

Special Edition

AMBASSADORS

FOR LIBERTY, HOPE AND PEACE

voices and perspectives



Remembering our past
The AIDLR 70th Anniversary

1946
2016

AMBASSADORS

FOR LIBERTY, HOPE AND PEACE

voices and perspectives

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REMEMBERING OUR PAST AIDLR

at the 70th Anniversary 1946-2016

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INTRODUCTION

DR. LIVIU OLTEANU: LET US BE AMBASSADORS FOR LIBERTY, HOPE AND PEACE, THINKING IN THE CONTEXT OF TIME

Intellectuals analyze the operations of international systems; statesmen build them; and diplomats think in the context of time.

But who are those *ambassadors* contributing to obtain results within the field of human rights and fundamental freedoms, religion, security and peace? And which tools should be used to achieve this purpose?

To solve these international challenges, some categories of people need special training in diplomacy. First of all, the ambassadors required for our times, are those who *think in the context of time*.

A successful diplomacy for international crisis, violence and instability is up to some characteristics¹. What does it mean?

- To *know and to understand history*, and never forget the lessons learned. The knowledge of history does not provide exact policy prescriptions in present circumstances, but it does illuminate choices.
- To take advantage of opportunities *to engage proactively through international events* where these different opportunities can be successfully promoted.

H.E. Dr. Adama Dieng, the UN Special Adviser of the UN Secretary General on Protection of Genocide and Dr. Liviu Olteanu, the Secretary General of the AIDLR, at the International Conference - Madrid on May 2016.





- To raise central questions of policy formulation and implementation, *seeking to achieve a negotiated outcome*. As James Baker advises: “Never let the other fellow set the agenda.”
- *Be firm as well as flexible*. Jean Nussbaum, the founder-president of the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty, upon meeting Angelica Ispirescu Costin in Romania in 1962, advised this young lady, persecuted for her faith by Communist regime: “be firm and steadfast in the principles, but flexible in their presentation”.
- To influence certain policy debates *through dialogue* and communication between cultures, religions and governments, as a solution for freedom, peace and security.
- To demonstrate an *analytical temperament* and to ensure meticulous attention to detail; to resist the temptation to decide or prescribe before taking the time to analyze. Jeff Bezos stresses, “If you don’t understand the details of your business you are going to fail.”

THE NEED TO TRAIN THE TRAINERS

All stakeholders: *politicians, diplomats, scholars, religious leaders and civil society representatives* need special training as diplomats; they need to think and to act in the context of time. Joining together, they can contribute better for liberty, global peace and security. *Diplomats* are key persons prepared to negotiate solutions in front of international challenges and they should be encouraged to develop and implement strategies for disseminating best practices to key audiences. In particular they should forge good relations with universities, think tanks, religious leaders and communities, civil society as well as with other relevant stakeholders.

Today, nations and people need to develop a deeper understanding of the other; respect, for the religious and philosophical conceptions of other civilizations, religions and cultures; and teaching others to live with differences. To avoid a mutual undermining of the authority of the standards of human rights, we have to know one another better.

What is needed is a critical defense of universal human rights in a way that gives room for different cultural and religious interpretations. This is not to confuse empty *words* with *practice*. Some countries are *democratic* in name, but dictatorial in daily life; and there are many who speak of the *dignity* of human beings, yet treating others without respect.

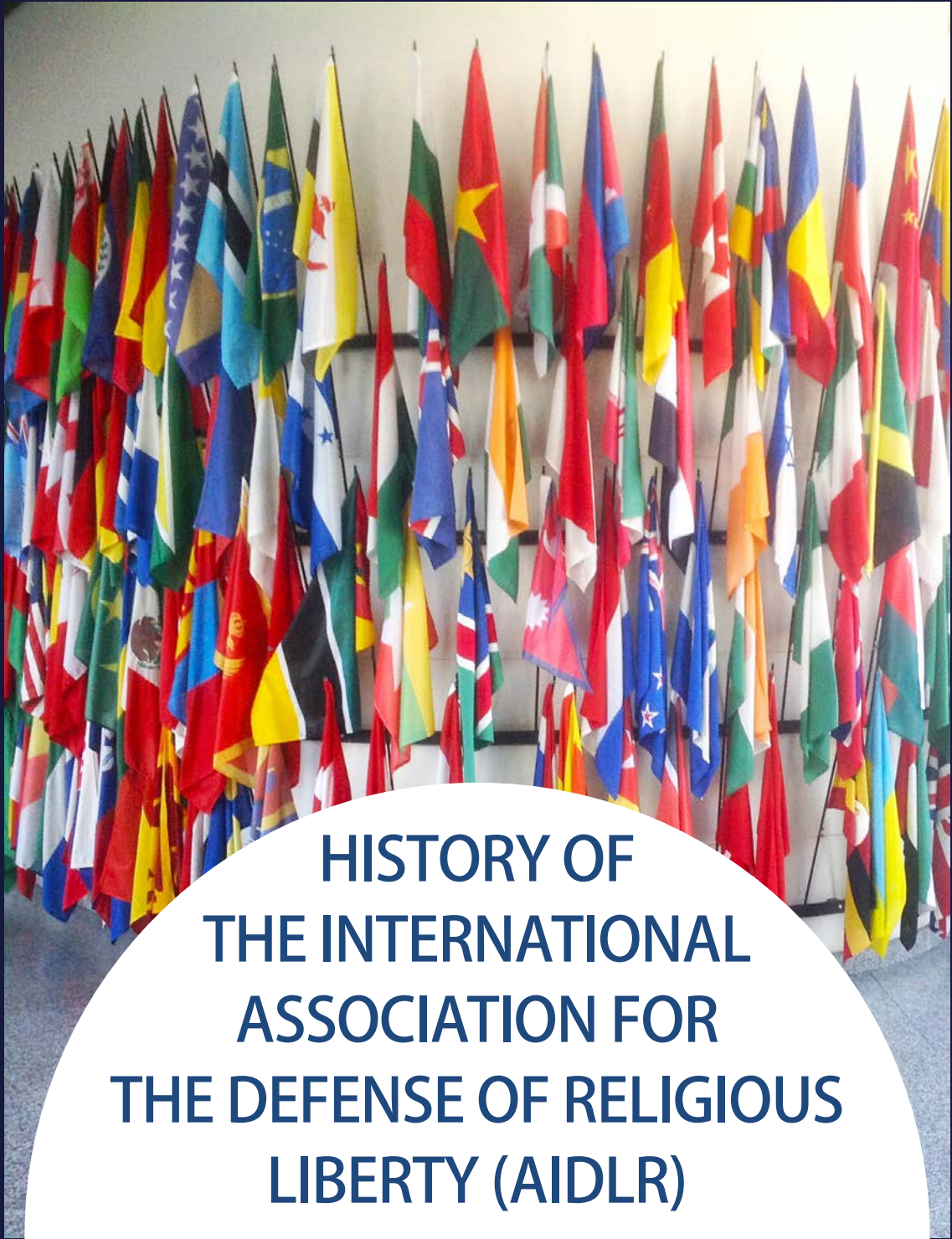
The issue of the dignity of every person and of protected life in the context of wars or migration, and the issue of human rights and specially of freedom of religion, conscience and expression – in the context of violence and terrorism in the name of religion - need international cooperation and a strategic plan with an effective mechanism and an active application.

CONCLUSION

- (a) *Every country of the world* needs to promote through its example and its politics, the Culture of Non-Discrimination, Respect, Justice, Tolerance and Liberty for all people, religions, cultures and civilizations, religious minorities and the dignity of each person.
- (b) Neither the Christian denominations, nor Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, and so on, have any moral right to impose pressure on another to accept their philosophies, beliefs or religion; *they* also have no right to prevent another from voluntarily teaching their teachings or to stop another from changing his or her religion.
- (c) Governments should not have any right to impose an ideology or to discriminate against religious or other belief minorities; nor to manifest discrimination, intolerance or persecution against the freedom of conscience of any persons, who are different to them.

Let us be ambassadors for liberty, hope and peace, by thinking and acting *in the context of time*.

¹ Robert D. Blacwill, London Academy of Diplomacy



HISTORY OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE DEFENSE OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY (AIDLR)

The history of religious freedom in the world is one of great interest. This is the story of the ups and downs of freedom, a history characterized by intolerance, discrimination, persecution, as well as hopes and challenges, struggles and victories.



MR MARIO BRITO

ON THE OCCASION OF THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY



Bern, Switzerland

This year, the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty (in French AIDLR) celebrates its 70th anniversary.

This is obviously a time for celebration. Yet, real celebration should not be a noisy and empty merriment but an occasion for serene and thorough evaluation of the course that AIDLR has been following since its birth in 1946 until today.

AIDLR is the legitimate child of Jean Nussbaum, a visionary physician, who knew by experience what segregation and harassment on account of conviction and religion meant. He had seen many people un-

dergo the painful experience of being discriminated against and punished on account of their religious beliefs and practices.

Dr. Jean Nussbaum was deeply persuaded that he would not succeed in his endeavors on his own. He would need to find the right partners in order to create the necessary synergy to successfully overcome the challenges and any opposition to the mission he had committed himself: that of protecting, defending and promoting liberty of thought, conscience, conviction and religion for everyone, everywhere.

During his stay in America to attend the United Nations Convention that took place in San Francisco on April 1945, he met Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt and realized that she was deeply engaged in promoting and defending human rights.

After several and fruitful exchanges, Dr. Nussbaum conveyed to Mrs. Roosevelt his intention to create the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty and extended an invitation to Mrs. Roosevelt to be its first president.

When we look back we realize that during the 70



years of AIDLR's existence a great number of individuals, institutions and countries have greatly benefited from its ministry and interventions, usually in close cooperation with organizations, states and individuals fighting the same fight of freedom of religion, conviction and conscience.

Dr. Jean Nussbaum's initial vision to create AIDLR is still alive and more and more timely and necessary today. In 1948 he expressed it this way:

"The goal of the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty is to disseminate, all over the world, the principles of this fundamental liberty and to protect, in all legitimate ways, the right of every man to worship as he chooses or to practice no religion at all.

Our Association does not represent any particular church or political party.

It has assumed the task of gathering all spiritual forces to fight intolerance and fanaticism in all their forms. All men, whatever their origin, color of skin, nationality or religion, are invited to join this crusade against sectarianism if they have a love for liberty. The workload ahead is immense, but will certainly not go beyond our strength and means if everybody gets down to work, with courage."

These are reasons why we are happy as we celebrate AIDLR's 70th anniversary!

If you identify with this vision and our core values, come and join us for the celebration of the anniversary and the fulfilling of the mission, which is ours and yours as well!



The goal of the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty is to disseminate, all over the world, the principles of this fundamental liberty and to protect, in all legitimate ways, the right of every man to worship as he chooses or to practice no religion at all. Our Association does not represent any particular church or political party.

Dr. Jean Nussbaum



DR. BRUNO VERTALLIER

HOW I MET DR. JEAN NUSSBAUM



Freedom of conscience and religion hangs in a very fragile balance. Lessons learnt from the injustices throughout history should remind us that these abuses should no longer exist. Freedom of conscience is one of the most precious gifts offered to humankind. One is aware of its value only when one is deprived of it. Freedom of conscience goes along with religious liberty; they are almost inseparable as these liberties reach into the innermost depths of a person and become a very part of men's intimacy. Freedom of conscience is not a negotiable liberty. The right to freedom of conscience must be the prerogative of all respectful societies, societies which respect citizens' believers, agnostics or atheists. Opposition and deprivation of freedom of conscience in the midst of a society is comparable to a crime against humanity.

Talking on Nussbaum, Dr. Bruno Vertallier shared: "How I Met Dr. Jean Nussbaum":

Dr. Jean Nussbaum was a tall and slim gentleman; I can still picture him with his moustache. It was fascinating to meet with him. He had charisma when it came to talking with people. Even the children were attracted by his personality and way of speaking. His gentleness expressed that he cared for people. I remember very well meeting him when I was fifteen. I even remember the details. The place where he gave his lecture was in the beautiful Athena conference center, located on the "Avenue de la Victoire," close to the "Place de Massena" in Nice. I went with my father to pick him up at the Westminster Hotel, located along the well-known "Promenade des Anglais." Going to eat with him was also a pleasure. Nussbaum spoke with a soft, very pleasant voice. He would tell us stories about Eleanor Roosevelt, about his visit to the Vatican, meeting with the pope and of course many stories about the two world wars and how he faced these situations. He never ran out of exciting experiences to share.

Jean Nussbaum was a man of conviction and courage; he was a man of liberty. He made a strong impression on me, a young lad. I'm sure that anyone who met Dr. Jean Nussbaum would remember him forever. And I assume this happened to many people, helping them in their lives too.

During his numerous travels, Jean Nussbaum met with ambassadors, politicians, ministers and presidents of many countries. His goal was to call the attention of highly influential people in society not only to the necessity but also the fragility of freedom, in particular in the realm of religion. He engaged in actions to support the oppressed, and especially to defend religious causes and minorities. So, it is only natural that after the war he founded, in 1946, the "International Association for the Defense of Religious Freedom" (in French 'AIDLR') and produced the magazine "Conscience and Liberty" in 1948.

DR. JEAN NUSSBAUM

FOUNDER PRESIDENT

INFLUENCES

Jean Nussbaum, a French physician of Swiss origin, founded the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty, abbreviated as A.I.D.L.R., in Paris, in 1946. His wish was to give a legal basis to the actions he had been taking on behalf of religious liberty, since the end of World War I. Jean Nussbaum was born in La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland, on November 24, 1888. The piety of his parents and their dedication to the service of others profoundly impressed the spirit of their son who, as man of faith, was firmly committed to the Bible his entire life. He had a medical practice in Chamonix, France, when World War I, broke out. Serbia, plagued by a strong outbreak of typhus from the very beginning of hostilities, made a desperate appeal to foreign countries to secure the help of physicians.

Jean Nussbaum volunteered and was appointed to the hospital of Nis, Serbia, near the end of 1914. The management of the hospital gave him a young Serbian nurse, Milanka Zaritch, as an assistant and interpreter. Soon after their first meeting, she became the superintendent of the hospital. They married in the fall of 1915. Milanka Zaritch was the niece of Voyislav Marinkovic, who later became the prime minister of the Serbian government. This family link, soon introduced Dr Jean Nussbaum into the diplomatic and international circles.

While he was in Serbia, circumstances led Jean Nussbaum to an intervention with an officer of the Serbian army, to allow an Austrian prisoner of war, appointed to serve in the Nis hospital, to practice the principles of his faith. Out of lack of tact and narrow-mindedness, this prisoner had



Jean Nussbaum

placed himself in a situation which might have cost him his life by refusing, as an enemy prisoner and in time of war, to obey orders. This event may have been instrumental in the awakening of the interest Jean Nussbaum was taking in the promotion and defense of liberty of conscience and religion for the rest of his life.

Back to Switzerland, then to France, after living fifteen years in Normandy, Dr. and Mrs. Nussbaum decided to enjoy the cultural life of the capital. In 1931 they moved to Paris, 49 avenue de la Grande Armée, in an apartment where the doctor would reside until his death in 1967.



A War Hospital in 1914

Jean Nussbaum and his wife, Milanka Zaritch

There he opened, in 1946, the first headquarters of the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty.

We had to remember the commitment and the philosophy of the man who was its founder president, Dr. Jean Nussbaum, and the creator of the magazine "Conscience and Liberty" [...]. We remain true to the program of the one who, with talent and devotion, civility and firmness, was able to assure the essential triumph of the principles regarding the liberation of man as well as the prosperity and peace of any society. His goal was to provide a legal basis for the promotion of religious freedom that he was already conducting since the end of World War II. The headquarters was located in Paris.



PRESIDENTS OF THE HONORARY COMMITTEE: ELEANOR ROOSEVELT, THE FIRST PRESIDENT

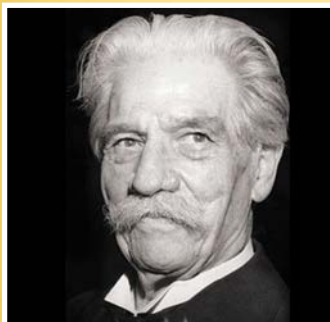
An honorary committee composed of eminent individuals who shared the same ideal assisted Jean Nussbaum. In 1946, Dr. Jean Nussbaum had met Mrs. **Eleanor ROOSEVELT**, widow of President Franklin Roosevelt. She was immediately interested in the projects of Dr. Nussbaum concerning religious freedom. They even became real friends. She willingly accepted the presidency of the honorary committee of the new association that included eminent personalities like Edward Henriot, president of the French National Assembly and members of the French Academy like Paul Claudel, Georges Duhamel, André Siegfried, the great physicist Duke Louis de Broglie.

As soon as it was founded, the Association was supported by illustrious individuals from the university, religious and political circles. Several of them were its presidents. Following Mrs Eleanor Roosevelt, the next president was **Dr Albert SCHWEITZER**, a French physician, a member of the French Academy, and Nobel Peace Prize holder; then, in 1966, **Paul-Henri SPAAK**, a Belgian politician and former minister at the Foreign Office, who had played an important part in restructuring post-war Europe. From 1974 through 1976, it was **René CASSIN**, a lawyer and member of the French Institute, who was also awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, in 1968. Besides, René Cassin was one of the initiators of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, of 1948.

