

# Conference of Hope for the Realization of a Heavenly Unified World: Religious Freedom based on Universal Human Rights

신통일세계안착을 위한 희망전진 콘퍼런스

보편적 인권을 중심한 종교의 자유

November 12, 2022

## Declaration on the Universal Value of Religious Freedom

- 1) *We, participants in the Rally of Hope sponsored by the Universal Peace Federation, convened on November, 2022, and dedicated to the theme of “The Universal Right to Religious Freedom as the Foundation for a World Culture of Peace,” affirm the following declaration in order to underscore the essential importance of the universal human right to religious freedom at a time when many believers of both major religions and minority religions, face persecution, intolerance, discrimination, and violence in many countries around the world. This Declaration builds on the foundation of the “Peace Charter” which was affirmed during the UPF’s Summit 2022 and Leadership Conference on August 12, 2022, and which advocated for a world culture of peace, a world of interdependence, mutual prosperity, and universal values.*
- 2) **Understanding** that the freedoms of religion, belief, conscience, and speech are fundamental rights that derive necessarily from the recognition of the dignity and value of each human being; and,
- 3) **Recognizing** that violations of religious freedom are still prevalent throughout the world, impacting the lives of billions of religious believers around the world who identify themselves in diverse ways as Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, Sikhs, Jains, Shintoists, and as followers of less well-known traditions, including indigenous traditions and many minority or newer religions; and,
- 4) **Noting** that freedom of religion is recognized in the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 18 (1): "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom ... either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice, and teaching"; and,
- 5) **Acknowledging** that the human right to religious freedom is stated clearly in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which affirms that “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”; and,
- 6) **Respecting** the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), adopted in 1966 by 173 member states of the United Nations General Assembly, which respects freedom of religion; and,

- 7) **Appreciating** that the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) has a Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief to identify violations of religious freedom and to recommend correction of such violations; and,
- 8) **Knowing** that many national constitutions—including the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution—affirm religious freedom as a fundamental right of all citizens, a right that is to be protected as necessary for human dignity, good governance, and rule of law; and,
- 9) **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, along with persecution of Mormons, Bahais, and countless other minority religions and indigenous spiritual movements; and,
- 10) **Recognizing** that religious intolerance is often closely linked to xenophobia, ethnocentric and racial ideologies, and cultural imperialism; and,
- 11) **Observing** that the believers of virtually all religions and cultures have at times been treated with disrespect, prejudice, and intolerance by dominant cultures, particularly when they are present as minorities in foreign countries; and
- 12) **Noting** that violations of religion may come not only from governments but also from the general public and even from other believers who, out of ignorance or malice, seek to suppress or punish members of religions who hold beliefs with which they disagree; and,
- 13) **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 powerful political forces, and by members of the wider public, based on false accusations and salacious rumors claiming that the Family Federation was somehow a cause of the brutal and senseless murder of Prime Minister Abe by a deranged assassin; and,
- 14) **Seeking** simply a world where prejudice, bigotry, hate and violence, including martyrdom, toward believers have no place, we hereby resolve:
  
- 15) To encourage all peoples, all multilateral organizations, and all governments to uplift and protect the right to religious freedom for each and every individual to;

Educate religious believers in all religions not only to practice tolerance and mutual respect toward the believers of other religious traditions but also to affirm the universal right to freedom of religion for all people;

Call upon governments to affirm and protect the rights 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 either the beliefs or the members of a particular religion;

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

Appeal to governments to live up to their constitutions and laws in protecting believers from slander, discrimination, and violence, and, with utmost sincerity and steadfast resolve:

***16) We ask the government and the people of Japan 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, a persecution that has its roots in specious arguments and one-sided, extremist allegations that have no place in a great nation such as Japan.***

***In addition, we call on all people throughout the world to stand firm against all forms of religious intolerance, prejudice, slander, and hate.***

Affirmed this day, November 2022