

February 20,
2018

13th Doha Interfaith Conference

13th Doha Interfaith Conference 2018

Religions and Human Rights

20 - 21 February 2018

**Sheraton Hotel
Doha
State of Qatar**

Introduction

Human rights are one of the most important assets to be protected and emphasized and linked to religious values and teachings; especially that human beings today are suffering from flagrant violations of these rights, manifested in the spread of human trafficking, injustice, suppression of freedoms, victims of war, displacement, exclusion, asylum and siege, the decline of freedom of expression and other human rights issues. Therefore, the preservation of human rights, regardless of religion, sex or color, is a fixed asset in all divine religions, guaranteed by Allah Almighty, and equated among all people. He granted everyone the right of dignity and the right to freedom, and all other human rights that do not violate His laws.,

If we consider all the laws and civil legislations - developed by humans, which are combined in modern times in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights issued by the United Nations in 1948, a comprehensive document of basic human rights that must be protected - we find that religious legislation preceded all laws in the rooting for the protection of these rights, and stressed the full equality of all people, and also come with many texts to criminalize those who infringe such rights.

In Islam, for instance, an indication that all people are equal in creation and have the right to life, Allah Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an: "O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women." Chapter (4) sūrat l-nisāa (The Women). Moreover, every man has been honoured by Allah over all other creatures: "And We have certainly honored the children of Adam and carried them on the land and sea and provided for them of the good things and preferred them over much of what We have created, with [definite] preference." Chapter (17) sūrat l-isrā (The Night Journey)

We also find the same meaning about human equality in the Bible: **"For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich to all who call on him." Romans (10: 12).**

Numerous are the religious texts that deal with human rights, detailing their legislation, and all the provisions of international laws and covenants to protect human rights which is only an affirmation of a religious origin and a divine command that preceded these laws. This is what the followers of religions should know and what learned people of religion should clarify to others.

From this perspective, the Doha Conference on Interfaith Dialogue comes at its thirteenth session to state the interlocking relationship between religions and human rights which is the basic point around which the universe revolves, and for which comprehensive humanitarian law are legislated, in an attempt to cover all aspects of this important issue (human rights), from the perspective of religions and legislation, starting with the vision and concept of human rights in divine laws of freedom of belief and religion, and freedom of religious practice, and the divine order of peaceful coexistence among all human beings, equality and justice, and to ensure personal freedoms with the controls of individual responsibility towards society, and other fundamentals established by religions and called upon in their teachings, even political and economic rights in all its forms, and also civil and social rights.

Religious teachings have complemented the protection of these rights by another aspect: confronting of all manifestations of violations that may be a barrier between man and his rights. We have found a clear call to tackle such phenomena as extremism and terrorism, and to renounce religious intolerance and contempt for religions.

Many aspects of the human rights issue from the perspective of religions will be addressed by the 13th Doha International Conference on Interfaith Dialogue, according to the following themes:

Theme 1: Human Rights in Religions (Vision and Concept)

1-1 freedom of belief and religious practice

Guiding points:

- Ensure freedom of belief and the practice of religious rites;
- Maintain human dignity and the prohibition of corruption in the land;
- The religious rights of minorities;
- Coexistence among the followers of religions.

1-2 Individual rights and public interest

Guiding points:

- Personal freedom and community values;
- The right to receive justice and equality;
- Freedom of thought and expression (media - journalism - social media - authorship);
- The right of litigation and defense;
- Freedom of movement and inviolability of residence;
- The role of religious teachings in the development of the social responsibility of individuals.

1-3 Human political and economic and social rights

Guiding points:

- The right of political participation;
- The right for taking asylum;
- The right to engage in work and the right of employees and workers;
- The right to social security (Housing - Subsistence - Health - Education);
- Women's rights (Inheritance - Education - Work - Marriage - Divorce);
- Rights of the child, the family and senior population and people with disabilities.

Theme II: The position of religions towards human rights violations (between theory and practice)

2-1 The position of religions towards extremism and terrorism

Guiding points:

- The phenomenon of genocide and ethnic cleansing;
- Physical assault and intimidation of people enjoying security;
- Intellectual terrorism and restriction of freedoms.

2-2 Religious tolerance and rejection of the phenomenon of intolerance and contempt for religions

Guiding points:

- Respecting religious sanctities and symbols;
- Religious teachings and addressing the phenomenon of religious intolerance and hate calls;
- The role of ethical and legal values in the face of the phenomenon of contempt for religions.