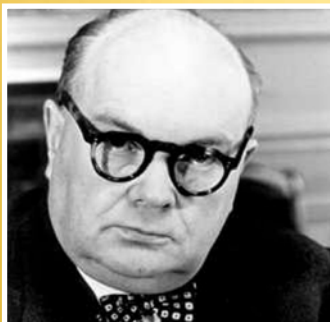
In 1977, the Association was presided by **Edgar FAURE**, a French lawyer and former president of the Council of State as well as Education Minister till his death in March 1988. **Léopold Sédar SENGHOR**, former president of the Republic of Senegal and member of the French Academy, presided the Association from 1989 through 2001. The current president is Mrs **Mary ROBINSON**, former High Commissioner for Human Rights and former president of the Republic of Ireland. All succeeded to the



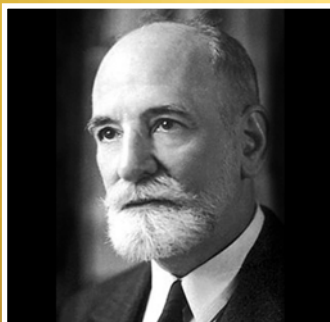
Eleanor Roosevelt 1946-1962



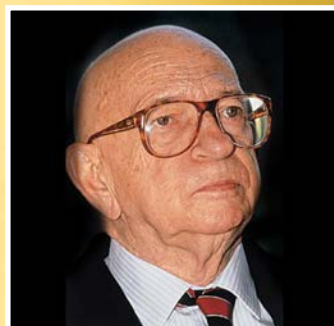
Albert Schweitzer 1962-1965



Paul Henry-Spaak 1966-1972



René Cassin 1972-1976



Edgar Faure 1976-1988



Leopold Sedar 1988-2001



Mary Robinson 2001-



presidency of the honorary committee. As for the association, it was fast developing. In 1966, the international headquarters of AIDLR was transferred from Paris to Bern. From 1973, in addition to that already in place in France, new national sections were formed in several countries of Western Europe and Canada: then, in Eastern Europe, and in the Caribbean.

NUSSBAUM' DIPLOMATIC AGENDA: CALENDAR REFORM

Barely installed in Paris on 1931, Dr. Nussbaum received a letter that left him astonished. Nussbaum was urged to go to the League of Nations to enquire about the reform calendar, which was on the agenda of the forthcoming session that was about to open. American businessmen, especially George Eastman, had launched a major campaign in favor of a world calendar intended to replace the current Gregorian calendar. Each year would have accounted henceforth thirteen months of twenty-eight days and would have ended by a blank day, which would have broken the normal cycle of weeks.

The complication comes from the fact that the number of days in the year, three hundred and sixty-five is not divisible by seven, fifty-two weeks totaling at least three hundred and sixty-four days. And leap years would have counted two blank days! Believers attached to religious observance of a day of rest were deeply troubled by this project. Especially Adventists and Jews, for whom Saturday is a holy day, were very concerned. With the new calendar, the same date every year would always have corresponded to the same day of the week; in this way the months and quarters would have all been equal.

Many bankers, industrialists and merchants perceived this to be of great advantage and won the support of many delegates of states. On his first assignment, Dr. Nussbaum had to face a very tenuous situation. After obtaining a hearing with the head of the French delegation in Geneva, he reminded him that Muslims, so numerous in the French Empire, offered special prayers on Fridays and would be upset by a reform that would

move the real Friday each year. Then he went to Mr. Djuritchitch, who headed the Yugoslav delegation, and said: "Your leader was a witness at my wedding, and I consider him like a member of my family." The Minister for Foreign Affairs was then Voyislav Marinkovitch. The doctor explained to the delegate of Belgrade the dangers of the new proposed calendar, and gained his support.

It was in October 1931 when the *Advisory and Technical Committee for Communications and Transit*, a specialized agency of the League of Nations in Geneva, considered the question of the calendar reform. The President of the Commission that included forty-two nations was the delegate of Portugal: Mr. de Vasconcellos. The latter, when opening the session, proposed that two vice-presidents be designated. "May heaven, thought the doctor, make sure that one of them be the representative of France or that of Yugoslavia!" The two vice-presidents elected were the French and Yugoslav. M. de Vasconcellos continued: "Should we allow representatives of non-governmental organizations to participate in the discussion? The assembly decided that they could be invited to speak for fifteen minutes. Thus the doctor could explain that the blank day would interrupt the continuity of the days of the week and could not be accepted by believers strongly committed to their holy day, whether it be Friday, Saturday or Sunday. Understanding the dangers of such a change, the Commission rejected the new proposal to reform the calendar by a massive vote.

In a report on this Convention, dated October 14, 1931, Joseph Herman Hertz, Chief Rabbi of the Jewish community in the British Empire, narrated Dr. Jean Nussbaum's intervention:

"He [the physician] earnestly requested the representatives to remember that it was an important issue of conscience, and that any interference with human conscience was incompatible with the ideals of the League of Nations. All previous interventions of the observers had been made in English, and several delegates had only been able to follow them through a translation. This masterly intervention in French, however, went to their hearts."

FOUNDATION OF ASSOCIATION AND RADIO MONTE CARLO

On April 25, 1945, Jean Nussbaum attended the United Nations Convention in San Francisco. Its goal was to found an international organization to succeed the League of Nations. The Economical and Social Council was appointed to deal with the topics concerning the human rights. There he met Mrs Eleanor Roosevelt, the widow of the former president of the United States. These two persons quickly agreed on the issues of human rights. It brought them closer to each other in the battle they were both fighting and fostered their cooperation in the years that followed:

“[...] every time he went to the USA, namely once a year at least, Dr Nussbaum was hosted by Mrs Roosevelt and her sons, in their estate. When she came to Paris, she used to lodge at Hotel Crillon and had several meetings with the physician, who organized suppers at his home, Avenue de la Grande Armée, or in the city.”

Jean Nussbaum mentioned his project to found the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty in Paris. He expressed the wish that she should be its first president. The American authorities agreed.

In 1948, Jean Nussbaum founded the *Conscience et liberté* [Conscience and Liberty] magazine and published the first three issues himself. A tireless worker, he gave numerous lectures on the issue of religious liberty. He recorded radio broadcasts on this issue. André Dufau, his main assistant in the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty from 1950 through 1966, wrote in 1988:

After the Second World War, in 1946, he used the powerful means of the radio for spreading the ideas of religious liberty that the world so badly needed. Every week, for ten years, the Monte Carlo radio broadcasted one program “Conscience and Liberty. The first speaker of this program was Eleanor Roosevelt. Jean Nussbaum finished his activities

only a few months before his death. On October 29, 1967, he died of a heart attack, aged 79.

When, in 1945, during a stay in San Francisco, Dr Nussbaum was asked by the French minister, Jean-Paul Boncour: “What interests do you defend?” he answered: “I do not defend any interests, but a principle: the principle of religious liberty.”

According with André Dufau, doctor of law, who was for 18 years the very close associate of Dr. Nussbaum, no one was better qualified than himself to evoke the exemplary life and the selfless work of this great man. How exciting a life it was, that of this courageous mans who consecrated all his strength to serve the sick and the oppressed! [...] He did not know “how to rest,” and it was never in vain when we required assistance from him.

The Association (AIDLR) has contributed actively in preparing the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, adopted by the United Nations in 1981. By Dr. Gianfranco Rossi, one of the Secretaries-General of the AIDLR, it has also cooperated with the Commission on Human Rights which, in its General Comments on Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, specified that the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion “includes the freedom to have or adopt a religion or belief of one’s own choice, and the freedom to manifest one’s religion or belief, individually or in community with others, and in public or private.

RECOGNITION: OFFICIAL STATUS AND “MESSENGER OF PEACE”

In 1978 the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty (AIDLR) received the status of non-governmental organization (NGO) to the United Nations by ECOSOC at the Commission of Human Rights, and after the strategic changes which Kofi Annan did in the system of the UN, the AIDLR continued to work at the UN Human Rights Council which is hosted in Geneva, and since 2013 working too at



Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt at Radio Monte Carlo

General Assembly of the UN in New York, and at the UN in Vienna. In 1985, the AIDLR received the same status with the Council of Europe and started to get a status with UNESCO in 1986.

On September 15, 1987, within the framework of the International Year of Peace, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar, the then Secretary General of the United Nations, conferred to the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty (AIDLR) the title of "MESSENGER OF PEACE".

From 2012, the AIDLR received the status of permanent representative at the European Parliament at Brussels and Strasbourg, and received the accreditation as Observer and Representative at the United Nations in New York and Vienna. From 1946, the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty (AIDLR) cooperated with the International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA), founded in Washington DC, United States, whose goals are similar. In particular, IRLA was the partner of AIDLR at the international conferences on religious freedom held in: Amsterdam in 1977, Rome in 1984, London

in 1989, and then in the meeting that would take place in Rio de Janeiro in June 1997. There are countless public conferences, including seminars and presentations in universities, and national or international seminars organized by AIDLR to which the IRLA participated: interventions with major international parliamentary bodies; meetings of its representatives with heads of states, politicians, civil or religious, or visits to ecumenical and confessional bodies.

PHILOSOPHY OF ASSOCIATION

In 1948, two years after the foundation of the Association, Jean Nussbaum wrote:

"The goal of the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty is to disseminate, all over the world, the principles of this fundamental liberty and to protect, in all legitimate ways, the right of every man to worship as he chooses or to practice no religion at all.

Our Association **doesn't represent any particular church or political party**. It has assumed the task of gathering all spiritual forces to fight intolerance and fanaticism in all their forms. All men, whatever their origin, color of skin, nationality or religion, are invited to join this crusade against sectarianism, fundamentalism and terrorism if they have a love for liberty. The work lying ahead is immense, but will certainly not go beyond our strength and means if everybody gets down to work, with courage.

"We are thus implementing ecumenism, on a special level, and in a very comprehensive way; for we are not only appealing to the Christians in the whole world, but also to the believers of all religions. We even hope that our appeal will also be heard by those who have no religion. Why shouldn't they join us?"

WHAT IS DOING CURRENTLY AIDLR

The International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty (AIDLR) from Switzerland, is cooperating with international and regional or-

ganizations and is participating as a Representative to the United Nations in Geneva, New York and Vienna and as a Representative to the Council of Europe, European Parliament and O.S.C.E.

The AIDLR believes in the importance of the continued education and training of human rights and religious liberty at all the levels: cooperate with governments and parliaments, diplomats and politicians, NGOs and civil society, universities and scholars, religious leaders and churches, religious minorities and other stakeholders in the defence of peace, human rights, religious liberty and of conscience for all people.

The AIDLR considers the organizing and participating in conferences, symposiums and panels of governments, parliaments, universities, inter-religious & interfaith meetings, one of the most important tools in favour of promoting respect for dignity, non-discrimination and understanding of the protection of religious liberty, no matter one's thinking, religion or belief. The International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty works as well as human rights and religious freedom adviser, contributing too by written or oral statements to the international, regional and national institutions. AIDLR organizes roundtables, religious liberty concerts and festivals, and monitors legislation, its application and trends on religious liberty issues.

AIDLR by its Secretary General Dr. Liviu Olteanu draws attention to human rights, religious freedom and religious minorities; since 2014 have proposed at the International Conference hosted in Madrid at Complutense University, the synergy between a network of relevant stakeholders in the platform the AIDLR has named DIALOGUE FIVE: 'Government – Diplomatic – Religious – Academic - NGOs/Civil Society' representatives; they must participate in multidisciplinary interaction to construct an efficient and effective understanding between civilizations, cultures and religions. The framework of Dialogue five' discusses how international, regional and national institutions can effectively work together, which would activate mechanisms to raise awareness of authorities, religious leaders, diplomats, educators and general population on the need of tolerance and

acceptance of other' differences and the respect of religious freedom for all people.

UNITED NATIONS FEEDBACK ON 'DIALOGUE FIVE' APPROACH

The UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief Dr. Heiner Bielefeldt, at the end of the International Conference on "Religious Liberty and Religious Minorities" commented:

"We have human rights obligations at different levels: national, regional and international and religious beliefs and human rights develop in different directions and can mutually undermine each other. We have the Council of Europe approach, the EU approach, various national approaches, the UN approach...Still I think as a matter of fact these different institutions sometimes are world of their own. We need coordination: one purpose is to avoid a mutual undermining of the authority of human rights standards and for that reason we have to know one another better, to be aware of what's happening, so from my perspective now working in the UN, it is very important to see what's happening in the Council of Europe, in the EU, in different countries.

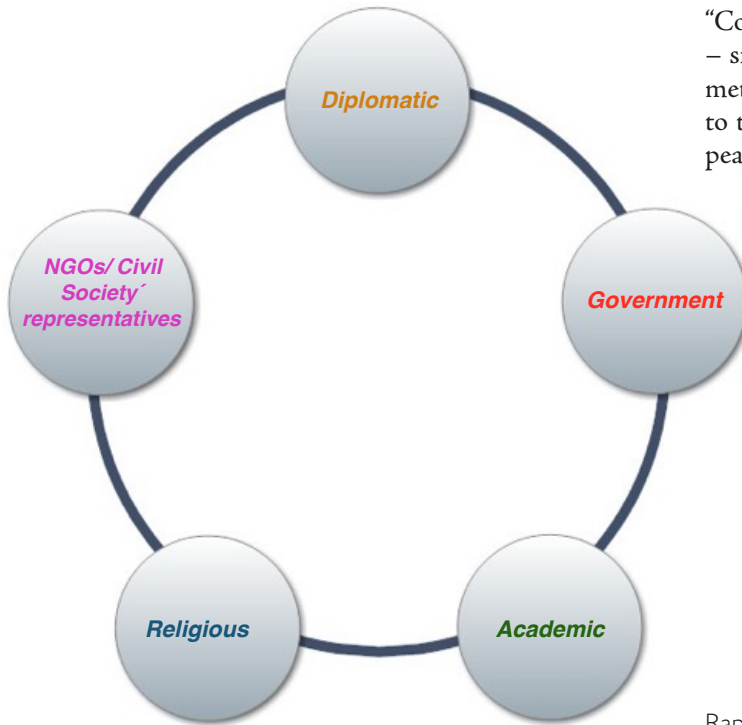
The structure of Madrid Conference was demonstrating how to avoid damage, risky situations or a loss of authority because one institution could be played off against other institutions; but of course there is also the positive opportunity to learn from one another, this is the task of cross" fertilization". We need these exchanges in order to know from one another's activities to mutually support and reinforce one another's rather than possibly undermine it without even knowing what we are doing.

Finally, the UN expert stressed:

"The Madrid Conference really sets an example, this is something we have to do, is really something we should copy, it is good and useful; we should establish that on a regular basis in fact. The project of AIDLR needs developing a consistence holistic framework at various levels, institutions and elements of infrastructure to fit together".



DIALOGUE FIVE STRUCTURE



By publishing academic materials such as “Conscience and Liberty” magazines and books – since 1948 - and by all of the previously stated methods and more, the AIDLR tries to contribute to the UN sustainable development goals, to the peace and security in our region and worldwide, contributing to understanding, respect and tolerance, between people, cultures and religions in spite of their differences. For the AIDLR, the dignity of each person is important and his representatives defend the principle of religious liberty for all people.

Professor Heiner Bielefeldt, UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, at First International Conference hosted in Madrid on 2014





**PRESIDENTS
OF THE HONORARY
COMMITTEE**



MRS. ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

(1946 TO 1962)

FIRST PRESIDENT OF HONORARY COMMITTEE OF THE AIDLR AND
PROMOTEUR OF UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS



FREEDOM IS A KEY ISSUE FOR SETTLEMENT OF VARIOUS KEY POLICIES THAT DIVIDE PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENTS

What the American President Franklin D. Roosevelt underlined on 13 April 1945, has the same or more value today. He said: “We seek peace – enduring peace. More than an end to war, we want an end to the beginnings of all wars – yes, an end to the brutal, inhumane, and thoroughly impractical method of settling the differences between governments. Today we are faced with the preeminent fact that, if civilization is to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relationships – the ability of all peoples, of all kinds, to live together and work together, in the same world, of peace.” Roosevelt truly believed in the possibility of a world.

The same legacy for peace and human rights, have been continued internationally by Roosevelt’ wife,

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt that could have contented herself with inheriting a name universally revered by free men. Yet, by wanting more she became a champion for the cause of human dignity in the world. Through her own merit, she warranted the respect and recognition of all thinking men. As the first President of Honour of the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty, it fell to her to launch the broadcast of “Conscience and Liberty” on Radio Monte-Carlo.

Here is a short part of her magnificent address:

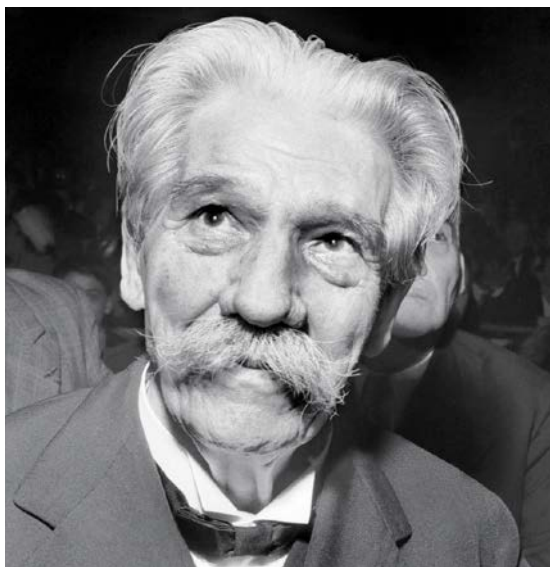
“Freedom is a key issue for the settlement of various key policies that divide peoples and governments today, and is, therefore, an issue that will affect the future of the United Nations. The decisive importance of this issue was fully recognized by the founders of the United Nations, in San Francisco. Concern for the preservation and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms stands at the heart of the United Nations. The United Nations has made it clear that it intends to uphold human rights and protect the dignity of the human personality. First of all, it is necessary for us to fully understand the essential freedom of democracy.

