

Concept Note on the AIDLR Side–Event, UN Geneva at the HRC 37th session

5 of March, 4:30-6:00 pm, room VIII:

“RELIGION’S INFLUENCE ON PEACE AND SECURITY

Member States, international and regional organizations and civil society play a fundamental role in fostering human rights, religious freedom and freedom of expression, promoting peaceful and inclusive societies.

We have witnessed in the recent years an increase of violence in situations around the world. At the same time, we have witnessed the spread of violent extremism, which misuses *religion* and *religious freedom* to justify brutal violence against civilians. In parallel, we have also seen how these phenomena - which in many situations represent threats to international peace and security - can easily be manipulated to justify limitations of fundamental rights and freedoms, including the rights to freedom of religion, belief, conscience, freedom of expression and opinion or freedom of assembly.

In these times, it is important that Member States, international, regional and civil society actors – as diplomats, academia, media, in particular religious leaders - coordinate their responses to these phenomena in order to foster respect for fundamental freedoms, prevent and respond to violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, and prevent and counter violent extremism, with the objective of protecting populations and promoting international peace and security.

For this purpose, the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty is convening a side event at the UN Human Rights Council 37th session in March 2018 on **“Religion and Religious Freedom’s Influence on Peace and Security**; also the AIDLR wants to discuss how different actors can work better together effectively fostering peace and security and sharing best practices; also this side-event inform the audience on the preparing of the **Second Global Summit on “The 70th Anniversary of the UDHR: How to Protect Minorities and Refugees by Fostering Human Rights, Peace and Security”** having a broad participation of Member States and international actors.

Also the launch of the book published by the AIDLR on February 2018 regarding “Religion’s Influence for Peace and Security” can be looked as part of the Anniversary of the 70th years since the AIDLR published its first book “Freedom of Conscience” in 1948 with the support of Eleanor Roosevelt, the first President of Honorary Committee of the AIDLR.

The Side-Event organized by The International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty (AIDLR) is based on the keynote-addresses delivered at the previous events co-organized by AIDLR and UN Office

of Genocide Prevention and sponsored by the EU, Spain, WCC, etc. (e.g. the Global Summit on Religion, Peace and Security -November 2016) and is a preamble of the II Global Summit on “The 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Freedom of Religion (1948-2018): How to Protect Religious Minorities and Refugees by Fostering Human Rights, Peace and Security (date to be confirmed, but likely to be October-November 2018, at the UN in Geneva).

Objective

The main objective of the Side-Event organized by the AIDLR on “**Religion’s Influence for Peace and Security**” is to see the positive role that must/ have to focus all religions and looking specially on the importance of religious freedom in favor of peace and security, and supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in particular Goals 16 and 17, which call for “Peace, justice and strong institutions”, and to “Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.”

Important question the Side-Event will aim to debate and answer

1. How to avoid the manipulation and the misuse of religion and religious liberty, and how to improve cooperation and coordination among all categories of actors in order to foster peace and religious freedom and prevent violence?