

Welcoming Address: The World Must Stand Up for Religious Freedom

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Conference Of Hope For The Realization Of A Heavenly Unified World

Chairman of the Washington Times Foundation



Thank you very much for that kind introduction. And special thanks to Dr Yoon Young-ho for your brilliant presentation and for your outstanding leadership during this time of global concern and crisis. And also let me add a word of thanks to our fonder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon for her extraordinary vision and passion to see a world of peace in our lifetime. I'd also like to welcome you, all of you who are participating in this conference online from more than 120 nations in so many time zones. So good morning, good afternoon and good evening to everyone, my friends throughout America, throughout the world, Europe, Africa, South America, Asia, all over.

We're gathered together today for a most important purpose. In light of the attacks on religious freedom in China, Japan and Middle East, elsewhere, the Washington Times Foundation and THINK TANK 2022 are proud to convene this Conference of Hope for universal rights and religious freedom. The Conference of Hope will highlight human rights issues around the world as part of the missions of the Washington Times Foundation and Think Tank 2022, which is a Korean Peninsula reunification initiative that's truly innovative. We want to promote peace and security globally, especially in Korea and the Pacific Rim. The highlight of the conference today will be the introduction and the adoption of the Declaration on the universal value of religious freedom. We call on all people throughout the world to stand firm against all forms of religious intolerance, prejudice, slander and hate, to conclude the Declaration which will be signed by representatives in Korea where you're sitting today, in Japan, with so many thousands of our friends and families watching this program – we love you dearly – and numerous countries all around the world.

The Declaration builds on the foundation of the Peace Charter, which was affirmed during the Universal Peace Federation Summit 2022 and the Leadership Conference in August, which advocated for a world culture of peace, a world of interdependence, mutual prosperity and universal values. These ideals have incredible power, and we can implement them to change the world. At that time in August, His Excellency Prime Minister Hun Sen of Cambodia encouraged all of the leaders there to reach out to parliamentarians throughout the world in order to mobilize the international community on matters of such consequence as human rights and religious freedom.

Ladies and gentlemen, today's lineup of distinguished speakers will underscore the importance of universal human rights and religious freedom at a time when many followers of the world's major and minor religions face persecution, intolerance, discrimination and violence in many countries. It's unthinkable in the 21st century that this is going on. And in some cases, it's happening right in your neighborhood.

The Conference of Hope for Universal Human Rights and Religious Freedom transcends political, religious, racial and ideological boundaries, and we seek to build a unified and more peaceful world around those core ideals of interdependence, mutual prosperity and universal values. Among the issues to be discussed today, there are going to be the plights of the Muslim Uyghurs, Buddhists, Jews, Christians, Bahais, Jehovah's Witnesses, Yazidis, Falun Gong and Unificationists. We are going to hear today from Japanese representatives who are going to passionately ask their government and their people to honor the long-standing traditions of fairness and mutual respect and cease the unjustified persecution of the members of the Family Federation in Japan. That began after the shocking and tragic assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

I've spent more than 30 days in Japan since August and what's going on there now is of critical consequence. The tragedy of losing Prime Minister Abe to his assassination was then distorted claims made in the media about the motivation of the assassin all blaming the Unification Church. It is so peculiar. You've probably read about it or heard about it. In my three decades working here at the Washington Times, I have never seen such a calibrated and focused witch hunt. It's shocking to see what's happening. The Japanese people are amazing people. They're aligned with America and freedom-loving countries. There's been so much hope from Japan over the years after World War II, how it resurrected as a strong nation that brought great products and great culture to the world. But what I saw in those five weeks shocked me. The world's got to stand up. The truth has got to come out. And thank goodness for this organization that Dr. Moon and Dr. Yun and others have led with the global network and its amazing speakers that its amazing speakers that we're going to have today a chance to listen to. I think it's a transitional moment right now folks without a doubt. It's critical moment in which we unite, face the truth and move forward courageously based on the principles expressed in the Declaration that you're going to hear.

Thank you all for being here. Let us listen and learn together through our unified efforts. Let's make a difference in Japan and throughout the world. Like John Kennedy said when he went to Berlin during the Cold War: "Ich bin ein Berliner" (German) ("I am a Berliner.").

That's my heart and I know that's the heart of many of us around the world. I am an American, a proud American, a proud Unificationist and the chairman of the Washington Times. But I want to move to Japan. I want to be a member of the Japanese Unification Movement and be there with my brothers and sisters. Let's do it together today. Thank you so very much and may God bless you and your families and your countries.

Thank you.