2-3 Manifestations of violation of personal freedoms of individuals and groups

Guiding points:

- Giving priority to the military, political and economic interests over humanitarian considerations;
- Violation of human rights in third World Countries (murder, displacement and disposition)
- Racial, religious and sectarian discrimination and racial superiority;
- Enforced disappearances, deportations and exile;
- The phenomenon of human trafficking
- Obstruction of humanitarian work and the threat towards those who support it.

Theme III: Human Rights issues between heavenly laws and international covenants

3-1 Religious Teachings and Promotion of International Human Rights Laws

Guiding points:

- Religious perspective of the human rights in times of peace and times of conflict;
- The position of heavenly and international laws from the siege of states;
- Protection of civilians against the dangers of military operations;
- The religious and legal position towards victims of wars and conflicts;
- Religious outlook to deal with war criminals

3-2 Successful experiments to integrate religious values in human rights laws

Guiding points:

- Constitutional legislation derived from religious laws;
- Activation of religious values in human rights laws;
- Civil rights associations and their relationship with centers of religious dialogue.

3-3 The Responsibility of international law in the protection of vulnerable religious groups

Guiding points:

- The Protection of religious minorities in international law;
- International law and the fight against religious terrorism and ethnic cleansing;
- International law and anti-discrimination on religious basis;
- Laws on sustainable development and poverty reduction;
- The right to live in a healthy and sound environment.

Participants

H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser (Qatar)

The High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

PANEL DISCUSSION SESSION

Theme: Activating religious values to support international human rights laws

Abstract

We must first recognize the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The identification of the individual as possessing rights is clearly articulated. So, too, does the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In Article 27 of the Covenant explicitly articulates the right of a minority to enjoy its own culture. This right is further emphasized for individuals in Articles 13 through 15 of the International Covenant of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.

UNAOC has a long track record of partnering with Religious Center, Academia and Research Institutes in order to target educational training programs answering growing challenges of intolerance, violent extremism and respect for Human Rights regardless of race, sex, language or religion.

A large part of the prevention process, is assuring everyone that his or her rights are protected. Much of what we do through our various programs and projects- capacity building, providing grants to youth-led peace building activities, enabling journalists to do more culturally sensitive reporting, and engaging the private sector- is all geared toward mobilizing communities across identity lines to work together to resolve shared societal challenges to prevent Human Rights violations.

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The Most Revd Prof. Dr Malkhaz Songulashvili (Georgia)

Metropolitan Bishop of Tbilisi and Professor in Comparative Theology at Ilia State University in Georgia

OPENING SESSION

CV

Born in 1963. He taught history and religion at Tbilisi State University in 1988-2007. He completed his doctoral dissertation in the UK through the Oxford Center of Mission Studies in 2013. He worked as a Bible Translator for the Georgian Orthodox Church and the United Bible Societies for 31 years. He Served Evangelical Baptist Church of Georgia as its leading Archbishop for 19 years (1994-2013). Since 2014 he has been an associated professor in comparative theology at Ilia State University, Georgia, and the Metropolitan Bishop of Tbilisi. For his peace and justice work among Christians, Muslims, Yezidis and Jews he has been honored with: The Lambeth Cross, 2006; Order of St George, 2008; Order of Christ the Saviour, 2011; Honorary Citizenship of Tbilisi, 2013; Order of St Nicolas, 2013; Pro Fide Award, 2014; Shahbaz Bhatti Freedom Award 1915. The Guardian of Tolerance Award, 2017.

Abstract

Long before the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 the family of Abrahamic faith traditions had developed clear understanding sacred nature of humanity. In Judeo-Christian tradition the concept of humanity being created into the image of God – Imago Dei - was foundational stone for respecting human dignity. The same concept has also been affirmed in Islamic tradition. Al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) had declared that Allah created Adam in His own image (‘alasaratihi). About 500 years ago Erasmus of Rotterdam, while addressing issues of peace and justice, made a mistake by choosing partisan approach in relations with other members of Abrahamic family. Time has come when the partisan approach to the human rights shouldn’t be acceptable any longer. Members of Abrahamic family are called to struggle for the rights for all people of faith or none in affirmation of the concept that every human being is a bearer of the image of God.