Basic human rights are simple and easily understood: freedom of speech and a free press; freedom of conscience and worship; freedom of assembly and the right of petition; the right of men to be secure in their homes and free from unreasonable search and seizure and from arbitrary arrests and sanctions. The immediate test is not only to the extent to which human rights and freedoms have already been achieved, but the direction in which the world is moving. This reflects the basic premise of the charter that the peace and security of mankind are directly linked with a mutual respect for the rights and freedoms of all.

DR. ALBERT SCHWEITZER

(1962 TO 1966)

SECOND PRESIDENT OF THE HONORARY COMMITTEE
AND NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNER



WE CANNOT ABDICATE OUR CONSCIENCE TO AN ORGANIZATION, NOT TO A GOVERNMENT

We cannot abdicate our conscience to an organization, nor to a government. 'Am I my brother's keeper?' Most certainly I am! I cannot escape my responsibility by saying the State will do all that is necessary. It is a tragedy that nowadays so many think and feel otherwise.

Only when an ideal of peace is born in the minds of the peoples will the institutions set up to maintain this peace effectively fulfill the function expected of them. May the men who hold the destiny of peoples in their hands, studiously avoid



anything that might cause the present situation to deteriorate and become even more dangerous. May they take to heart the words of the Apostle Paul: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." These words are valid not only for individuals, but for nations as well. May these nations, in their efforts to maintain peace, do their utmost to give the spirit time to grow and to act.

The great secret of success is to go through life as a man who never gets used up. That is possible for him who never argues and strives with men and facts, but in all experience retires upon himself, and looks for the ultimate cause of things in himself.



PAUL-HENRY SPAAK

(1966-1972)

THE THIRD PRESIDENT OF THE HONORARY COMMITTEE OF THE AIDL: EUROPE OF TOMORROW – A SUPRANATIONAL EUROPE



Throughout his whole life Paul-Henri Spaak remained unconditionally attached to the values of freedom, humanism and democracy that had been drilled into him since his childhood. Faithful to his own beliefs, he never wavered from defending these principles during his long and prolific career in politics, both nationally and internationally.

Intelligent, generous and sensitive, and open to dialogue, Spaak was not a man to become shackled by rigid or unshakeable positions and attitudes. A pragmatist, he was acutely aware of the non-stop de-

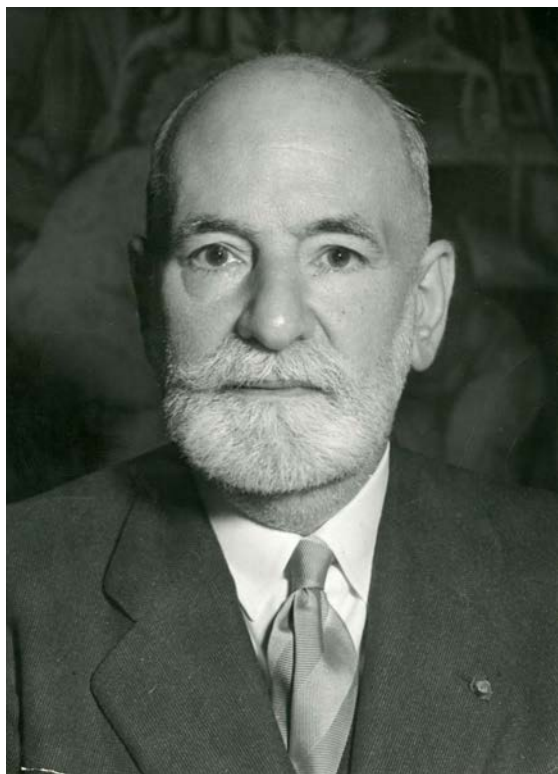
velopment of ideas and events. He was also willing to bend to these constraints, sometimes at the price of having to make painful concessions.

Spaak gained international prominence in 1945, when he was elected chairman of the first session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. He was a staunch defender of the independence of the European Commission. “Europe of tomorrow must be a supranational Europe,” he declared. In honor of his work for Europe, the first building of the European Parliament in Brussels was named after him.

RENE CASSIN

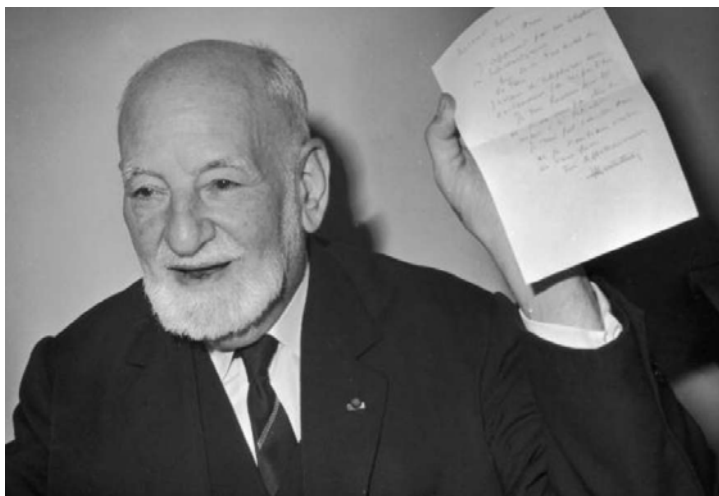
(1972-1976)

THE FOURTH PRESIDENT OF THE HONORARY COMMITTEE
OF THE AIDLR: NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNER A PASSIONATE
DEFENDER OF PEACE



Madame Cassin described Rene as one: He believed that with the cooperation of statesmen, one had to mobilize moral, secular and religious forces without excluding any single denomination; he sought out conversations with representatives from all faiths. A genuine 'resistance fighter' against everything which oppressed mankind, he was an awakener of consciences, a passionate defender of peace and of the brotherhood of men of goodwill. In this he was religious.

Once more he recalled this memory from the 1914 war: At the end of September 1914, I



had been gravely injured by a bullet to the stomach and I can see once again before me the fire that burnt down the aid station of the village of Dompcevrin. In the early morning, I was lying on the ground in misery like my companions. At daybreak, I saw the heavy silhouette of the curate moving around the area. When it came to my turn I was fully conscious, and whilst thanking the curate for his visit I said to him in all honesty, "I am a stranger to your way of worship and I don't share your convictions". He replied in his rugged voice, "My child, if you have to appear before the Supreme Judge shortly, know that He will be a judge of love". This scene is one that I will never forget. For Rene Cassin, the most elective remedy for hatred is justice, and it is by that inspiration upon which the law is formulated. He waged this battle until his dying days.



EDGAR FAURE

(1976-1988)

THE FIFTH PRESIDENT OF THE HONORARY COMMITTEE
OF THE AIDLR: AN IMPORTANT STATEMAN



Edgar Faure being invited by Dr. Pierre Lanares, Secretary General of the AIDLR to be the President of Honorary Committee, answered:

Dear Sir,

In response to your letter and the contact already established between Mr. Andrew Dufau and my colleague Professor Hubert Thierry, I am pleased to inform you of my willing acceptance to succeed my late lamented friend, Rene CASSIN, s president of the Committee of Honour of the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty. This is a cause in which I have a profound interest.

The presence within the committee of personalities such as President SENGHOR and Professor ELLUL, for whom I have the utmost esteem, is a further reason for accepting your courteous proposition. In the sincere hope that we have the opportunity to meet in the near future, please allow me to offer you my very best regards. Edgar Faure”.



LEOPOLD SEDAR SENGHOR

(1988-2001)

THE THE SIXTH PRESIDENT OF THE HONORARY COMMITTEE
OF THE AIDLR: AN ACADEMIC AND STATEMAN

Letter from 10th Novembre 1988

Leopold Sédar Senghor

Léopold Sédar SENGHOR
B.P. 5106
DAKAR – FANN (Sénégal)

N° 012/FS/88

Dakar, 10 November 1988



Mr. Secretary General,

I have received your very touching letter dated 6 October 1988.

Your letter was of even more interest for as well as being a socialist, I am a practising Catholic. That is to say that I am in favour of religious liberty.

Therefore, I accept with pleasure the position as director of the steering committee of your association.

I look forward to the pleasure of making your acquaintance, Mr. Secretary General.

Leopold Sedar Senghor

Mr. Gianfranco Rossi
Secretary General
of the International Association
for the Defense of Religious
Liberty
Schlosshaldenstrasse 17
3006 BERN (Switzerland)

I am very happy to accept your invitation to be the President (Chairman ?) of
The Committee of Honour of your Association.

Léopold Sédar Senghor

Former President of the Republic of Senegal

Leopold Sedar Senghor is a former Chairman of the Honorary Committee of the IRLA (International Religious Liberty Association). A poet, writer, member of the French Academy, but also a man of politics, he was the first president of the Republic of Senegal. He has defended cultural diversity and individual freedoms.



MARY ROBINSON

(2001-2016)

STATEWOMAN AND HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS OF UN

Letter from 1st August 2003

Mary Robinson

ETHICAL GLOBALIZATION INITIATIVE

A project led by Mary Robinson

1 August 2003

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the International Association for the Defence of Religious Liberty, inviting me to become the Chairperson of the Honorary Committee, which counts amongst its members several VIPs from the scientific, political and religious arena.

I am very familiar with the history of the association, and I am very honoured to accept the invitation to become Chairperson of the Honorary Committee, following in the footsteps of those great names that precede me.

I will be ready to promote, along with the association, the rights linked to freedom of religion and conviction, and to urge further thought on the implications of this fundamental dimension of human dignity.

Please accept, Sir, the expression of my highest consideration,

Mary Robinson



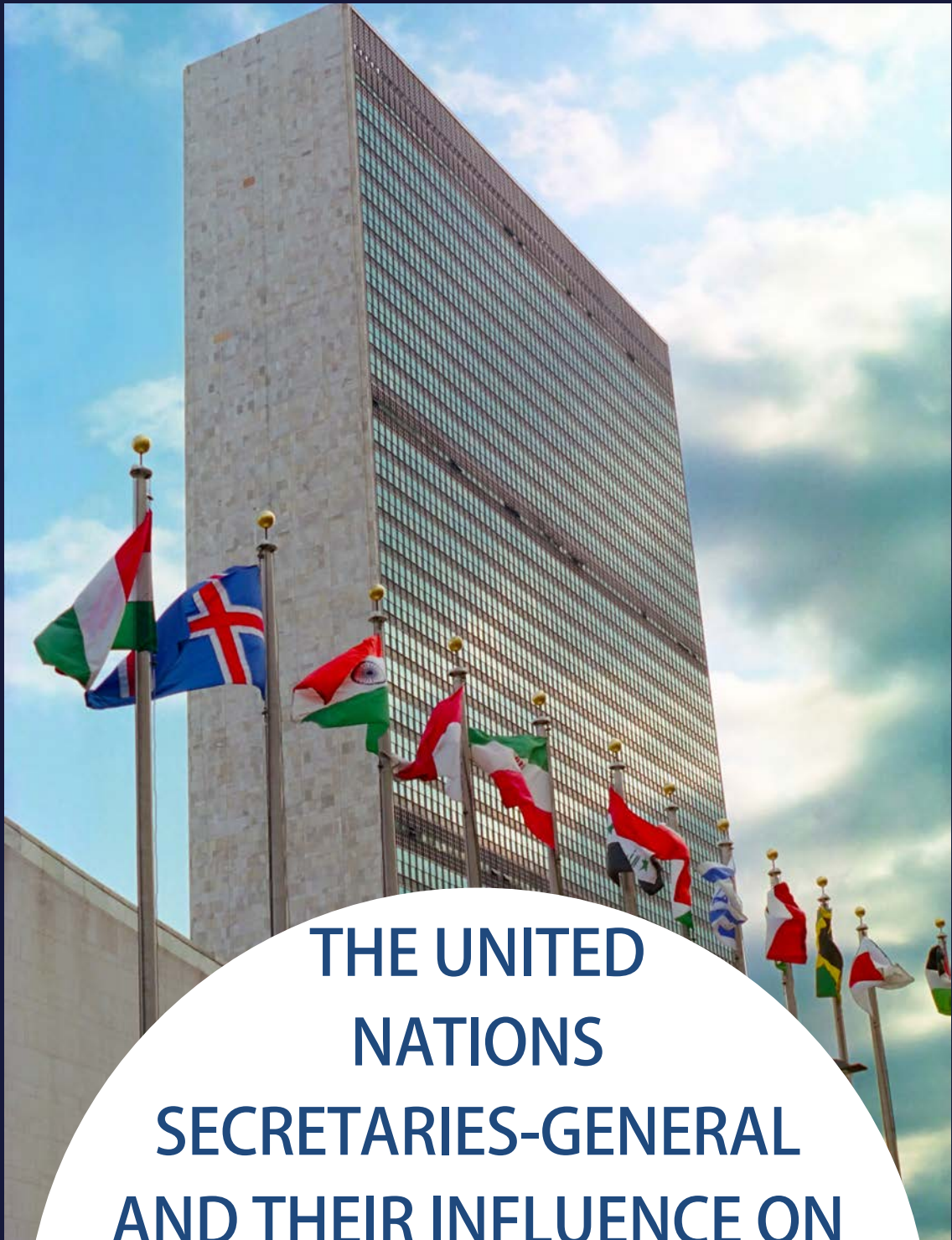
Maurice Verfaillie
Secretary General
International Association for the Defence of Religious Liberty
Schlosshaldenstrasse 17
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48 Chemin du Grand-Montfleury PO Box 147 1290 Versoix, Switzerland tel: +41 22 755 2125 fax: +41 22 755 2287

Mary Robinson is the President of the Honorary Committee of the IADLR. She is a previous United Nations High-Commissioner for Human Rights and previous president of the Irish Republic. She received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009.



**THE UNITED
NATIONS
SECRETARIES-GENERAL
AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON
THE HISTORY OF THE AIDLR**



DAG HAMMERSKJOLD AND UNITED NATIONS MEDITATION ROOM



Dag Hammarskjöld UN Secretary General expressed in 1957 an atypical perspective, which can have an impact supporting the peace; he personally planned and supervised in every detail the creation of the 'United Nations Meditation Room' as it exists today and he wrote the following text inscribed on a wall facing UN headquarters in New York – regarding this special

– and necessary – room of prayer and meditation for peace.

“We all have within us a centre of stillness surrounded by silence. This house (United Nations), dedicated to work and debate in the service of peace, should have one room dedicated to silence in the outward sense and stillness in the inner sense. It has been the aim to create in this small room a place where the doors may open to the infinite lands of thought and prayer. People of many faiths will meet here, and for that reason none of the symbols to which we are accustomed in our meditation could be used. However, there are simple things, which speak to us all with the same language.

We have sought for such things and we believe that we have found them in the shaft of light striking the shimmering surface of solid rock. So, in the middle of the room we see a symbol of how, daily, the light of the skies gives life to the earth on which we stand, a symbol to many of us of how the light of the spirit gives life to matter. But the stone in the middle of the room has more to tell us.

We may see it as an altar, empty not because there is no God, not because it is an altar to an unknown god, but because it is dedicated to the God whom man worships under many names and in many forms. The stone in the middle of the room reminds us also of the firm and permanent in a world of movement and change. The block of iron ore has the weight and solidity of the everlasting. It is a reminder of that cornerstone of endurance and faith on which all human endeavour must be based.



The material of the stone leads our thoughts to the necessity for choice between destruction and construction, between war and peace. Of iron man has forget his swords, of iron he has also made his ploughshares. Of iron he has constructed tanks, but of iron he has likewise built homes for man. The block of iron ore is part of the wealth we have inherited on this earth of ours. How are we to use it?

The shaft of light strikes the stone in a room of utter simplicity. There are no other symbols; there

is nothing to distract our attention or to break in on the stillness within ourselves. When our eyes travel from these symbols to the front wall they meet a simple pattern opening up the room to the harmony, freedom and balance of space. There is an ancient saying that the sense of a vessel is not in its shell but in the void. So it is with this room. It is for those who come here to fill the void with what they find in their centre of stillness”.



JAVIER PEREZ DE CUELLAR

AND “MESSENGER OF PEACE” DESIGNATED TO THE AIDLR



Javier Perez de Cuellar, the UN Secretary General, as a un recognition of the significant contribution to the program and objectives of the International Year of Peace, designated the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty” as a Peace Messenger” on 1987.

Perez De Cuellar said: “The General Assembly, in its first session, has embarked on the task

of the organization, which is to realize the principles proclaimed by the charter in declaring “that it is in the best interest of humanity to bring to an immediate end persecution and religious or racial discrimination”, and by inviting governments and responsible authorities “to take, to this end, the speediest and most energetic measures.

Freedom of conscience goes beyond freedom of thought. It is, indeed, an active law which, under the terms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, implies, “the freedom to change one’s religion or belief and freedom to manifest one’s religion or belief alone or in community with others and in public or private through teaching, in practice, at worship and by the observance of rituals.” If freedom of conscience was the basis of some of the noblest achievements of humanity, its infringement has caused, over the centuries, untold human suffering; in our time, the exercise of this right is a constant struggle.



Freedom of conscience
goes beyond freedom
of thought.

International Year of Peace السنة الدولية للسلام Международный год мира Année internationale de la paix 国际和平年 Año Internacional de la Paz



In recognition of
a significant contribution to
the programme and objectives of
the International Year of Peace,
proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly,
the Secretary-General designates

*International Association for the
Defense of Religious Liberty*

as a
Peace Messenger

A handwritten signature in dark ink, which reads "Javier Pérez de Cuéllar".

