civil society to respect other faiths and humanity in general. To achieve this goal, we recognise the great benefits of cultural exchange and the need to train young people to become advocates for human rights and peace.

We will expand the RFYN network across the world and encourage young people to participate at all levels of the IARF.

3. Human Rights and Responsibilities

It is our fundamental aim to protect Religious Freedom as described in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and we should create awareness of the duties and responsibilities that this implies. We must become advocates against the violation of this human right. This is the journey of a human being to *being human*.

4. United Nations and EU

We already have been given a presence at the United Nations in New York and Geneva and at the European Parliament. We have not utilised this opportunity and this must change. Although IARF International doesn't have the capacity to give financial support now, we look to the EME and the US Chapter to take the lead to ensure we maximise this opportunity and to contribute to the work of the IARF within the spirit of this vision and with the guidance of the International Council.

5. Working with other organisations and religious leaders

We should create and maintain working relationships with other organisations who share our objectives in particular fields and will look to working as partners where this is appropriate.

We also wish to create and maintain dialogue with religious leaders who are outside our membership organisations.

Other Issues

Peace Commission

We support the IARF Peace Commission and look forward to receiving from them the details of their plans for future activities.

Interfaith Dialogue

We are undecided as to whether interfaith dialogue is part of our role in defending religious freedom and wish to reflect on this further. We would be pleased to listen to the thoughts of our member organisations before making any commitment to further activities.

Fundamentalism

Fundamentalism is a major source of disharmony in the world which we view with extreme concern. However, at this point in time, we believe other organisations are better placed to confront this issue and therefore this is not an issue upon which we should expend our resources. However, we do wish to actively support the voice of liberal Islam.

Communication

We are very much aware that communication between the International Council and our member organisations and our individual members is in need of improvement if we are to fulfil our vision. We will need to co-ordinate all our activities and inform each other of our plans and achievements. We anticipate that within 3 months we will launch a completely new website that we hope will also be connected to our member's websites. We would like to receive content for this new website as a matter of urgency.

What we need from our members

We, the International Council, are united in our belief that this is the right way forward for the IARF and we hope that you will give your support to it. However, we will remain open to new ideas and the thoughts of all our members.

We ask that regional organisations and chapters put together plans to address at least one of these objectives and share their plans with the International Council.

We expect that all our plans will be undertaken with respect for individual autonomy and respect for the environment, the world in which we live.

We have one further request to our members;

Over recent years, the International Organisation has supported many initiatives and given grants to worthy activities by selling off a portion of our investments. We can no longer sustain this approach and this year we will only commit to a few grants totalling of \$3,500. Nevertheless, our overhead cost, primarily for our administrator, Lukasz Liniewicz, leaves us with a significant shortfall. In support of our common vision, we encourage you all to give generously to the IARF, in addition to the figure set by the Council.

For and on behalf of the Council,



Robert Ince: President

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