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HE Rabbi Dr. Reuven Firestone (US)

Regenstein Professor in Medieval Judaism and Islam, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Los Angeles

PLENARY SESSION II

Theme II: The Position of Religions on Human Rights Violations

Title: Religious perspectives on human rights in times of peace and conflict

CV

Reuven Firestone is a Founder and acting co-director, Center for Muslim-Jewish Engagement, a partnership of the Omar ibn Al Khattab Foundation, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, and the University of Southern California's Center for Religion and Civic Culture at the College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences (2007-present).

He is the Associate Professor in Medieval Jewish and Islamic Studies, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Los Angeles, Ca (1993-1997). He has been the Assistant Professor in Hebrew Language and Literature, and Director of Hebrew and Arabic programs, Boston University, Boston, MA. (1987-92), the Academic Director: Boston University Study Abroad at the University of Haifa, Israel (1988-1992), the visiting Scholar, Lotan Summer Series in Jewish Studies. Kibbutz Lotan, Israel (1988, 1996, 1998, 1999).

Abstract

“Religious perspectives on human rights in times of peace and conflict”

Judaism, like the other divine religions, requires respect for human rights both during times of peace and during periods of conflict. And Judaism, like the other divine religions, requires respect for human rights both among believers and non-believers. When people of religion fail to respect human rights, especially during times of stress, they fail the divine imperative. There are two major reasons for this failure: 1) greed, and 2) fear. This presentation will explain how these two failures can be corrected.

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Dr. Jamal A. Badawi (Egypt)

Professor Emeritus, Saint Mary's University, Halifax, NS, Canada

PLENARY SESSION I

Theme 1: Human Rights in Religions (Vision and Concept)

Title: Freedom of Belief and Religious Practice: a Muslim Perspective

Abstract

In the context of such an inclusive international interfaith conference, it is helpful to search for values that nearly all humans can accept. Given the diversity within the human family, we need to state such values in an inclusive and general manner.

However, such core values need articulation and authentication. This is where sharing various religious and/or philosophical perspectives is both refreshing and educational. This paper deals with an Islamic perspective on the vital issue of freedom of belief- "religious", philosophical or otherwise. For freedom of belief to be meaningful, it requires also the freedom to practice what such beliefs require. Such practice must be in the context of respect of other belief communities and their parallel rights, in the spirit of peaceful co-existence with other "belief" communities in one's local community, society, nation and the world at large. My intention in this paper is to articulate the apparent "particularity" of that Islamic perspective on the topic within the broader scope of universality that is inclusive of all components of the diverse human family. Maybe a day will come, when inclusive open-minded and open-hearted dialogues will replace polemics and triumphalism and focus on the vital practical issues facing humanity. A helpful approach may be to deal with these issues in a manner that respects particularities within inclusive universality.

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Prof. Ivo Josipović (Croatia)

Professor of Law School, University of Zagreb, Croatia

Ankica Marinović, Institute for Social Research, Zagreb, Croatia

PLENARY SESSION I

Theme 1: Human Rights in Religions (Vision and Concept)

Title: Freedom to believe and not to believe as a human right in Croatia

CV

Ivo Josipović (born in Zagreb, 1957) served as the President of Croatia from 2010 to 2015. As politician, he promoted reconciliation in the S.E. Europe, human rights and fight against corruption. Before presidential mandate, he has been a university professor (international Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure), Member of Parliament and composer. He has published several books and 85 scientific papers dealing with international criminal law, criminal procedure and human rights. Josipovic received honorary doctorate from Immanuel Kant University (Kaliningrad) and Istanbul University. He has received prestigious domestic and international awards for his work in the field of human rights, ecumenicalism and art. Among many recognitions and decorations, he received the European Medal of Tolerance from the European Union, the *Premio Galileo 2000 Award* for art and *Grand Prix* of the European Broadcasting Union.

Abstract

This paper is inspired by the research Religious communities in Croatia: position and interfaith relationship. Freedom to believe and not to believe is guaranteed by the Croatian Constitution. This paper will consider some cases of positive and negative praxis of respecting/violating of this right at the example of some minority religious communities and irreligious people in Croatia. Paper covers the next main points: religious situation in Croatia, legal framework of the state - Church (religious communities) relationship, examples of respecting religious freedom and examples of violating the right to religious freedom in the state, political and civil society. Conclusions will show that Croatia has developed a model which privileges the Catholic Church, accepts and cooperates with some other traditional religious communities, but occasionally discriminates against some other religion, and people with different religious and irreligious conviction.