Javier Pérez de Cuéllar

15 September 1987



International Year of Peace: السنة الدولية للسلام Международный год мира Année internationale de la paix 国际和平年 Año Internacional de la Paz





BOUTROS BOUTROS-GHALI AND “CONSCIENCE AND LIBERTY” JOURNAL

Letter of February 6, 1993

Boutros Boutros Ghali



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

6 February 1993

Dear Sir,

It is with great interest that I read your letter of 16 December 1992, as well as the special edition of your magazine 'Conscience and Liberty' featuring the activities of the United Nations in promoting freedom of thought and religion. I thank you sincerely for them both.

First, I would like to let you know how grateful I am for your encouragement in this mission that is very much my own. The task of the UN in these troubled times, even notably in the heart of Europe, is most certainly not the easiest. Like you, I am convinced of the necessity to safeguard freedom of conscience, which has been jeopardised by all forms of extremism across various global platforms. It is evident that there can be no work for peace and justice without a profound and daily commitment to tolerance.

Finally, I would like to express how anxious I am to promote the wonderful founding principles of the United Nations charter and therefore, intend to support associations such as yours; without which the UN would not have the necessary stepping stones that it very much needs to access the public conscience.

My dear Sir, I thank you once again for your kind concern and offer you my most sincere regards.

Boutros Boutros-Ghali

Mr Gianfranco Rossi
Secretary General
International Association
for the Defence of Religious
Liberty
Berne



Boutros Boutros Ghali was the Secretary General of the United Nations from 1992-1996. Statesman and Egyptian diplomat, legal expert and university lecturer, he was the professor of International Rights and International Relations at the University of Cairo.

KOFI ANNAN

THE ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS AND THE UNITED NATIONS REFORMS ON HUMAN RIGHTS



Kofi Annan as UN Secretary General talking about the people who sacrificed their lives in the cause of peace, emphasized: “The United Nations was founded by men and women who dreamt of peace because they knew the cost of war. We, in our time have also witnessed friends and colleagues pay the ultimate price in the cause of peace.

Talking also on the role of people of faith to the cause of peace underlines: People of faith are a strong influence on group and individual conduct. As teachers and guides, you can be powerful agents of change. You can inspire people to new levels of commitment and public service. You can help bridge the chasms of ignorance, fear and misunderstanding. You can set an example of interfaith dialogue and cooperation. Together, you can help chart a path of moderation for the devout, showing them that they can remain true to their convictions and beliefs while engaging fully in the changing world around them.

Your deliberations should also enable you to make an important contribution to the “Alliance of Civilizations” that is intended to respond to the need for a committed effort by the international community in both its intergovernmental and its civil society forms -- to bridge divides and overcome prejudices, misconceptions, and polarizations, which potentially threaten world peace. It is in this spirit that I encourage you to spread its message of dialogue and peaceful coexistence in your communities.





BAN KI-moon

FAITH IN OUR FUTURE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)



The founders of the United Nations understood that sovereignty confers responsibility, a responsibility to ensure protection of human beings from want, from war, and from repression. The task of human protection is neither simple nor easy. We don't always succeed. But we must keep trying to make a difference.

That is our individual and collective responsibility. The challenges facing us have changed, but our core responsibility to maintain international peace and security has not. In such an irreversibly interconnected world, challenges faced by one become challenges faced by all – sometimes gradually but often suddenly.

This is the global logic of our times. I want to bring the sense of hope and solidarity to people in need today and to ensure that the United Nations is an effective instrument of progress and dignity for all. That is my seventieth-anniversary commitment to the world's people.

Human rights are an essential component of human protection, the responsibility to protect populations by preventing genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. However, my doctrine envisages that our efforts to prevent these awful crimes rest on three pillars: first, state responsibility- each state should be responsible; second, international responsibility to help states succeed and third, timely and decisive responses should national authorities manifestly fail to protect, including under Chapter VII if the Security Council deems such steps necessary. I think civil society can be the eyes and the watchers of how governments are implementing all these principles of justice and accountability.

Together, we can answer the cry of that child trapped under the rubble of an earthquake and people caught in the crossfire and those who are wondering: Can the world hear my call? Who will help me and my family? The UN recognizes that human protection stands at the center of both its purposes and principles.

Regardless of religious tradition, we have a common faith; a faith in our shared future. Let us harness our common humanity and make a better world.





**SECRETARIES - GENERAL
OF THE AIDLR**



DR. JEAN NUSSBAUM FOUNDER PRESIDENT OF THE AIDLR



FOUR PERSPECTIVES ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

1. Perspective on a free country

The struggle for freedom has now affected the entire world and the salvation of our civilization depends upon its outcome. But what is a free country? The different responses and more or less tendentious interpretations abound. Is there yet a “touchstone” that indisputably makes it possible to judge? Most certainly and here it is: A free

country is undoubtedly one where a citizen may think as he pleases, where he may believe or not believe, one where religious freedom is sound and without official limitations. Religious freedom exists only in the free world and the first indication of a social or political oppression for citizens begins with a restriction of their right to worship at their discretion or for its existence to be denied.

2. Perspective of joining on vigilance of freedom

Believers or unbelievers, Protestants or Catholics, Christians, Jews or Muslims, philosophers, agnostics or spiritualists find themselves fraternally joined within its ranks, which are steadily growing. We need, in each country around the world, collaborators and delegates, whatever their political leanings or doctrinal or dogmatic nuances, as long as their hearts and their spirits are above all open and concerned enough to persist. Would you like to join with us? You can either do so simply by showing us your sympathy or by subscribing to our association for which Mrs. Roosevelt has accepted the Honorary Presidency. The hour has come for elite to be on their guard. The salvation of our freedom, build on centuries of relentless struggles and innumerable sacrifices, depends on the vigilance of each and every one...

3. Perspective on creating a climate of tolerance

Tolerance is in danger. Is not out very reason for existing to defend and cry out, loudly, each time it is attacked? How can we claim to fight fanaticism if we passively assist or even vaguely consent to its universal triumph? We have asked our-



January 24, 1952, United Nations Assembly, Palais de Chaillot in Paris. Jean Nussbaum with Eleanor Roosevelt, widow of former President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and other personalities: Bert Beverly Beach, André Lecoultre and John Robert Bertalot.

selves these questions and with the same amount of anxiety as you. Neither their seriousness nor their urgency has escaped us. But, the only weapons we have available to resolve these matters are spiritual weapons. These are not, thank God, the least effective but they are also not the most obvious. Our first goal is to create a climate of tolerance. We are well aware that tolerance is difficult to practice and we shy away from to very quickly once we give in to passion. We will never fulfill our mission by arranging a crusade of the “tolerants” against the “intolerants”. Fanaticism exists, that is a fact, but it rarely speaks its name. Certainly it is unfortunate that the progress of democracy in the world has not led to the disappearance of the crime of opinion, but it is up to each nation to give itself the law that suits it best.

4. Perspective on political neutrality

We consider it our duty – of tolerance also – to retain strict political neutrality and to never make a hasty or inconsiderate judgement on internal affairs of state. The cause of religious liberty can gain nothing through this inopportune intervention. Those who have to struggle to maintain their faith – but who can nevertheless still hold on to it and pass it on to their children – run the risk of seeing a government that already has the tendency to treat them suspiciously become alarmed upon receiving our criticisms and protests. We know that every work of tolerance is primarily a work of peace and fraternity, and we will do everything in our power never to fail in this sacred duty.



DR. PIERRE LANARES

FORMER SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE AIDLR



FREEDOM AND RESPONSABILITY

Man can choose to act according to principles that will favor his fulfilment, such as those presented by God, but he can also choose to have a different attitude by accepting the consequences. A freedom that has no means of expression is no longer a freedom. God gave man the possibility of rejecting him by warning him that all freedom implies responsibility. Freedom without love is a source of confrontations and constraints in religious life as in everyday life.

Caesar, the symbol of political authority, has a *limited* power, in administrating social relations,

a *transitory* power, up to the establishment of the kingdom of God, and a *delegated* power. Permanent and priority citizen allegiance must be kept for God for “we must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). If Caesar goes beyond the limits of authority conferred upon him over the human beings in his care, he will engender conflicts between his dominating will and man’s freedom of conscience. Caesar’s existence is part of God’s will for man’s good, but it does not justify the existence of a totalitarian Caesar. Caesar is still responsible before the one who delegated him his power. In fact, religious liberty is not a human right among others. It is the foundation of other liberties. Jesus’ religious liberty is different. It is a right which flows from a duty to act according to one’s conscience. Duty, for which one is responsible before God and abandonment of which could have eternal consequences.

This freedom proclaimed by Jesus is a love relationship with the Creator and with all men to whom the freedom whose respect we ask for ourselves is granted.

Freedom without love is a source of confrontations and constraints in religious life as in everyday life.

PIERRE LANARES



DR. GIANFRANCO ROSSI

FORMER SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE AIDLR



DIFFERENT “VIEWS” OF THE WORLD HAVE THE RIGHT TO EXIST

Every nation, it is true, has the inalienable right to self-determination, to choose and to freely develop its political, social, economic and cultural systems. But no nation or group can assume the right to establish or maintain a political system that does not respect the rights and fundamental freedom of individuals; in other words that refuses to respect the inherent dignity of each member of the human race.

In fact, to guarantee this right to each individual means to acknowledge his right to be himself, to live in harmony with his deepest convictions and his own world view, to thrive in a perspec-

tive that goes beyond his life on earth to attain the certainty of an eternal destiny. We can only reinforce the words of Rene Cassin, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize and one of the fathers of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, when he said: The right to the freedom of thought is the basis and the starting point for all other rights. It is the right to the freedom of conscience that gives the human being his value and his dignity. Different “views of the world” -whether religious or not - should have the right to exist, to express themselves and to be valued in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Religions with a global vision of the human family that preach justice, peace and love amongst men, should play an important role in the building of a pluralistic society that respects human rights.

We must fight vigorously and with almost urgency against religious extremism and strive to the best of our ability to ensure that the right to the freedom of thought, of conscience and religion or conviction is recognised and guaranteed by law in every country, not only in principle but also in all its different manifestations.

The right to the freedom of thought is the basis and the starting point for all other rights.





DR. MAURICE VERFAILLE FORMER SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE AIDLR



reprehensible. Those who harm the freedom of choice in the matter of conscience and religion, like those who violate human dignity, who put in danger the security of men and women, their health and their lives or who overstep the limits of good morals should be punished by the same token. But it is also essential for the functioning of a true democracy that punishments should be based on the same legal foothold as those which apply equally to all: to individuals or communities, to traditional churches, both old and new, to old or new spiritual communities, both mainstream and minorities.

DO NOT MEET INTOLERANCE WITH INTOLERANCE

In San Francisco, at the end of the Second World War, men and women of good will created the United Nations Organisation and, a few years later in 1949, others gave birth to the Council of Europe; they all had the same primary objectives: to prevent the miseries of war for future generations, to promote the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to put into practice the tolerance required to live in peace with each other.

The International Association for the Defence of Religious Freedom does not, in principle, defend religious liberty at all costs. It is evident that the society must structure different freedoms for the collective good. Many types of behaviour are



The International Association for the Defence of Religious Freedom does not, in principle, defend religious liberty at all costs. It is evident that the society must structure different freedoms for the collective good.

MAURICE VERFAILLE

MR. KAREL NOWAK

FORMER SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE AIDLR



RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM AND FANATICISM ARE DETRIMENTAL TOWARDS RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

It seems that religious fanaticism and religious liberty are two phenomena that create tensions and which, to some extent, are paradoxical. Extremism, and more especially religious extremism, has a tendency to be an obstacle for religious freedom.

It often creates legal restrictions and, in some cases, provides the authorities with a pretext for limiting religious liberty. But what is an extremist? What is a fanatic? What is a fundamentalist? “Extremism” and “fanaticism” are generally defined as

a deviation from a commonly accepted behavioural norm that varies according to the time, place or culture. Whatever the definition, it appears that the fanatic displays very strict standards and displays very little tolerance for ideas or opinions contrary to his own. History has shown us that religious extremism and fanaticism of any nature are hostile and detrimental towards religious liberty. Religious groups that have extremist tendencies display very little tolerance towards other religions or other forms of devotion.

There are governments who, in order to attempt to battle against religious extremism, restrict religious liberty to all. I will quote a personal remark by Nariman Gasimoglu, a scholar originating from Azerbaijan, a translator of the Koran, former research associate at Georgetown University (US): “The Islamist Religious groups [...], which do not yet benefit from widespread support, have been strengthened by repression, whereas the moderate Muslims, the Protestants and the Jehovah Witnesses have suffered.

The best – perhaps the only – method of countering religious extremism is to open up society to religious liberty for everyone, to democracy and free debate, including even Islamist groups. It is the only means to deprive Islamic extremism of its influence, by demonstrating the reality of what extremism in power could mean. Religious liberty favours democracy, and democracy favours religious liberty.

The more we allow people the freedom to practise their religion, the more we liberate society from the problems of religious extremism. Freedom is a form of remedy for social problems such as extremism.”



DR. LIVIU OLTEANU IS THE CURRENT SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE AIDLR



THE NEED FOR NEW APPROACHES ON RESPECT FOR DIFFERENCES

The history of religious freedom in the world is of great interest. This is the story of the ups and downs of freedom, a history characterized by intolerance, discrimination or persecution, as well as hopes and challenges, struggles and victories. Our world is a complex and polarized one, with trends, contrasts, insecurity and crisis. It is undeniable that religious liberty is confronted with new and unprecedented challenges due to the hatred, increasing the violence and terrorism in the name of religion, and aggressive secularism, as well as an important redefinition of the major social institutions.

Why so many people suffered and are still suffering persecution, discrimination, intolerance and death? There are many reasons, but one is due to lack of acceptance that as human being, we are different and we have differences. For that we need to have new approaches on respect for differences.

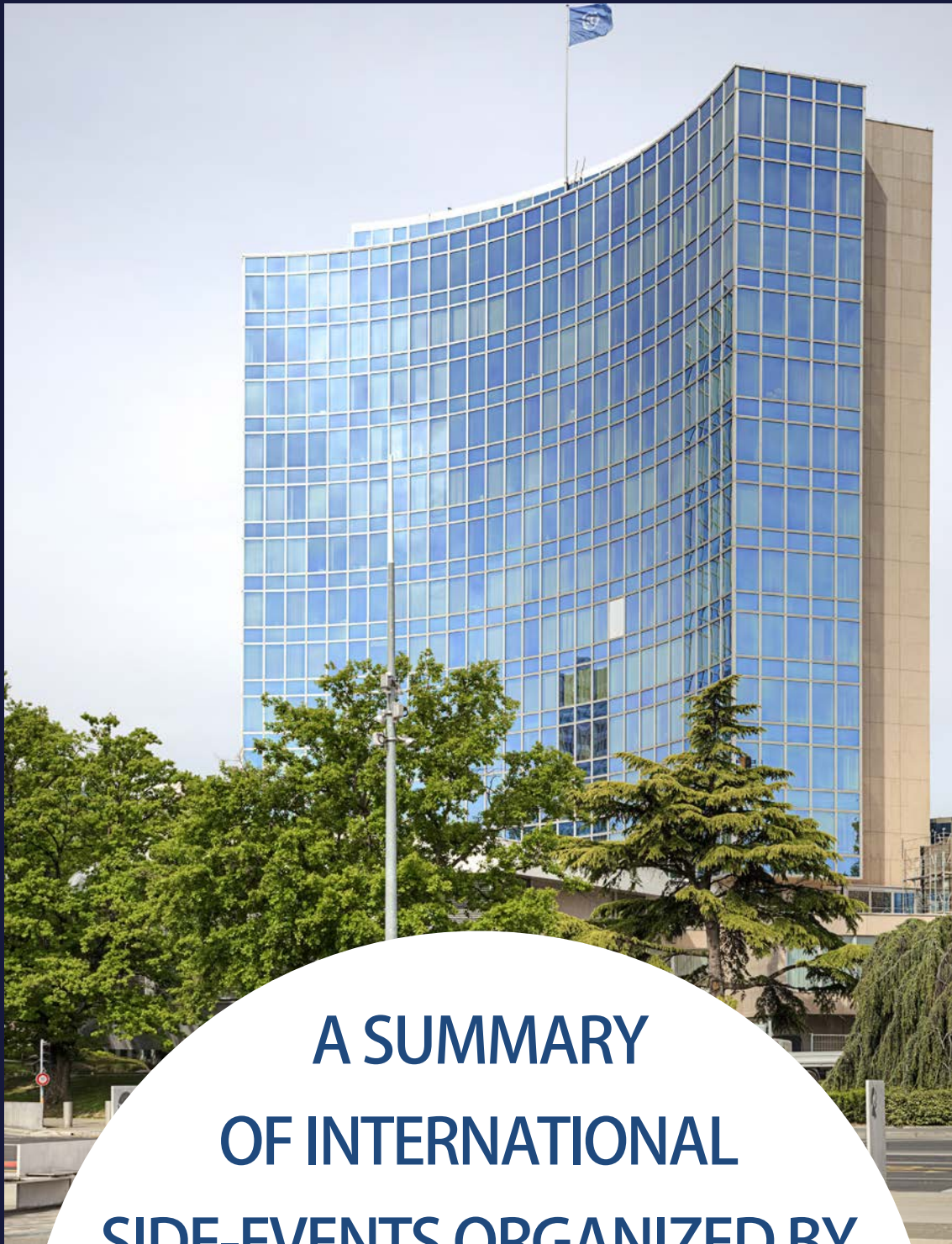
1. Respect for differences begins with acknowledging the rights, dignity and perspectives of everyone in a thoughtful manner and then by treating others as one would like to be treated. Practically, this is Jesus' principle, the golden rule of the Bible: *"And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them."*

2. It would be wise to look forward and reflect on how to live wisely and treat or understand people, how we look to religions, beliefs, cultures, and try to understand why it is so important to have a respect for others' differences.

