

UPF Czech Republic: Czech Panelists Expound On Human Rights in Practice

Juraj Lajda

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Prague, Czech Republic – The history of human rights and their relationship to religious freedom were key topics addressed at a conference to mark Human Rights Day on December 10, 2025, in Prague. Hosted by UPF-Czech Republic, the conference, titled “Human Rights as an Essential Part of Our Daily Lives,” was held at the premises of the Czech Association of Scientific and Technical Societies.



Panel speakers addressed these two aspects of human rights. **Dr. Roman Joch**, director of the Civic Institute, explained that progressive theories of history claim that behavioral norms change, and there are no unchangeable values. The contrasting religious view is that God created the world and gave people a moral code, which contributed to the emergence of human rights. He also outlined Socrates' concepts of natural rights and four virtues: moderation, courage, prudence, and justice; John Locke's view that all human beings have natural rights; and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen that emerged from the French Revolution, in which rights are granted – but also can be revoked – by the state, which resulted in the totalitarian morality of the 20th century.

Prof. Harald Scheu, member of the Legislative Council of the Czech Republic and university professor, spoke about relationships between religion and the state. These range from strict separation of church and state, to state-religion cooperation in the form of concordats, and the dominance of the church, as in Denmark or Greece.

Dr. Juraj Lajda, president of UPF-Czech Republic, gave a historical overview of human rights, from the 1648 Peace of Westphalia; through the 1776 U.S. Declaration of Independence; to the League of Nations and the United Nations with its 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Mgr. Martin Slezák, a lawyer and representative of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, spoke on the topic, "Czech law on churches: A dinosaur trampling on freedom of religion." He discussed in detail the law on the registration of churches and religious societies. The Czech law is essentially based on the Austrian model and represents a certain improvement over its predecessor. The state requires many internal documents, and dissolution is at any time possible. In the event of the dissolution of a church, its property is forfeited to the state.



Mgr. Nina Nováková, a former member of Parliament (2021-2025), spoke about human rights from the perspective of the individual, saying such rights come not by the state's legal mandate but from God. She warned that humanity should not lose its God-given dignity. She also cautioned that the abuse of ideology can have disastrous consequences.



The last speaker was **Mr. Leoš Strnad**, spokesperson for the Falun Gong Association in the Czech Republic. He introduced the philosophy of the Falun Gong movement, based on truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance. He described the persecution of the movement in China since 1992, through measures such as the burning of books and the forced renunciation of the teachings. He explained how the terms "sect" or "cult" are used to justify persecution of practitioners, as well as their supporters and sympathizers.



The conference inspired a lively discussion among the participants. The persecution of the Family Federation in South Korea and Japan was mentioned, and it was acknowledged that there is often public indifference towards such issues. Although it's difficult to change this attitude, it is necessary that people speak up in the face of injustice or wrongdoing. Participants agreed that it would be helpful if persecuted minorities showed solidarity and cooperation with each other.