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Ambassador Sri Razali Ismail (Malaysia)

Chairman of the Malaysian Human Rights Commission/ SUHAKAM

PLENARY SESSION I

Theme 1: Human Rights in Religions (Vision and Concept)

CV

Razali Ismail is the Chairman of Cypark Resources Berhad and Allianz Malaysia Berhad inter alia, is Pro Chancellor of Universiti Sains Malaysia and an Adjunct Professor with the University of Malaya. He heads an NGO foundation, Yayasan Chow Kit, on underprivileged and marginalized children. He has from April 2016 appointed Chairman of SUHAKAM for 3 years.

Abstract

Despite the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) almost seven decades ago, many Muslim-majority countries including Malaysia face certain difficulties in fully committing itself to the UDHR. In the context of Malaysia, this may be due to a combination of factors such as the assumption by certain quarters of the Muslim population that human rights are significantly inconsistent with the tenets and teachings of Islam. Such circumstance has created a certain degree of resistance to the advancement of human rights promotion and protection in the country. In this light, this paper seeks to explore the various approaches and strategies that could address and potentially dismantle the tensions surrounding human rights and Islam in Malaysia, and to highlight the interface between human rights and Islam particularly in relation to economic and social rights.

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Dr. Bob Roberts, Jr (US)

The founding and Senior Pastor of North Wood Church

PLENARY SESSION II

Theme II: The Position of Religions on Human Rights Violations

CV

Dr. Bob Roberts, Jr. is the founding and Senior Pastor of NorthWood Church, a multiplying church near Dallas/Ft. Worth, TX. He is the author of *Transformation, Glocalization, The Multiplying Church, Real Time Connection: How To Use Your Job To Change The World, Bold as Love and Lessons from the East*. He is a leading practitioner and writer on glocal—global and local—transformation of individuals, religious organizations, communities and global engagement. He has penned articles for both religious and secular publications. Roberts' experience has resulted in his being called upon by a global audience, including, but not limited to the United Nations as well as the US Islamic World Forum, among others. Some countries Bob has worked in with Christians, Muslims and followers of other faiths include, but are not limited to, Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Mexico, Brazil, Australia, Egypt, West Bank, Israel, Iraq, Kuwait, and Iran. Bob is a graduate of Baylor University (BA), Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (M.Div), and Fuller Seminary (D.Min). Bob is married to Niki and they have two children, Ben and Jill. He also has three grandchildren.

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Mr. Burhan Koroglu (Turkey)

Professor of Philosophy of Islam, Epistemology, Metaphysics, Political Philosophy, Ethics

PLENARY SESSION II

Theme II: The Position of Religions on Human Rights Violations

**Title: The Human understanding of Islamic philosophy
and its value in terms of human rights**

CV

He graduated from the Department of Philosophy in Istanbul University in 1985. He taught Islamic Philosophy and Muslim Thought courses in Marmara University, Middlebury College, USA, and University of Jordan. He was the chairman of MEDAM (Civilization Studies Center) and lectured in Bahcesehir University. Currently he is associate professor of philosophy and the Director of Social Sciences institute in Ibn Khaldun University.

Abstract

Muslim thinkers have made an effort to reconcile Islamic values with the universal values that they have developed through philosophical investigation to explain the message of Islam through the concepts of philosophy in human understanding. Systems of thinking in Islamic thought, which we can basically classify as Kalam, Philosophy and Sufism aim to create a human vision and to assign this vision to the mental and ethical perfection of humankind and society; each of which is in itself and together with other systems of thought. While doing this, the main objective of Muslim thinkers has been to reconcile the Quran-Hadith framework with the mental-philosophical accumulation that they have developed by benefiting from other cultures and philosophical traditions.

In this paper, under the title of the human conception of Muslim thinkers, we will discuss the approaches of human perfection as an entity of thought and human will, which makes him know his individual and social rights such as life, ownership, freedom of thought, freedom of belief, continuing his bloodline, right to vote and stand for election in real terms, determined in religious and legal texts and which make him realize them.