3. We need to learn about other cultures, religions, beliefs, customs and traditions; this will establish and maintain harmony in our relationships and peace in the world.

Consequently, I believe that governments, diplomats, religious leaders, academia and non-governmental organizations can effectively work together at international, regional and national levels to promote peace and security, tolerance and respect for diversity, religion or belief and always defending the human dignity and the principle of freedom of religion for all people.

To what extent is religious freedom distinctive and necessary in our society today? Religious Liberty is a cornerstone of freedom for all people. For it, the AIDLR "doesn't represent any particular church or political party" and, do not defend one religion, church or belief, but defend and want to protect a principle: the Principle of religious liberty for ALL people.



**A SUMMARY
OF INTERNATIONAL
SIDE-EVENTS ORGANIZED BY
THE AIDLR**



A CHRONICLE OF DR. JOSE MIGUEL SERRANO SCHOLAR AND UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR



The events having occurred over the past year (n.r.2013) with increasing religious persecutions in Asia and Africa (where armed conflicts are taking place), with problems linked to religious freedom in the Ukraine and the refugee crisis in Europe, greatly spread persecutions on religious grounds and increased the necessity to multiply and strengthen forums on religious freedom.

In such a context, the efforts the *International Association for the Defence of Religious Liberty (AIDLR /IADRL)* made in 2014 and 2015 seem to have been a premonition. The AIDLR did well in setting up dialogue forums in which three es-

sential elements combine together. On the one hand we have what we could call “religious freedom diplomacy” as Liviu Olteanu, the AIDLR Secretary General, rightly put it and, on the other hand, the presence of a large panel of scholars that ensure that these issues are discussed rigorously and at a highly academic level. The third element is the active participation of the members of different religious denominations, these members probably being the most necessary as they give voice to personal conviction and testify to how the demand for religious freedom helps in the achievement of self-fulfillment.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE AT MADRID UNIVERSIDAD COMPLUTENSE ON “RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AND RELIGIOUS MINORITIES” - 2014

As an example of this triple presence, they were featured in the event set up by the AIDLR at the Institute for Human Rights of the Faculty of Law of the Universidad Complutense in Madrid on 17 January 2014. On that occasion, the main topic was religious minorities and their treatment, the latter being the key to distinguish real respect for human dignity. As previously said: “the keystone of respect towards religious freedom is the way minorities are treated.” That treatment is precisely where genuine respect for human dignity (in both meanings of the word: “sacred” and what is most distant from economic value) can be assessed.

The Universidad Complutense event pre-

sented two major effects. On the one hand, many scholars became more interested in religious freedom in great public institutions at national and international levels. On the other hand, it allowed a fair number of religious denominations to be present in the academic field from which they have been missing throughout time to a certain extent, with the exception of confessional universities. From another viewpoint, it also gave body to the collaboration the Institute of Human Rights was putting together with the AIDLR Secretary General, who was first a student, then a scholarship-holder at the University of Oxford through the Institute, and finally a collaborator and professor at the Institute.

Guests and participants came from the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, the Spanish government on the one hand and international experts on human rights and freedom of religion and international NGOs on the other.

Heiner Bielefeld's intervention on "the necessity to plan such events on a regular basis" was particularly important. In that perspective, the Universidad Complutense Law Faculty is preparing the next meeting in Madrid in 2016 with the International Association for the Defence of Religious Liberty. (Note: The II International Conference took place on 16-17 of May 2016).

Secretary General Liviu Olteanu stressed in his presentation at the University the need today of one more complete paradigm in favor of the

religious liberty and of religious minorities: the multidisciplinary dialog in favor of the liberty and peace, named 'Dialogue 5': Governmental- Scholars- Diplomatic- Religious- Civil Society Representatives. Between 200-250 scholars, religious, diplomatic, NGOs representatives and students of the Faculty of Law attended the conference.

The representative of the Spanish Government Professor Dr. Ricardo Garcia-Garcia thanked the AIDLR and its Secretary General for the International Conference and its work for the defense and the promotion of religious liberty. According to the participants, this first "AIDLR International Conference" was a great success.

First International Conference hosted in Madrid at Law Faculty, Universidad Complutense, on 2014





TWO SIDE-EVENTS AT THE UNITED NATIONS IN GENEVA – JUNE 2014

The success of the event led the AIDLR to hold a panel of experts on “Human Rights worldwide, religious freedom and religious minorities; a ‘five-way stakeholders representatives’ dialogue” on 10 June 2014. The event was held in the United Nations during the Human Rights Council’s 26th session.

On top of the AIDLR’s participation, one must also acknowledge the support given by the permanent delegations at the UN: the Council of Europe, the Republic of Uruguay, Canada and the Kings of Spain and Norway.

The most strictly academic aspect of the event at the international headquarters of human rights

was the launching of the book “*Worldwide Human Rights and Religious Liberty: a new equilibrium or new challenges*”. It is no easy thing to exaggerate the importance of this book. Firstly, due to the almanac the volume celebrates, the 65th anniversary of the magazine *Conscience et Liberté*, the eldest magazine dedicated to religious freedom and one of the oldest focusing on fundamental rights. This work is a reference and is particularly relevant and it certainly deserved to be introduced as it was in Geneva. It also showed the universalistic effort of the AIDLR.

The presentation of this book took place within a panel moderated by Dr Liviu Olteanu,



Dr. Bruno Vertallier, the former president of the AIDLR at UN in Geneva on June 2014 with the first edition of *Conscience and Liberty* journal (1948); and H.E. Petru Dumitriu, former Ambassador of the Council of Europe at the UN in Geneva, currently the UN Inspector in Geneva



**The Human Rights Institute of the Faculty of Law
at Complutense University of Madrid
and the
International Association for the Defense of
Religious Liberty, Berna Suiza**

Internacional Conference,

In the light of Edict of Millan (313-2013),

«Religious Liberty and Religious Minorities: Among the balance and the challenges»

Friday, 17rd January 2014

Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Faculty of Law.
Meetings Room, at 10:00 to 19:30h

Program's Directors:

Professor Dr. José Miguel Serrano, Professor Dr. Philosophy of Law, UCM

Attorney Drd. Liviu Olteanu, Secretary General, International Association
for the Defense of Religious Liberty, Bern Switzerland



AIDLR Secretary General. President Bruno Vertallier, former Prime Minister Petre Roman, Ambassador Laura Dupuy, Ambassador Petre Dumitriu, Judge Harald Mueller and Professor José Miguel Serrano took part in it.

The second part of the event consisted of a debate panel on “religious liberty and religious minorities – developing a holistic frame. There were interventions by Rita Izsak, Special Rapporteur on minorities, Professor Ricardo García-García, member of the Ministry of Justice in Spain, Dr Ganoune Diop, Dr Harry Kuhalampi, Professor Heiner Bielefeldt, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief (by video conference) and Dr Liviu Olteanu. The panel developed the idea of a five-way stakeholders representatives dialogue, a concept supported by the International

Association for the Defence of Religious Liberty and involving governments, diplomats, religious leaders, academics and NGOs able to work together at international, regional, national and local levels to promote tolerance and respect towards other people, heeding differences of beliefs and religions while always defending human dignity and the principle of religious freedom for all.

Moderator Petru Dumitriu, Ambassador and permanent observer of the Council of Europe, started the debate with a speech in which he developed the idea that religious liberty is an existential condition for a peaceful society. It is a pillar of democracy. To this end, collective cooperation to make people aware of the “five-pillar” line, which the AIDLR referred to, is compulsory. Furthermore, United Nations Special Rapporteur on

The side-events organized by the AIDLR at the UN in Geneva on June 2014



minorities Rita Izsak, referred to the necessity for religious minorities to be active agents to convince and assist their governments in promoting religious freedom. She also tackled the institutional aspect.

Another participant, Dr Ricardo García-García, deputy Director general of relationships with religious faiths of the Spanish Ministry for Justice, focused on the Spanish system, which turned into a model at international level. This system starts from the fact that, in Spain, one faith clearly is numerically predominant, alongside a series of other faiths notoriously deeply rooted in society. From that point of view and considering religious liberty as a constitutional fundamental value, the rule is cooperation with religious faiths, taking care that said cooperation does not interfere with or control these faiths. Thus, the system

is based on equality between different faiths, separation between State and religions, cooperation and the respect for Human Rights.

Prior to the joined efforts summary in both speeches and in his presentation in the same spirit as previous speakers and along the lines of what the International Association for the Defence of Religious Liberty developed, Heiner Bielefeld, UN special rapporteur for religious freedom, called for a multi-factorial cooperation which needs to develop between said civil society, State and international organizations' representatives. The confluence of all those efforts creates a synergy which was specifically evidenced through the three fundamental events – the first one being the book, the second one being the conference in Madrid and the third one being the day at the United Nations which we are referring to.





International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty (AIDLR)

Schoshshaldenstrasse 17, CH-3006 Bern, Switzerland; www.aidlr.org; info@aidlr.org; liviu.olteanu@aidlr.org

Honorary Committee's Former Presidents: Eleanor ROOSEVELT, Albert SCHWEITZER
Paul Henry SPAAK, René CASSIN, Edgar FAURE, Léopold Sédar SENGHOR, Mary ROBINSON

President: Bruno VERTALLIER, Secretary General: Liviu OLTEANU



PERMANENT MISSION OF NORWAY

With the participation of

Ms. Rita IZSAK, The Special Rapporteur of United Nations on Minority Issues,
Mr. Heiner BIELEFELDT, The Special Rapporteur of United Nations on Freedom of Religion or Belief (By video message)

**WORLDWIDE HUMAN RIGHTS,
RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AND RELIGIOUS MINORITIES**

A side-event at the 26th Session of the United Nations - Human Rights Council

Co-sponsored by

The COUNCIL OF EUROPE and PERMANENT MISSIONS OF: URUGUAY, SPAIN, CANADA and NORWAY

10 June 2014, from 12:00 to 15:00 h

Geneva, Palais des Nations, Conference Room VIII

You are kindly invited to a side-event consisting of two panels:

I. Book launch: the special edition of "CONSCIENCE and LIBERTY" on "Worldwide human rights and religious liberty: A new equilibrium or new challenges".

Moderator: Attorney Liviu Olteanu, Secretary General of the AIDLR, Permanent Representative at the UN, EP, OSCE and Representative at the COE

Panelists:

- Dr. Bruno Vertallier, President of the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty (AIDLR) Bern Switzerland
- H.E. Mr. Petre Roman, Member of Romanian Parliament, former Prime Minister of Romania, former Ministry of Foreign Affairs, former President of Romanian Senate, Member of the Club de Madrid
- H.E. Mrs. Laura Dupuy Lassere, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the United Nations in Geneva, former President of the Human Rights Council
- Judge Dr. Harald Mueller, Hanover Germany
- Professor Jose-Miguel Serrano Ruiz Calderon, Researcher & professor at Human Rights Institute and Law School Universidad Complutense of Madrid, Spain
- H.E. Mr. Petru Dumitriu, Ambassador, Permanent Observer of the Council of Europe to the United Nations in Geneva

II. Panel discussion: "Religious Liberty & Religious Minorities - Developing a Holistic Framework"

Moderator: H.E. Mr. Petru Dumitriu, Ambassador, Permanent Observer of the Council of Europe to the United Nations

Panelists:

- Ms. Rita Izsak, the Special Rapporteur of United Nations on Minority Issues
- H.E. Mr. Ricardo Garcia-Garcia, Deputy Director General- Ministry of Justice of Spain, Expert on the relation with the religious minorities, Madrid Spain
- Prof. Ganoune Diop, Representative of the International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA) to the UN in New York and Geneva, Adviser Interfaith Relations, Washington DC, United States
- Dr. Mr. Harry Kuhalampi, former Adviser MEP- European Parliament, the Commission of FORB, Brussels
- Prof. Heiner Bielefeldt, the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief (video message)
- Attorney Liviu Olteanu, Secretary General of the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty, Bern Switzerland

Sandwiches and fruits will be served at 11:45 h

MADRID SECOND INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON “FREEDOM, RELIGION, SECURITY:
ANTAGONISTIC TERMS?”- 2016

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

FREEDOM, RELIGION, SECURITY – ANTAGONISTIC TERMS IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL INSECURITY?

Security by Education on Prevention & Protection Against Violence,
Terrorism & Genocide in the Name of Religion – Developing a Holistic Framework

ORGANIZERS



UNIVERSIDAD COMPLUTENSE
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HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTE
LAW FACULTY



Association internationale
POUR LA DÉFENSE DE LA LIBERTÉ RELIGIEUSE
International Association
FOR THE DEFENSE OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

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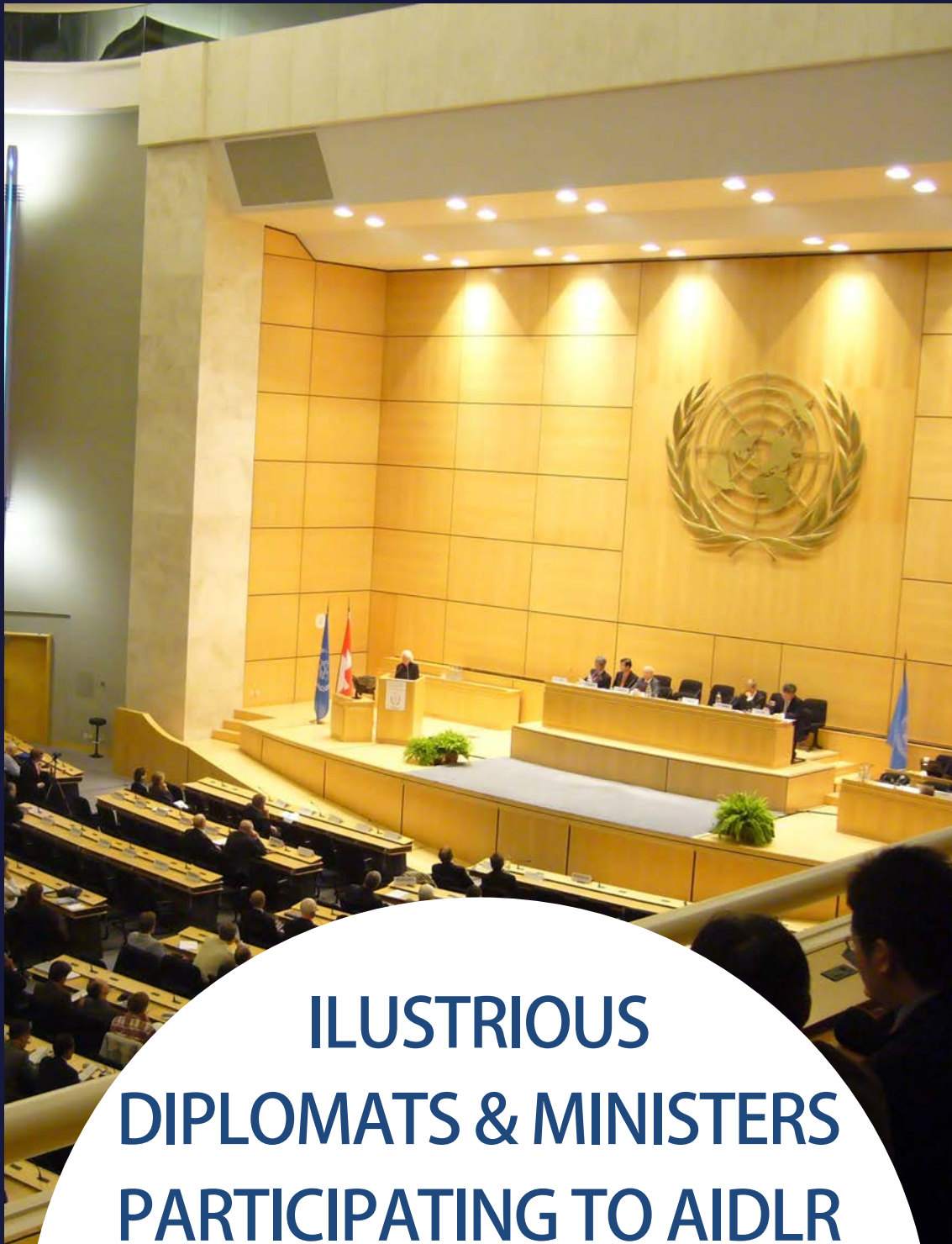


12-13 of May 2016
Sala de Juntas, Facultad de Derecho-
Universidad Complutense de Madrid



H.E. Rafael Catala Polo, Minister of Justice of Spain receiving the book: "Agents and Ambassadors for peace" from the Secretary General of the AIDLR". Sitting: Dr Ricardo Garcia Dean of Law Faculty and H.E. Dr Adama Dieng.





**ILUSTRIOS
DIPLOMATS & MINISTERS
PARTICIPATING TO AIDLR
INTERNATIONAL EVENTS**



H.E. DR. ADAMA DIENG

THE UN UNDER-SECRETARY GENERAL, SPECIAL ADVISER OF THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL ON PREVENTION OF GENOCIDE



TO BUILD A WORLD FREE OF ATROCITY CRIMES AND TO ENGAGE OURSELVES AS “AGENTS AND AMBASSADORS FOR PEACE”

H.E. Adama Dieng, an internationally champion for human rights and against the genocide, participated to the Second International Conference organized by the AIDLR and University Complutense, event hosted in Madrid on May 2016 and having the support of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Justice of Spain. Later as a feedback on that international conference or-

ganized by AIDLR, he wrote:

“It was an honour and a pleasure for me to participate in the conference that you organized on “Freedom, Religion, Security: Antagonistic Terms?” in Madrid.

I was impressed by the level of discussion that took place at the conference, which was indicative of its relevance at this time. It is clear that we (United Nations - Office on Genocide Prevention, and International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty) share the same views – that we must ensure respect for civil and political rights, in particular freedom of expression and opinion and freedom of religion and belief, if we are to build a more secure world, a world free from atrocity crimes.

We must continue to speak out in defense of all human rights, particularly when security threats are being used by many States to justify limitations of basic rights and freedoms. (...). We need to seek out and support those individuals and groups, including community, religious and political leaders, that are taking a principled stand, placing values before interests, and promoting peace and respect for diversity. Your goal to contribute to more peaceful societies is fully in line with the objectives of our work with religious leaders, which is aimed at the prevention of incitement to violence. (...).”

Participating too at the launching of the book dedicated to the worldwide diplomats for peace, in the context of “protecting freedom of religion and freedom of expression against violence in the name of religion”, the honorable international expert Dr. Dieng said: “I would simply say that I fell deeply honored to be associated with the launching of this

important publication “Agents & Ambassadors for Peace” (belonging to the AIDLR) and I would like to congratulate you for such important achievement.

I think this book is coming at a time when the world is facing so many crises. Friends, we need to really question where we stand today and I would like simply to say looking forward that the content of this book, the numerous conclusions and recommendations contained in this book, it is our responsibility to bring them around the world, to spread this message because this is a message for peace.

We have the possibility if we decide, to engage ourselves as “Agents and Ambassadors for Peace”.

In another occasion H.E. Adama Dieng said too: “In a world where societies are more and more diverse, tolerance is more likely to flourish when the human rights of all religious groups are respected and, similarly, human rights can thrive only

We must continue to speak out in defense of all human rights, particularly when security threats are being used by many States to justify limitations of basic rights and freedoms.



if different groups are treated in the same way. To strengthen this preventive and constructive path we all have to commit to tackle the problem of incitement to hatred, as well as all kinds of discrimination and violence that may undermine the freedom of religion or belief based on the existing human rights instruments.

H.E. Dr Adama Dieng, Special Adviser of the UN Secretary General in Prevention of Genocide, at the launching of the AIDLR book “Agents and Ambassadors for Peace” on May 2016 in Madrid at the Second International Conference





H.E. MS. LAURA DUPUY LASSERE

FORMER AMBASSADOR OF URUGUAY AT THE UNITED NATIONS
IN GENEVA AND PRESIDENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL



FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF BY ALL PERSONS IS STILL A CHALLENGE - TO PROTECT EVERY SINGLE PERSON

The enjoyment of the freedom of religion or belief by all persons is still a challenge, as it is the realization of many other human rights, unfortunately. Building on Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, of 1948, which states that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”, the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelationship of all human rights and fundamental freedoms was clearly stated in the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action of the UN Summit on Human Rights held in Vienna in 1993. Regarding specifically the freedom of religion or belief, one must have in mind Articles 18 and 19 of the Universal Declaration, as well as Articles 18, 19 and 20 of the International

Covenant on Civil and Political Rights -ICCPR- since this human right is very much connected to the enjoyment of the freedom of opinion and expression.

For years, UN and Rapporteurs on freedom of opinion and expression have been reminding of the need to focus on human rights and its violations (for example, an attack or discrimination against persons based on their adherence to a religion or belief or for being non believers), rather than on protecting religions per se, calling to leave aside controversial concepts like defamation of religions, which can be applied in a discriminatory manner protecting one religion or belief over others or used to prevent normal criticism toward powerful religious leaders or more broadly silence members of religious minorities or non believers, intimidating them and reducing their participation in society and even sometimes sentencing them to the death penalty or a life-sentence for non serious crimes, or through criminal types very vaguely defined (different laws on apostasy, blasphemy, inciting religious unrest, contempt of heavenly religions, outraging religious feelings, etc.).

The idea behind a human rights approach is to protect every single person independently of his or her “race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”, recognizing they have equal and inalienable rights; being this protection not a privilege given by a state but based on the inherent human dignity, and on the need to promote his or her development free from fear and want. The freedom of thought, conscience and religion is a “neutral” freedom not attached to an idea or object. Accordingly, no predominant or “superior” ideology or “truth”, including religions or beliefs, should be imposed on anyone, history having already shown the impacts of totalitarianism. The principles of equality and non-discrimination are key.

H.E. PETRU DUMITRIU

FORMER AMBASSADOR OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AT THE UN IN GENEVA, HE IS CURRENTLY THE UN INSPECTOR AT GENEVA



TO BE VIGILANT AGAINST FORCES THAT TRY TO MANIPULATE THE HUMAN NEED FOR IDENTITY OR RELIGIOUS BELIEF

The political stand of the Council of Europe was made clear in the Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on religious freedom “We, the 47 member states of the Council of Europe, strongly condemn such acts and all forms of incitement to religious hatred and violence. Freedom of thought, conscience and religion are inalienable rights enshrined in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and guaranteed by Article 18 of the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and by

Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights, of which the Council of Europe is the custodian. There can be no democratic society based on mutual understanding and tolerance without respect for freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Its enjoyment is an essential pre-condition for living together. The Council of Europe tries to consider the issue of the freedom of religion in the perspective of social cohesion and in keeping with the need of culturally diverse societies. The Committee of Ministers emphasized that, in order to reconcile respect for different identities with social cohesion and avoid isolation and alienation of certain groups, it is indispensable to regard respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as a common basis for all: no cultural, religious or other practices or traditions can be invoked to prevent any individual from exercising his or her basic rights or from participating actively in society, nor shall anyone’s rights be unduly restricted on account of their religious or cultural practices.

The Council of Europe’s work in the field of freedom of thought, conscience and religion is guided by the extensive case law of the European Court of Human Rights (the Court) and the principles developed over time. One of the principal obligations that states have assumed under Article 9 of the ECHR is that of neutrality and impartiality vis-à-vis communities of believers. The divide between secular and religious values in the intellectual and political debates seems to be increasing.

The Council of Europe can serve a vital role in Europe and within European societies by resisting any attempt to divide human rights protection from religion, and by remaining vigilant against forces that try to manipulate the human need for identity or religious belief.



H.E. MS. BELEN ALFARO

AMBASSADOR OF THE ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS,
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF SPAIN



EDUCATION IN RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY ARE KEYS FOR PEACE

Alfaro Belen, Ambassador of Alliance of Civilizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kingdom of Spain participating to the international conference organized by the AIDLR in Madrid where have been launched the AIDLR book “Agents and Ambassadors for Peace” underlined:

“... I would like to thank the Secretary General of International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty for the coordination of the book “Agents & Ambassadors for Peace” which is very interesting one.

I would like to highlight two aspects of this book: first, that it deals with many different aspects related to freedom of religion and its link with freedom of expression, freedom of religion for peace, religious minorities, so it tackles many different aspects that are now in the international arena. And second, I would like to highlight from the book is the actors: from governments, international organizations, academic sector, civil society, NGOs, because to be a peace maker, this is a task, and all these different actors are all in this book, so I think this is the right perspective.

Freedom of religion, respect and tolerance for religions, correct management of religious diversity, education in religious diversity are keys for peace.

H.E. MR. RAFAEL CATALA POLO

MINISTER OF JUSTICE OF KINGDOM OF SPAIN, AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON “FREEDOM, RELIGION, SECURITY”



WHERE THERE IS RELIGIOUS FREEDOM THERE WILL BE PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

Thanks to the initiative of a visionary, Dr. Nussbaum, the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty (AIDLR) was born, to whose representatives, Mr. Mario Brito -President, and Professor Liviu Olteanu - General Secretary, I would like to offer my thanks and deepest appreciation for their ongoing collaboration to organize this international conference, and for the work they conduct on a daily basis. I don't believe the timing of the constitution of the Association was random, occurring seventy years ago with the momentum and encouragement it received from the great promoter

of human rights, Eleanor Roosevelt. The world had just witnessed some of the bloodiest attacks on human dignity, ignited by the desire for domination by certain totalitarian powers; this resulted in some of the cruellest wars in our history and therefore a sort of reestablishment of the rights and the respect for citizen's freedoms was much needed at that time.

I believe Dr. Jean Nussbaum was correct and had a fundamental insight when he stated:

“Where there is religious freedom there will be peaceful coexistence, all the freedoms will be respected, public authorities will take into account the dignity of each person and their actions will always be subject to that higher criterion of respect for freedoms.”

Consequently, religious freedom becomes the best thermometer to gauge the actual effect of all freedoms and human rights. I think we can say without fear of contradiction that defending religious freedom is defending all freedoms and, on the contrary, where religious freedom is infringed, all other freedoms are threatened.

Therefore I believe that all discussions addressed in the context of this international conference can only be focused through the prism of the supreme value of religious freedom; and in order to move along this path, we should be able to find the most effective ways for religious freedom to forge its way, to become functional within our societies and to become a cardinal element of our coexistence. It should therefore be the subject of the highest esteem of all societies, of believers and non-believers and followers of any religion: because, as the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty (AIDLR) well defends, this also comprises the right not to profess any religion or even the desire to change beliefs belongs to the sphere of religious freedom too.

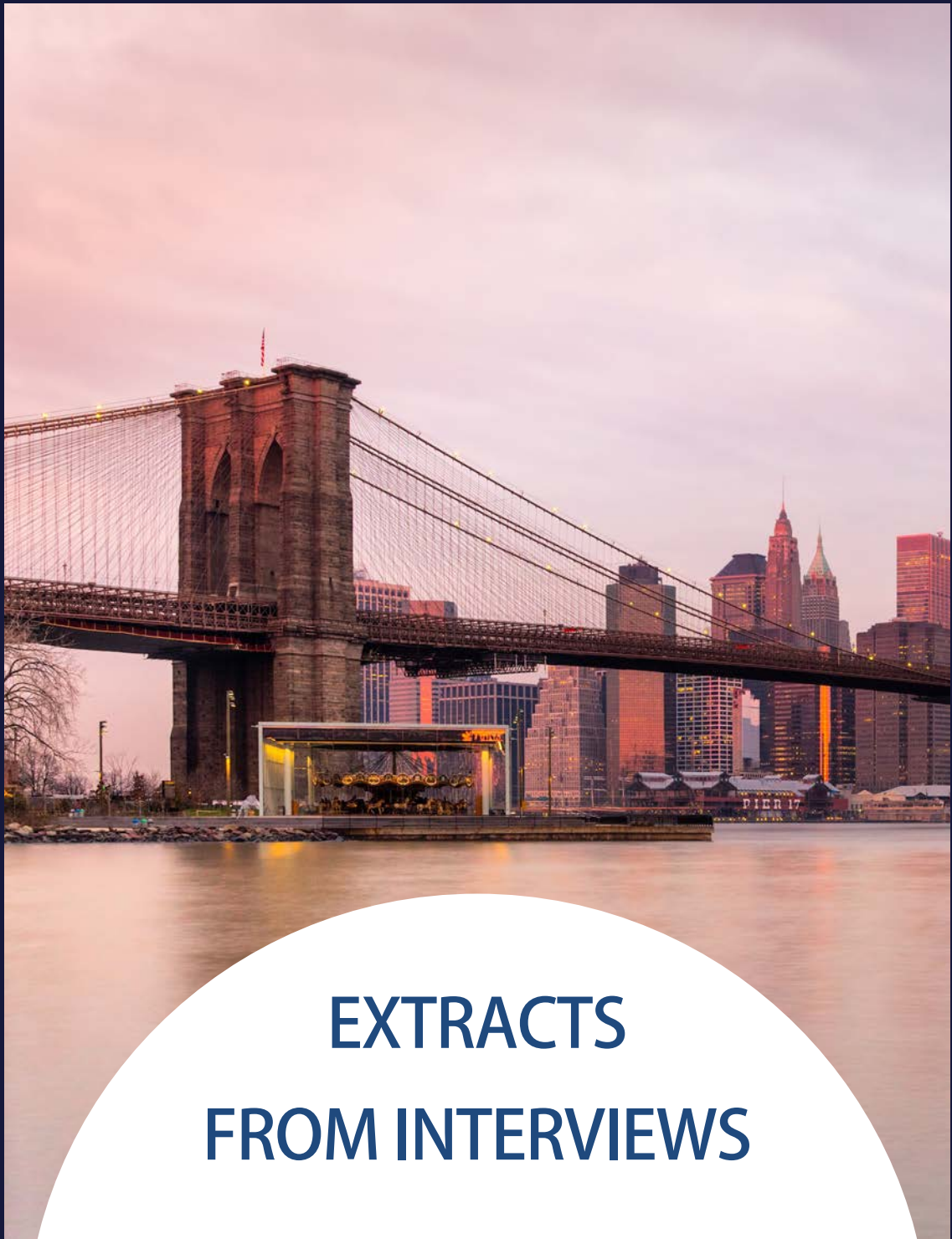


From left: Orthodox Priest Teofil Moldovan; Dr. Liviu Olteanu; H.E. Minister Rafael Catala Polo; Dean Ricardo Garcia Alonso; H.E. Adama Dieng; professor Jose Miguel Serrano; H.E. Raime Rossell Granados, Deputy Director Ministry of Justice; Director General of Ministry of Justice of Spain

We are all aware that religious freedom is suffering from ever-increasing and very serious threats. All current observatories agree that the ability to exercise religious freedom is worsening around the world. Violations [of that freedom] occur on differing levels, but they all paint a very worrying picture. I also believe that it is as disappointing as it is unacceptable to think that religious freedom could take such a step backwards in our world today. The fact is that religious freedom is the victim of the phenomena of intolerance, bigotry and even violence carried out in the name of religion or even when those involved believe they are invoking God Himself.

Security and freedom, as your conference works towards these days, are complementary concepts and therefore pluralistic democracies strive to implement this complementarity between security and freedom in the legal system. It is important that all those who

defend religious freedom have a clear discourse and a discourse that can effectively convey these sentiments to members of our societies too. Society is subject to the insidious and demagogic messages conveyed by the enemies of freedom. We would be wrong to think that effective measures by the government apparatus to protect the citizens' safety against the manifestations of fanatical violence are enough. Now more than ever, there's a need for an intense collaboration between political leaders and religious leaders i.e. between those who exercise social and religious leadership, who are able to wage a genuine cultural fight that promotes tolerance, pluralism, and ultimately promoting the values on which the Declaration of Human Rights are based. I think that this main cause must be a political priority undertaken by all governments, through public action and collaborative action with members of society and the religious and social leaders.



EXTRACTS FROM INTERVIEWS

The AIDLR interviewed between 2013-2015: Heiner Bielefeldt the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief; Rita Izsak, the UN Special Rapporteur on minority; Bogdan Aurescu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania.



DR. HEINER BIELEFELDT

UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF



CHALLENGES FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AND SECURITY

LO: *What do you consider are the greatest challenges for religious liberty in the 21st Century and what can diplomats and politicians do to solve religious liberty issues?*

HB: In my view, the biggest challenge is religious hatred. Dealing with hatred, of course, implies tackling societal root-causes, including the utilization of religion for political gains, such as narrow versions of national “identity politics”. Tight control agendas in combination with exclusivist national identity politics create the breeding ground for the most extreme forms of hatred and violence. Perhaps more than any other human right, freedom of religion or belief is exposed to countless misunderstandings. “is can be dangerous, especially if the human rights nature of religious freedom is questioned or even denied.

LO: *Robert Seiple, the first American Ambassador At-Large on Religious Freedom stated, “the governments that ignore the religious liberty of the minorities or discriminate against them, cannot obtain security for the majority”. Do you believe that this statement stands true today?*

HB: Yes, absolutely. Systematic discrimination against minorities are mostly indicative of a general disrespect for human rights which, sooner or later, will also negatively affect members of the majority. To formulate it in positive words, safe-

guarding the human rights of minorities constitutes a crucial part of a society’s common good and fosters a healthy development of democracy.

LO: *What role does civil society and INGOs have today toward the United Nations in regards to peace, understanding and stability between people, cultures and religions of all places?*

HB: To give you a short answer: without civil society organizations the whole system would largely remain inefficient. Human rights and all the other goals mentioned in your question can only develop through the critical interplay of government and non-governmental organizations. While governments carry formal responsibilities under international law, various organized and spontaneous monitoring systems must complement one another. When attending UN meetings in Geneva and New York I always meet with NGOs as well, and it’s there that I really feel at home. It is good that different NGOs have different profiles. We need those who work on human rights broadly, across the entire spectrum of rights, such as Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch, but equally important are the contributions of highly specialized organizations like International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty (IADRL) who has a particular expertise in promoting freedom of religion or belief. So please continue your commitment and network with others in order to create practical synergies.

MS. RITA IZSAK

UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON MINORITY



TO BUILD BRIDGES OF TOLERANCE, THE NEED OF COORDINATION

LO. What influence do you consider religious minorities have for peace and worldwide security? Why?

RI. I think that religious leaders have a vital role to play in efforts to ensure peace and security, first and foremost in their own societies, but also on the international and global scale. I would like to see leaders speak out more often against religious hatred and incitement to violence. Their influence is great and they must use it to defuse tensions and to help build bridges of tolerance, understanding and mutual respect. Religious minorities by their very nature tend to be numerically smaller and socially and politically non-dominant and so it frequently falls to the leaders of majority faiths to play a leadership role. However, I believe that all faiths, large or small, have at their core a message of love, peace, forgiveness and harmony and so all faiths have a role to play in projecting those messages, not just to their own congregations and followers, but to the whole of society. Religion should and can be a force for good, nationally and internationally, but in too many situations it is a dividing force.

LO. On January of 2014, you and the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Heiner Bielefeldt joined with other international representatives at the International Conference hosted in Madrid at the Human Rights Institute and Law

Faculty, University Complutense. What about that International Conference?