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Dr. Elizabeta Kitanovic (Belgium)

Executive Secretary for Human Rights of Conference of European Churches in Brussels

PLENARY SESSION II

Theme II: The Position of Religions on Human Rights Violations

CV

Dr Elizabeta Kitanovic is the Executive Secretary for Human Rights of Conference of European Churches in Brussels. She works as a senior human right advocate vis-à-vis International Organizations. She is the editor of the Human Rights Training Manuel for European Churches. She is also the founder and editor of the first European Churches Human Rights Library. She was the author of the Church and Society of CEC's Annual Report 2007-2014. In 2009/2010 she was a member of the Advisory Panel of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency and was again nominated for 2012/2014. Dr Kitanovic completed her studies in Theology at the Political Science Faculty, University of Belgrade. She graduated from the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Serbian Government. Dr Kitanovic regularly gives lectures and presentations in the area of human rights.

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Mr. Alonso E. Illueca (Panama)

Adjunct Professor of International Law and Human Rights, Universidad del Istmo (Panama)

PLENARY SESSION III

**Theme III: Human Rights Issues between Heavenly Laws
and International Covenants**

CV

Alonso E. Illueca, *Adjunct Professor of International Law and Human Rights, Universidad del Istmo (Panama)* Alonso Illueca is Adjunct Professor at Universidad del Istmo (Panama) where he teaches Public International Law and Human Rights. He currently serves as Academic Expert for the Americas Network for Refugee Legal Aid and the UNHCR. He is also Junior Partner at the law firm Bufete Illueca. Illueca served at the Permanent Mission of Panama to the U.N. (2017), the U.N. Office of Legal Affairs, Codification Division (2016-2017), the Permanent Observer Mission of the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) to the U.N. (2016), the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States (2013), and the Ombudsman Office of Panama (2013).

He previously taught Public International Law at Universidad Santa María La Antigua (2015-2017). In 2016 he participated in the 52nd Session of the International Law Seminar organized by the U.N. Office at Geneva, becoming the 6th Panamanian to ever participate. Illueca has published in edited books and journals specializing in international law, the law of treaties and the use of force. He is opinion columnist for La Prensa (Panamanian newspaper). Illueca received his LL.B. from Universidad Santa María La Antigua (2013), his Ed.S. degree from Universidad del Istmo (2014), and his LL.M. from Columbia University (2016).

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Mr. CLAUDIO D. PRESMAN (Argentine)

Lawyer and politician in INADI (National Institute against discrimination, xenophobia and racism), Argentina

PLENARY SESSION III

**Theme III: Human Rights Issues between Heavenly Laws
and International Covenants**

Title: Legal framework for the Dialogue, Respect and Religious Coexistence.

CV

Claudio Presman is an Argentine lawyer and politician who has served in different positions in the civil service. He served as president of the Radical Civic Union block in the Legislature of the City of Buenos Aires (2009-2013) and as Secretary of the Latin American Jewish Congress, regional branch of the World Jewish Congress. In 2014, he was appointed Deputy Ombudsman of the City of Buenos Aires (2014-2017). In 2017 he was appointed by the national government as Comptroller of the National Institute Against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism (INADI). He is the author of different opinion articles.

Abstract

Recently, the human rights legislations have received values of integration, dialogue and respect for religious diversity. The laws, as well as their judicial interpretations, have been positively influenced by the notion of respect of freedom of cult or creed and the free exercise of their religious rights. This paper discusses how Argentina's National law has adopted well-known principles of freedom of worship and religion included in its National Constitution. Furthermore, it examines the different religious values reflected in anti-discrimination and human rights' laws. Finally, the paper will present several cases with judicial resolution that reflects the application of human's rights and religion freedom's rights. As conclusion, it will be argued about the importance of interfaith values in human's rights law.

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Dr. Raquel Margalit Ukeles (US)

Ph.D. from Harvard University in comparative Islamic and Jewish studies

Theme 1: Human Rights in Religions (Vision and Concept)

Subtheme 1-1 Freedom of belief and religious practice

CV

Raquel Ukeles, PhD, is the Curator of the Islam and Middle East collection at the National Library of Israel (since November 2010), and is responsible for developing the collection and for building digital, cultural and educational programs in these areas. Major projects include: Jrayed.org: Digital archive of early Palestinian newspapers; Bustan writers-in-residence program for Arab and Jewish writers; and the publication of a three volume Arabic-English catalogue of Islamic manuscripts.