RI. It was a pleasure to attend the Madrid conference and have an indepth discussion with experts coming from various backgrounds. It is very important to address the challenges of religious minorities and identify possible solutions with academia, government representatives, international organizations, independent experts and NGOs together as we all have a particular role to play. I believe that the Madrid conference brought together some of the best advocates for religious freedom and religious minorities and I do hope that our cooperation will continue.

LO. After the Madrid Conference, your UN colleague, professor Heiner Bielefeldt the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief noted and emphasized (see all at: A/HRC/25/NGO/121): "I attach great importance to the design of the Madrid Conference.... which really sets an example, is really something we should copy, we should establish that on a regular basis in fact. (...). We need coordination..." Do you agree with Heiner Bielefeldt's comments?

RI. I fully agree with the comments of my colleague and friend, Heiner. Indeed all these institutions come with their own mandate and responsibilities and it is understandable that they all want to do something about the same problems that arise at a certain time in a given locality. However, if not harmonized, this can do more harm than good. But we don't have to go that far, even within our very



own UN system, I often experience uncoordinated actions when it seems that the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing. It would be essential to connect the dots and make sure that the policies and approaches of various institutions do compliment and not hamper each other or duplicate efforts unnecessarily.

LO. What global role do you think civil society should have, the NGOs on the defense of human rights, religious liberty and religious minorities?

RI. I think that the role of civil society and human rights defenders are hugely important in the protection of all human rights and the rights of religious minorities. I have immense respect for the hundreds of organizations and individuals around the world who sometimes put their own lives in danger to protect human rights and to speak out against oppression and violence. They do not get the recognition and the support that they deserve

Religion should and
can be a force for good,
nationally and
internationally.



and I urge governments to protect them and to engage with them to help them do their vital work. It concerns me that many face an oppressive environment and threats to their work and safety...even from their own governments. My message to them and to many others who are doing this work, including the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty (AIDLR), is to continue your work because your message and your example are there to inspire us all.

H.E. DR. BOGDAN AURESCU

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF ROMANIA



NO ONE OF MAJOR RELIGIONS IS A PROBLEM FOR PEACE AND SECURITY - DIALOGUE PROMOTED BY ALL RELEVANT ACTORS

LO. How do you view the cooperation between diplomatic representatives and other governmental officials, on the one hand, and civil society organizations, on the other? Do you believe that the human rights expertise available through the means of national and international non-governmental organizations makes the difference today in the implementation of human rights commitments?

BA. I should point out that diplomats dealing with human rights do not have a monopoly on the related expertise. The subject is too vast and the mechanisms of human rights protection too complex to be left to a handful of specialists. They are rather those who synchronize national and international efforts in improving the legal framework for an efficient protection of human rights. What we have behind is an array of national institutions whose duty is to implement the legislation on human rights, monitor its application, and sanction its violations.

LO. We remember New York 9/11, Madrid, London, Syria, Iraq, Nigeria, and more recently Paris (Charlie Hebdo), Copenhagen and Tunisia, and ever more numerous/frequent terrorist attacks perpetrated in the name of religion. Do you believe that "religion" has become a growing "problem" for worldwide security and peace?

BA. This is perhaps one of the most harmful misconceptions being circulated these days in connection with the afore mentioned tragedies. Not one of the major religions is a problem for peace and security. Not one of them preaches anything other than peace, love and generosity. Religions inspire and give a sense of direction. Crimes have been made in the name of lofty ideals since the dawn of history.

Lofty ideals do not justify crimes, just as crimes cannot taint these ideals. Let us be clear: this is about the abusive use of religion by a handful of fanatic, misguided or simply interested groups. And while governments have a duty to protect their citizens and provide the entire set of instruments to avoid radicalization of religious or ethnic groups, I think the duty in addressing the content of religious propaganda inciting violence lies mainly with religious leaders.

They can and must clarify the true meaning of their religion for "the misguided," and dismantle the toxic narratives of "the interested." It is a duty to their followers, who are quite often confused by the developments in our contemporary world. The handiest example is the harm done to Islam by the various jihadist terrorist groups.

LO. What about the influence that interreligious dialogue, respect for differences, tolerance and the role of religious minorities may have for peace and worldwide security?

BA. One must be aware that religious diversity is an asset, not a problem. Ignoring or mismanaging it means depriving the society of a valuable resource for democracy. The religiously motivat-



ed tensions and violence of the past several years make it clear that States should attach more importance to freedom of religion in order to create a climate of peace and security in multi-cultural and multi-religious communities. Social cohesion does not mean eliminating cultural and religious identity, or assimilation; it means integration in the social life of the larger, culturally diverse community. Interreligious dialogue is therefore of paramount importance.

All relevant actors, governmental and non-governmental, must promote this dialogue. In this respect, I cannot but express my highest appreciation for the work done over the years by the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty (IADRL) in fostering interreligious dialogue. This is an effort that I would like to see multiplied at this time of dramatic evolutions on the world scene.





**SCHOLARS
AND/OR RELIGIOUS
LEADERS REGARDING
RELIGIOUS LIBERTY**



AMBASSADOR ROBERT SEIPLE

SECULARISM – CONFRONTING A FAMILIAR ENEMY



Dr. John Seel, sums up the secular transformation of our religion this way: “Religious conviction has become a consumer choice, riddled with expressive individualism and couched as the therapeutic self-help church of Oprah.” More succinctly, we have met the enemy and they are us!

Today, religious freedom has been upstaged by religious pluralism, a pluralism defined largely by culture. Ironically, the one institution, the church, designed to impact culture has been co-opted and held captive by that culture. William Wordsworth was prescient when he penned his poem, the “World is too much with us.” In all too many occasions, the church has provided “a form of godliness, denying the power thereof.” (II Timothy 3:1-5) and, like Solomon’s foreign wives (1 Kings 11:2), we have had our hearts turned away from things spiritual to the more secular trappings of culture. As a result, we have lost our

prophetic voice and our seat at the table of relevance.

I’ve argued for “respect”, a knowledge-based respect that elevates both our discourse and our actions. Know your own faith at its deepest and richest best, and know enough about your neighbour’s in order to show it respect. Respect must be built on a comprehensive understanding of the “other.” Superficiality renders one irrelevant in our increasingly chaotic and dangerous world.



JUDGE DR. HARALD MUELLER

FULL AUTHORITY TO OBSERVE THAT RELIGION WHICH EACH PREFERRED



When I, Constantine Augustus, as well as I, Licinius Augustus, fortunately met near Milan and were considering everything [...], we thought, among other things [...] that those regulations pertaining to the reverence of the Divinity ought certainly to be made first, so that we might grant to the Christians and others full authority to observe that religion which each preferred; whence any Divinity whatsoever in the seat of the heavens may be propitious and kindly disposed to us and all [...]. And thus [...] we thought to arrange that no one whatsoever should be denied the opportunity to give his heart to the observance of the Christian religion, of that religion which he should think best for himself [...].”

One can only explain the transformation of persecuted religion to state religion if one remembers that the Roman Empire adhered to the principle of unity between religion and the empire,

according to the belief of pagan antiquity. Religious law (*jus sacrum*) was considered to be part of public law (*jus publicum*)

There is almost certainly a cause and effect relationship between religious freedom and the systematic separation of church and state. But one cannot in any event assert that religious freedom is greater when church and state are more rigorously separate. After all, religious freedom could also find itself threatened by anti-clerical secularism, which bans the church and religious communities from engaging in any public act whatsoever and in the best-case scenario grants it the status of a private association. The acceleration of globalisation may give a lot of people the impression that national borders are losing their meaning, but religion appears in some way to compensate for what has been lost in terms of identity.





MGR. PIETRO PAVAN RIGHT TO RELIGIOUS LIBERTY NOT ALLOW DISCRIMINATION



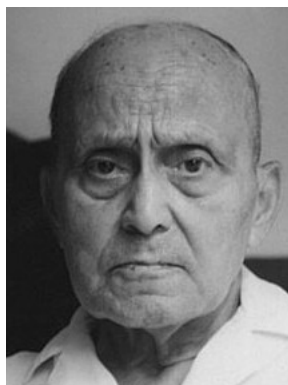
Regarding the nature of the right to religious liberty, there is no doubt that such as it is defined and proclaimed in the Council document and in the minds of the fathers, it is a right which does not allow discrim-

ination; it is identical for all, namely, it is a universal right which belongs to all citizens of all civilised societies of Catholic and non-Catholics, Christians and non-Christians, believers and non-believers.

“In addition” – declares the conciliar document – “when dealing with religious freedom, the sacred Council intends to develop the doctrine of recent popes on the inviolable rights of the human being and the legal order of society.”



DR. MOHAMED TALBI RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IS NOT A TOLERANT CONCESSION



We never emphasize enough that religious liberty is not an act of charity or a tolerant concession towards misguided persons. It is a fundamental right for everybody. To claim it for myself implies ipso facto that I am

disposed to claim it for my neighbour, too.

From a Muslim point of view and on the basis of the Qur’ân’s basic teachings, religious liberty is fundamentally and ultimately an act of respect for God’s sovereignty and for the mystery of His plan for man: man who has been given the terrible privilege to build, entirely on his own responsibility, his destiny on earth and for the here after. Finally, to respect man’s freedom is to respect God’s plan.



MGR. EMILIANOS TIMIADIS

WHEN YOU FEEL VERY LITTLE CONCERN FOR YOUR NEIGHBOUR,
YOU HAVE NO MEANS OF SAVING YOURSELF



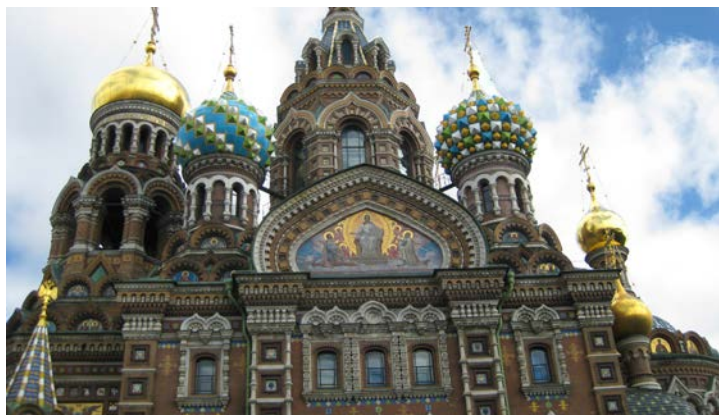
Today's world requires us more and more to meet individuals and groups whose religious or philosophical ideas differ from ours. Mutual respect for the beliefs of others is an absolute necessity; it derives from love.

There is no country or nation with a single faith. But the attitude of a believer to those who belong to other faiths is clear: not only should they not disapprove, much less malign their convictions, but instead strive to find common ground between their beliefs. St. John Chrysostom paints this beautiful portrait of a Christian: "We are the light and the leaven, the torches and salt; we must illuminate and not spread darkness; we must be a tonic and not a dissolving element; we must attract the infidels and not put them to flight. Why chase away those we need to attract? This is the rule of Christianity in all its perfection; here is the definition with nothing missing; this is the highest pinnacle: to find a common interest. Indeed, nothing can make us imitators of Jesus Christ as our zeal for the good of others" (Homily 25, I in Epist. ad I Corinth. pg 61, 208).

St. John Chrysostom underlines too: "When you feel very little concern for your neighbour, be aware that you have no other means of saving yourself, and if only out of self-interest look out for your brother and everything that is related to him...(those who don't) imagine what punishment awaits them! As the fire gains ground and grows in intensity, it will

burn everything they own and because they have refused to protect the interest of their neighbour, they will also lose all their possessions. God, indeed, only wanted to make a united body of all men, and that is why he planned everything in such a way that the interest of each would be directly linked to that of his fellow man. That is so we can see that the world forms such a well-organised whole. Let no one seek his own interest if he wants to be sure to find it. And let it be understood that relinquishing riches, martyrdom, or anything else can protect us if we have not attained perfection in charity"

Thus, the fathers of the church revived the spiritual foundations of freedom by means of a brotherly interest in one's neighbour. Freedom, and it is not a bad idea to say it again, is a gift, a grace that frees us from ourselves and from our neighbours. The church, faithful to the principle of subsidiarity, must strive therefore to impose the minimum requirement while maintaining maximum freedom. According to the vicissitudes of history, the church focuses on freedom sometimes, sometimes on the love of the community.





DR. JOSE MIGUEL SERRANO

SEVERAL ANGLES OF FREEDOM OF RELIGION



To a certain extent, this issue of religious liberty or freedom of religion can be analyzed from several angles of the present day perspective. From the standpoint of scientism, a minority in the popular domain but

of great public influence, religion is an atavistic remnant, merely tolerable as a folkloric attitude and worthy of rejection from all truly relevant social life. For others, religion is an attitude or a set of beliefs that represents a great risk when it has public influence. Thus, social action must be fundamentally used to stifle it. However, and in contrast with the previously mentioned attitude, they do not deny that religion serves a role in the formation of a valuable private conscience. There are also those who consider religious liberty as the lesser of evils in the context of a positive evalua-

tion of religion. This refers to those who see the other's religion as a tolerable error since its extirpation would lead to greater problems and issues as experience has shown.

The International Association for the Defence of Religious Liberty has always adopted a different attitude from those previously described. It is the actual valuable role of religion in the establishment of personal and social order that calls for its liberty and freedom, which is the human right *par excellence* alongside dignity.

Consequently, societies are to be assessed by how much they appreciate religion, which in turn leads to at least two entirely related things. The first is the freedom of its practice, of its diffusion and of its educational effort. The second has to do with how this freedom finds its touchstone precisely in how it treats the religious minority. In accordance with the conclusions reached in the conference (organized by the AIDLR in 2014 and hosted at Complutense University of Madrid), respect, or more exactly the way we treat minorities, is the true test of our appreciation of religion, and with it, of religious liberty.



DR. HARRI KUHALAMPI

EXPERIENCE OF FREEDOM OF RELIGION HAS TO DO WITH ATTITUDES, SOCIAL RELATIONS AND PATTERNS OF INTERACTION



At the moment, freedom of religion or belief is actualized on the basis of the European heritage and in harmony with its traditions. The Lisbon Treaty can be regarded as one of the most essential points of reference

relating to religious issues and relations between the state and the various religious bodies within the EU in general, but also in reference to freedom of religion or belief. Article 17 states the following: 1. The Union respects and does not prejudice the status under national law of churches and religious associations or communities in the Member States. 2. The Union equally respects the status under national law of philosophical and non-confessional organizations. 3. Recognizing their identity and their specific contribution, the Union shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with these churches and organizations.³²

While the EU remains secular, it recognizes the religious needs of all its citizens. Because all human beings have an inherent propensity for ideas and experiences in the spiritual or religious realm, the EU must also make allowance for the fact that people need opportunities to fulfill these basic human needs both privately and publicly, together with fellow members of their faith community. While the present debate on the freedom of religion or belief is primarily taking place within a legal framework, the experience of this funda-



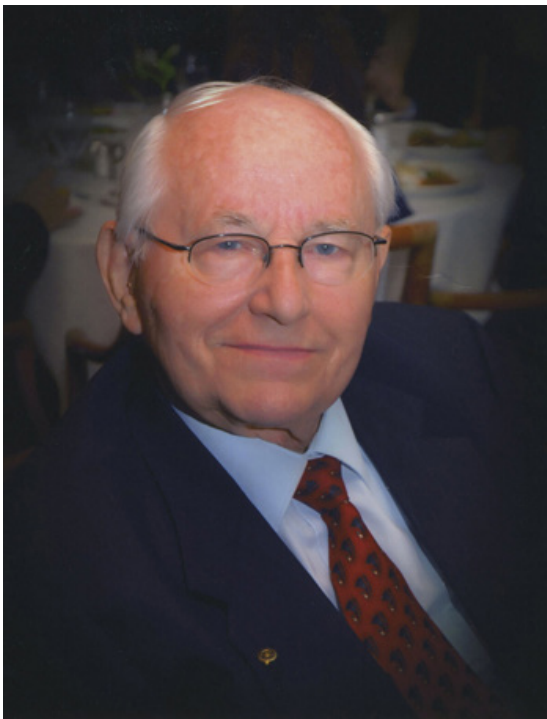
mental freedom has to do with attitudes, social relations and patterns of interaction. Tolerance and respect for another person's religious ideas or practices cannot be forced by legal demand. Instead, they result from a social and cultural learning process taking place throughout society. Freedom of religion or belief should be on the agenda of more sociologists, psychologists and political scientists, who are better acquainted with the way in which social groups relate to each other.

What is needed is a more practical approach, so that freedom of religion or belief is seen in terms of making non-discrimination, mutual respect and tolerance an essential part of communal interaction at all levels of public life.



DR. BEVERLY BERT BEACH

TO COMPREHEND WHAT RELIGIOUS LIBERTY ACTUALLY IS,
IT IS USEFUL TO COMPREHEND WHAT IT IS NOT



Religious freedom is a human right so fundamental and so sacred that we must do our utmost to grasp it with all of our understanding. Certain false conceptions about religious liberty provoke conflict. In order to better comprehend what religious liberty actually is, it is useful to comprehend what *it is not*.

We can discern seven fairly common errors that are all the result, at least to some extent, of a fundamental misunderstanding. This assumption would imply an exemption of moral duties and would free man from the connections and attachments of religious responsibility.

1. It is not freedom with regards to God, as many materialists and atheists believe. History shows us that in the nineteenth century, in a period when political liberalism was in vogue - especially in European society - the concept of religious liberty was frequently identified with materialism, agnosticism, free thinking and the rejection of the sovereignty of an all-transcending God. According to this school of thought, each individual needed to liberate himself from the religious tyranny of a God who had been created by man. Thus religious liberty became synonymous with emancipation from complete obedience to a Supreme Being, who was demanding yet imaginary, and achieving independence from him.

2. It is not a freedom with regards to men. Certain free-thinkers want to interpret it as a complete emancipation from any external control exerted by the family, school, the government or society in general, as if this freedom did not imply any obligation to the community in which we live, nor any responsibility towards society. Even in the delicate arena of religious liberty, an honest citizen would never argue in favor of an unrestricted and absolute independence. Religious freedom has two aspects: first, the freedom to believe and to hold religious opinions; and secondly, the freedom to act within society according to one's beliefs. Freedom of opinion itself is absolute because it has little or no social consequences, but the freedom to express one's beliefs through one's deeds falls within the social context.

3. It is not freedom with regards to self. Some would see religious freedom as the absolute right of the individual to believe exactly according

to his choice. While religious freedom implies an unqualified civil or legal right to believe according to one's personal desire, it nevertheless does not signify freedom towards oneself with regards to the essential moral obligation to obey one's conscience. Man has received from God a responsibility with regards to human dignity. He must endeavor to form his conscience according to righteousness and to comply with what it says.

4. It is not freedom with regards to the authority of the Church. Some uninformed people consider religious freedom as a total independence from organized religion and in direct opposition to the authority or control of the Church. They argue that the true principle of freedom is to shake off the ecclesiastical "yoke." The whim of the individual must be paramount. Some Marxists encourage this kind of religious freedom not

so much to exalt the personal freedom of action but rather to replace the alleged oppressive power of the Church with the all-powerful authority of the State.

5. It is not freedom with regards to State control. Those who support the concept of religious freedom advocate total independence from the government. They see a large wall separating the Church from any State control, and they refuse to recognize legitimate government authority. True religious freedom requires that the State does not interfere in the religious beliefs of its citizens: it is a closed area (which Mr. Carrillo de Albornoz called "pure religious freedom") where it has no authority. On the other hand, religious activities and state jurisdiction overlap each other in many cases. If sometimes the separation between Church and State must be inviolable, it may at





other times be permeable and allow legitimate collaboration without excluding those same government regulations.

6. It is not freedom to maintain animosity and religious conflicts. In the name of religious liberty many practicing people attack, slander and falsely accuse other faiths. They absolutely invest in the right to believe, preach, teach and live according to one's beliefs and one's message without any external constraint. They do not provide any excuses for thoughtlessly disparaging and attacking other churches and their followers. It is not a weapon to use in the wars of words or an authorization to create division, rivalries or disputes. Neither does it form part of the theatre of interfaith disputes. We live in the age of ecumenism, whether we approve or not. The use of dishonest, selfish and intimidating methods of persuasion represents a corruption of legitimate denomina-

tional testimony and is nothing less than a moral violation of religious freedom. On the contrary, it is the *sine qua non* condition of peaceful and sincere human interfaith relations.

7. It is not the freedom to be indifferent or skeptical. The supporters of this point of view tend to think that there is very little difference between what we believe in and if we believe. They state that religious beliefs hold no importance and that religious differences are all relative. Of course, true religious liberty gives everyone the right to completely reject one or all religions and even be indifferent to religious convictions. However, the purpose of this principle is not to promote religious apathy or irreligion; rather, it is the most secure platform on which we can stand in the individual and collective pursuit of fundamental reality and religious identity.

A rolled-up scroll of parchment with the text "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" written in a black, calligraphic font. The scroll is tied with a blue ribbon and rests on a blue surface. The United Nations logo is visible in the background.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights





**PRINCIPLES OF THE
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION
FOR THE DEFENSE OF RELIGIOUS
LIBERTY**



Our purpose is to disseminate ideas of tolerance, and to defend the right for anyone to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to believe or not, freedom to change one's religion or belief, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest one's religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

We believe that religious liberty is a God-given right, and hold that it is best exercised where separation is maintained between religious organizations and state.

We believe that legislation and other governmental acts which unite religious organizations and state are opposed to the best interests of both institutions and are potentially prejudicial to human rights.

We believe that government is divinely ordained to support and protect citizens in the enjoyment of natural rights, and to rule in civil affairs; in this realm government warrants respectful obedience and willing support.

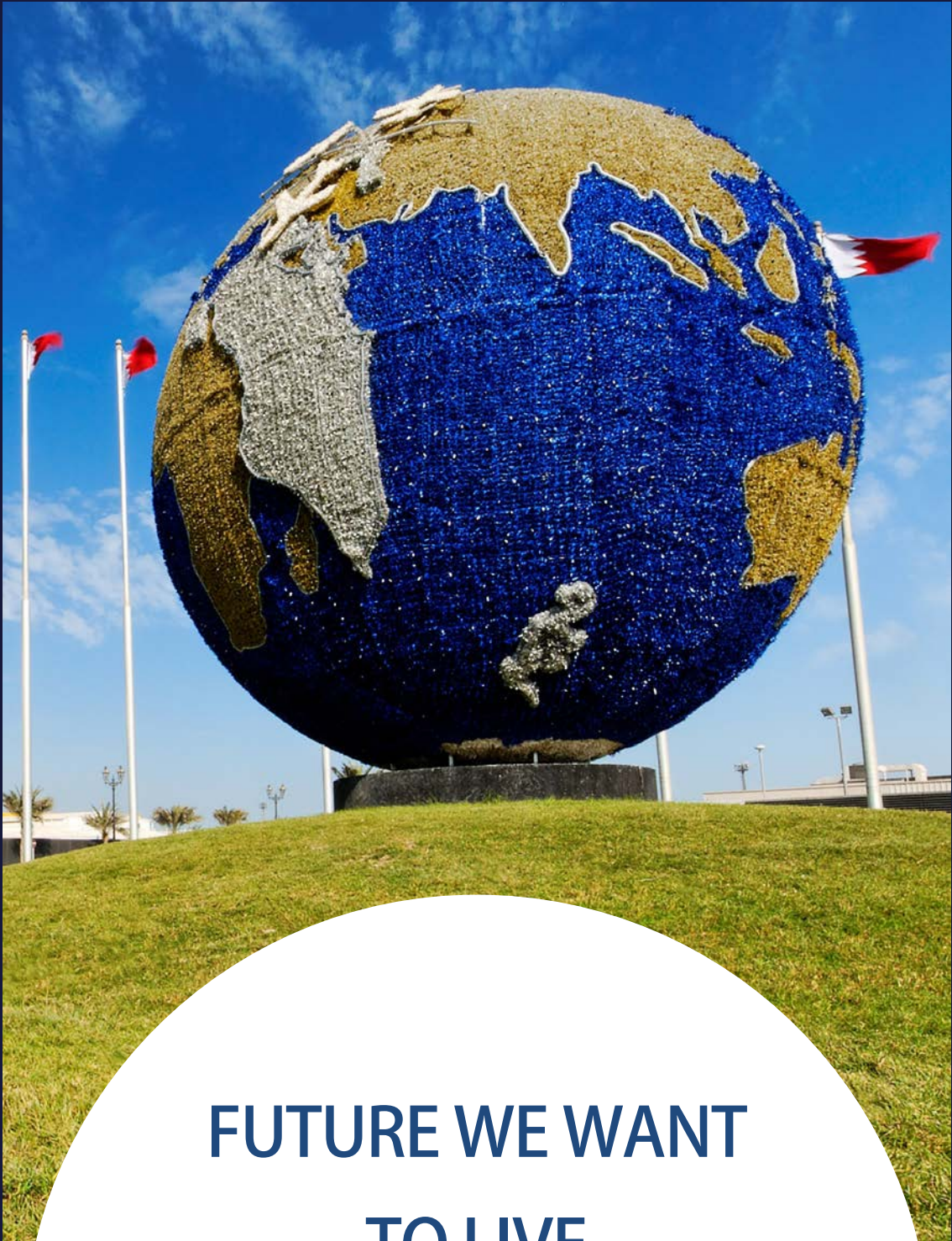
We believe in the natural and inalienable right of freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of one's choice; to change religious belief according to conscience; to manifest one's religion or belief either individually or in community with others and in public or private, in worship, observance, practice and teaching – subject only to respect for the equivalent rights of others.

We believe that religious liberty also includes the freedom to establish and operate appropriate charitable or educational institutions, to solicit or receive voluntary financial contributions, to observe days of rest and celebrate holidays in accordance with the precepts of one's religion, and to maintain communication with fellow believers and religious communities at national and international levels.

We believe that religious liberty and the elimination of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief are essential in the promotion of understanding, peace and friendship among people.

We believe that citizens should use lawful and honourable means to prevent the reduction of religious liberty, so that all may enjoy its inestimable blessing.

We believe that the spirit of true religious liberty is epitomized in the Golden Rule, which teaches that „every human being should do to others as he would have others do to him.”



**FUTURE WE WANT
TO LIVE**



We need to remember and to support the Preamble of the UN Charter, which underlines:

“We the people of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, and for these ends to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good security and to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all people, have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims.

Accordingly, our respective Governments, through representatives assembled in the city of San Francisco, who have exhibited their full powers found to be in good and due form, have agreed to the present Charter of the United Nations and do hereby establish an international organization to be known as the United Nations”.

Thanks to the United Nations for still being a “workshop for peace” to everyone, everywhere and for taking care of human rights and security.

Thanks to all diplomats of the world and to stakeholders’ efforts in favour of a better life, liberty, security and peace.

In words inscribed too on a wall facing UN headquarters in New York, the Hebrew prophet **Isaiah** (2:4 NRSV) envisioned a world in which people would beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks – converting the economy of militarism to one of peace. The UN Charter supports this horizon. Article 26 of the Charter calls for the maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion of human and economic resources for armaments.

AIDLR' RECOGNITION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS



 NATIONAL PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

 مجلس النواب العراقي

 THE PARLIAMENT MEMBERS OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

 Ref:ref/2014

 The International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty

 Schosshaldenstrasse 17, CH-3006 Bern, SWITZERLAND



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 Transition Team of the President-elect Jean-Claude Juncker

 Head of the Transition Team



 United Nations

General Assembly



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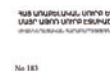
 HAUT-COMMISSARIAT AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME - OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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 Palais de Bruxelles



 ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH

 INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

 FOR THE DEFENSE OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

 No 183

 June 17, 2014

 LIVIU OLTESANU


 SECRETARY GENERAL

 INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

 FOR THE DEFENSE OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

 Bern, Switzerland

«Και συμβουλευθήσεται Λόκος μετά θάνατον».
 Ευχόμεθα μαζί σας όπως η προφητεία αυτή του
 Ησαΐα (11, 6) πραγματοποιηθεί κατά το νούν έτος
 εις τόν θενόν δοξασιζόμενον σημερινόν κόσμον.
 Ευφρόσυνον άγων Δοδκατημαρον!
 Διατύπος εύχης προς τόν Τεχθέντα Κύριον
 † ό Κωνσταντινουπόλεως Bartholomew.
 Φενάκη, ΧΤέννα 2014




 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft

 Confédération suisse


 Confederazione Svizzera

 Confederaziun svizra

Dear Secretary General Mr. Oltéanu,
 I appreciate your support for the UN
 I hope your organization will
 continue to work with the UN
 for world peace and
 human rights.
 All the best for the Happy New year!

 Secretary-General of the United Nations
 Secrétaire général des Nations Unies



 BUCKINGHAM PALACE



 The President

 313598 10.09.2014

 Mr Liviu Oltéanu

 Secretary General

 International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty

 Schosshaldenstrasse 17

 CH-3006 Bern



 CASA DE S. M. EL REY

 EL JEFE DE LA SECRETARIA

 DE S. M. LA REINA

 Palacio de la Zarzuela

 MADRID, 15 de enero de 2014



 PRESIDENCIA

 DEL GOBIERNO



 SECRETARIAT OF STATE

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 No. 20.700



 Assistant Director-General s.l.

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 International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty

 Editorial Office

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 Switzerland



 El Embajador de España

Council of Europe

 The Secretary General

 Strasbourg, 6 February 2014

 Dear Secretary General,

 I should like to thank you for your letter and for the New Year calendar of the

 International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty (AIDLR).

 The Council of Europe is as you state very committed to the religious dimension of


 intercultural dialogue. Your personal contribution to the exchanges, in particular last

 year in Yerevan, was very much appreciated and I am confident that this dialogue will

 be continued both in your Association and in the Council of Europe.

 Wishing you all the best for 2014.

 Yours sincerely,



 Thorbjørn Jagland

 Mr Liviu Oltéanu

 Secretary General

 International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty (AIDLR)

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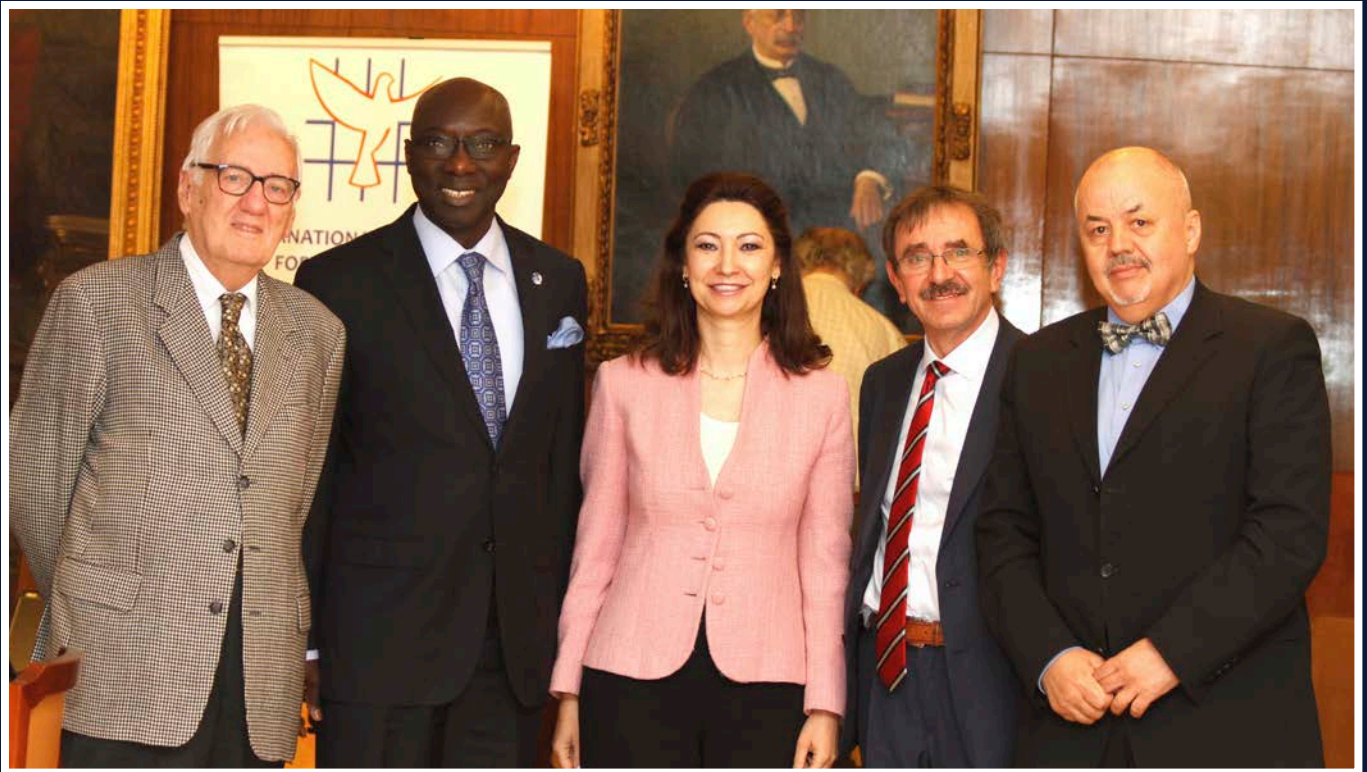
 F. 42924, Secretary General

 F. 42924, Secretary General



Ambassadors for liberty and peace - today and yesterday





At the AIDLR Madrid International Conference 2016. Alberto de la HERA, Former Director General of Legal Cooperation, Ministry of Justice of Spain. H.E. Mr. Adama DIENG, UN Under-Secretary General, Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide H.E. Ambassador Ms. Belen ALFARO (Alliance of Civilizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain) Dr. Liviu OLTEANU, Secretary General of the AIDLR H.E. Dr. Petru DUMITRIU, UN Inspector, former Ambassador of Council of Europe at the UN in Geneva

The current human rights situation requires a common political attitude, unequivocal and coordinated measures of action of different actors. The AIDLR proposes the “Dialogue five” framework: a) diplomats, b) politicians, c) scholars, d) religious leaders, e) civil society/ non-governmental organizations, working together to all levels: national (Ministries of Justice, Foreign Affairs, Education and Culture), regional (OSCE/ODIHR, Council of Europe, EU) and international (United Nations).

The AIDLR believes that respect for human dignity, fundamental rights, international law and religious liberty according with one’s conscience, have to represent for the international community, not only a priority but an urgency; the respect of the life and of dignity of every person, requires a common vigilance and empathy with all those which are suffering no matter the culture, color, background, education, and so on. We love and support the diversity and the culture of respect and we have to do everything for intercultural and interreligious dialogue, for peace, freedom and security.

Dr. Liviu Olteanu



Association internationale
POUR LA DÉFENSE DE LA LIBERTÉ RELIGIEUSE
 International Association
FOR THE DEFENSE OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

UNITED NATIONS REPRESENTATIVE IN GENEVA, NEW YORK & VIENNA In Participatory Status with the COUNCIL OF EUROPE in Strasbourg, EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT in Strasbourg & Brussels, and with O.S.C.E.

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