Raquel grew up in an Orthodox Jewish family in New York and studied Hebrew, Torah, and Talmud from an early age. She received her MA and Ph.D. from Harvard University in 2006 in comparative Islamic and Jewish studies. Her dissertation was entitled " Innovation or Deviation: Exploring the Boundaries of Islamic Devotional Law." Ukeles also studied Islamic law and Arabic in Egypt, Morocco and the Netherlands. Her publications include several articles on the responses of Shafi'i and Hanbali jurists to popular religious practices, and a monograph on Islam in America post-9/11. For the past 20 years, Raquel has taught and written extensively on Islam and Judaism, and on improving Jewish-Muslim relations. She attended the Doha conference in 2006 and 2007, and is honored to return.

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Prof. Alessandro Ferrari (Italy)

Associated Professor at the Department of Law,
Economy and Cultures of the University of Insubria

Theme 1: Human Rights in Religions (Vision and Concept)

Subtheme 1-1 Freedom of belief and religious practice

**Title: Towards a Mediterranean living together.
The role of religious communities**

CV

Alessandro Ferrari, Llb University Of Modena (1993), PhD Law and Religion University of Milano (1999), PhD Canon Law (University of Paris XI (2003) is confirmed Associated Professor at the Department of Law, Economy and Cultures of the University of Insubria (Varese and Como) and permanent visiting professor at the Research Master “Islamologie, Droit et gestion” at the University of Strasbourg. He is scientific director of the Research Center “Religion, Law and Economy in Mediterranean Area” (REDESM) at the University of Insubria where he teaches Law and Religion, Comparative Religious Laws and Mediterranean Islam., secularism and laïcité; religious freedom in Europe and constitutional transitions of the MENA countries.

Abstract

The paper aims to investigate the role of religious communities on the two sides of the Mediterranean. Taking the post-second world war constitutionalism as a common parameter for the two sides, the paper analyzes the new role of religious groups in the Mediterranean geopolitical space. A widespread narrative assigns the monopoly of “freedom” to Europe and, in general, to the Western world, depicting the majoritarian-Muslim side of the Mediterranean as backward in the matter. This paper will challenge this perspective, showing how a more interrelated and comparative analysis between the two Mediterranean shores is necessary. Starting from the answers to the permanent settlement of Muslim communities in Europe and the open cultural and religious pluralization of the Southern “Islamic shore”, the paper will show how the transnational framework affects the role of religious groups of this geopolitical area and ask for new models of citizenship’s, able to cope with plural societies and to balance between universal values and specific legal and cultural traditions.

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Prof. JAIME ROSSELL GRANADOS (Spain)

Deputy Director General for Religious Affairs, Ministry of Justice Madrid (Spain)

Theme 1: Human Rights in Religions (Vision and Concept)

Subtheme: 1-1 Freedom of belief and religious practice

Title: The Spanish model for the management of religious diversity: 25 years of the signing of agreements with religious confessions

CV

Jaime Rossell Granados received his PhD in Law and the Extraordinary Doctoral Dissertation Award from the Complutense University School of Law (Spain).

Since 1999 Professor of Law in Church and State Legal Affairs and Canon Law in the University of Extremadura, he has been Head of the Public Law Department (2003-2007) and Dean of the Faculty of Law (2007-2015). He is currently the Deputy Director General of Religious Affairs in the Ministry of Justice.

His research in the last years is focused in the study of the exercise and development of religious freedom, the phenomenon of religious migration in Spain and the legal consequences of interculturality.

Abstract

Since 1978, Spain recognizes religious freedom as a fundamental individual and collective right in article 16 of the Spanish Constitution. The development of this right took place with the enactment in of the Organic Law on Religious Freedom in 1980. This law regulates the range and content of this right and, on the basis of the principle of cooperation, contemplates potential agreements between the State and religious denominations “deeply rooted” in our country.

This paper will analyze, in the first place, the tools created to develop the right of religious freedom; secondly, the position and role of the State in relation to the religious denominations; and thirdly, it reflects on the agreements signed in 1992 between the Spanish State and several religious denominations, analyzing their origins, evolution and contents, and proposing measures that could improve the current situation, such as the involvement of NGOs.

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Prof. Pietro Vereni (Italy)

Assoc. Prof. Pietro Vereni- University of Rome “Tor Vergata” - Italy

Theme 1: Human Rights in Religions (Vision and Concept)

Subtheme 1-1 Freedom of belief and religious practice

Title: The conflicting usage of places for Muslim prayer in Rome

CV

Pietro Vereni is currently associate professor of cultural anthropology at Università di Roma Tor Vergata and contract professor at Trinity College - Rome Campus. He earned a PhD in anthropology in 1998 doing fieldwork in Western Greek Macedonia. He's also done fieldwork (1998-1999) between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland when research assistant at the Queen's University of Belfast. He's now working on: prisons in Italy; squats in Rome; Bangladeshi immigrants in Rome; religious diversity in Rome.

Abstract

This article aims at showing how the historical religious relevance of Rome, seat of Catholicism, has attracted a variety of religious forms in the City. For Muslims that has taken a double dimension: it has opened space for the Grand Mosque in Pariolineighborhood, one of the biggest and most suggestive example of eclectic architectural Islamic style in Europe; but it has also attracted to the city many Muslims that find difficult to locate their religious needs in decent spaces. Indeed, outside of the Grand Mosque Muslims in Rome are facing restrictions to the public expression of their religious needs and are now reconsidering their relationship with the official representatives of the State and Municipality. POINTS COVERED: Spatial organization of Muslim minorities; religious rights in Rome; religious diversity and social exclusion; political and social recognition of religious diversity.

Mr. Vahid Suljic (Bosnia)

Project coordinator on projects funded by QNRF- Qatar

Theme 1: Human Rights in Religions (Vision and Concept)

Subtheme 1-1 Freedom of belief and religious practice

Title: Implications of Interfaith Dialogue to Social Peace and Cohesion in Bosnia and Herzegovina

CV

Vahid Suljic holds a MA in Public Policy in Islam from Hamad Bin Khalifa University (2017). He earned Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Qatar University (2011). Currently, Vahid is a project coordinator on a four year project funded by QNRF and co-led by College of Islamic Studies faculty – HBKU titled: "Governance of Natural Resources in Africa: Advancing a Qatari Perspective and Economic Diversification". In 2016, he joined Association of World Citizens Youth as a Research and Advocacy coordinator. Between (2009- 2010), Vahid worked as a researcher assistant with the college of Business & Economics (CBE) at Qatar University.

Abstract:

Even though the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina ended in 1995, many indications point to the possibility that it might happen again! The three main ethnic groups of Bosnia have completely different visions for what a future state should look like. The US and European Union's strategies ended in failure and the international community fell short in its commitment. Some religious leaders are trying to tackle the current situation, even though Bosnia is a secular state with no state religion. It seems that religious awareness and affiliation plays a dominating role in determining the loyalty of Bosnian citizens. Bosnia remains a problematic area far from true reconciliation and with other numerous unsolved problems. The aforementioned concern serves as a prime motivation for this study. The aim of this research is to identify what are the implications of interfaith dialogue to social peace and cohesion in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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Mrs. Vesna Škare Ožbolt (Croatia)

Member of the Parliament

Previous Minister of Justice of the Republic of Croatia

Theme 1: Human Rights in Religions (Vision and Concept)

Subtheme:1-2 Individual rights and public interest

Title: The rights to equality and Justice

CV

Vesna Škare Ožbolt has been the Minister of Justice, she contributed to the Introduction of new institutes in the Croatian justice system. As the Advisor of the Croatian President she played key role, such as the leading negotiator with the representatives of the UN mission to Croatia in the process of the establishment of the peace in the war-affected areas leading to a peaceful return of Serb- occupied areas of Eastern Slavonia to Croatian sovereignty. As the President of the National Committee for the Establishment of Trust, the Normalization of Life and Reconciliation on the War-Affected Areas coordinated activities between the UNTAES officers, the delegations of the Croatian refugees, representatives of international organizations. As a member of the Parliament proposed 14 laws.

Abstract

Founded in May 1993, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) closed its door on 29 November 2017. The introduction of ‘persecution’ as crime against humanity, rape as a war crime and defining key elements of the crime of genocide are the most prominent contribution of the ICTY to the development of the international criminal law. However, failure to indict key players due to the even-handedness on ethnic grounds instead of grounds of justice, controversial mode of liability (joint criminal enterprise, JCE), poor selection of judges and the political influence on the court by different countries, contributed to its failure to fully satisfy the expectations of the victims and chances for the reconciliation. To achieve better results in delivering justice proper balance between the right of the victims to the satisfaction and the right to equality and justice for the accused, remain to be observed in the creation of every future *ad hoc* tribunals.

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2018

13th Doha Interfaith Conference

Dr. Edward Kessler (UK)

Founder Director of the Woolf Institute in Cambridge

Theme 1: Human Rights in Religions (Vision and Concept)

Subtheme:1-2 Individual rights and public interest

CV

Dr Edward Kessler, MBE is Founder Director of the Woolf Institute and a leading thinker in interfaith relations, primarily, Jewish-Christian-Muslim Relations. In 2002 he was elected Fellow of St Edmunds College, in 2007 Dr Kessler was described by *The Times Higher Education Supplement* (London) as 'probably the most prolific interfaith figure in British academia' and in 2011 he was awarded an MBE by Queen Elizabeth II for services to interfaith relations. He has written or edited 12 books, including the standard undergraduate textbook entitled, *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations* (Cambridge, 2010). His most recent books are *Jews, Christians and Muslims* (SCM, 2013) and *Jesus* (The History Press, 2016).

Abstract

Nowhere is the subject of peace and understanding, or more realistically, violence and misunderstanding, more evident than in discussion about human rights violations on the grounds of religion. Speakers tend to be advocates of one side or another, pursuing a strictly partisan agenda. Why is it comparatively rare to find people which are both pro-one side AND pro-the other? The reason is that too few are concerned about seriously engaging different views, easily overwhelmed by the shrill screams of religious intolerance, ignoring the diversity of humanity. The Mishnah, edited about 1800 years ago, states,

'Humankind was produced from one individual, Adam to show God's greatness. When a man mints coins in a press, each is identical; but when the king of kings of kings, the Holy one, blessed be he, creates people in the form of Adam not one is similar to any other.' (*Sanhedrin* 4.5)

The challenge today is to engage in genuine dialogue and mutual understanding. If we are committed to religious tolerance, we know that good neighbours are better than good guns. Otherwise, we will only generate noise but not hope.

Dr. Jafar Morvarid (Iran)

Assis. Prof. - Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran

Theme 1: Human Rights in Religions (Vision and Concept)

Subtheme:1-2 Individual rights and public interest

Title: Hermeneutic Elements in the Methodology of Ijtihad: Agreement with the Spirit of the Book, and Derivation of Justice and Human rights as the Purpose of Sharia

CV

Jafar Morvarid is an assistant Professor of Philosophy and Islamic Theology, Faculty of Theology and Islamic studies, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad and Dean of Interreligious Dialogue Department and Institute for Intensive courses and Sabbaticals. I received my B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. in philosophy. I also studied several years in Seminary School. He has a solid knowledge of western philosophy, especially the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein, and a relatively solid knowledge of Islamic sciences including Islamic philosophy, Islamic theology (*Kalam*), Islamic jurisprudence (*feh*), its principles (*Osoul*), Hadith, and Qur'an. He has published several philosophical and theological papers in refereed journals. His main interest, in philosophy, is Wittgenstein's philosophy and, in religious studies, is interreligious Dialogue. My PhD's thesis was on Wittgenstein's philosophy and its relation to relativity of worldview.

Abstract

God purposefully promulgated (ja'1) Islamic Judgement on the purpose of Sharia. In Islamic Theology the Divine Legislator holds the perfect wisdom; therefore, the Divine Law is considered as rational graces. Divine imperatives and prohibitions follow the real benefits. Jurists, while interpreting the Texts in their independent reasoning (Ijtihad) need attention to find out the practical duty and the purposes of the Sharia (human rights). Islamic thought is a dynamic phenomenon, the cause of which has been effective Ijtihad during many centuries. The spirit of Quran addresses the common innate nature of humanity (fitrah in Quranic terminology). Quranic anthropology emphasizes that religion based on an innate nature and human rights that do not change in various times and cultures. Methodology of Ijtihad tries to make a consistency between emerging requirements and the innate nature and human rights that the universal imperatives of Sharia target.

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Dr. Masudur Rahman (Bangladesh)

Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies in the International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC)

Theme 1: Human Rights in Religions (Vision and Concept)

Subtheme:1-2 Individual rights and public interest

Title: Rights of children in Islam and the Responsibility of Society towards them

CV

Dr. Md. Masudur Rahman completed B.A. (Hon's), M.A. and PhD in Islamic Studies from the University of Dhaka. He is teaching at International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC), Bangladesh as an Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies. He has published several articles in local and international refereed journals, and has presented research papers in several national and international conferences in Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Abstract

Islam has clear injunctions regarding all aspects of the life of children. The Quranic verses and traditions of the Prophet (S.) emphasize on ways of building up of health, mind, education, culture, character of the children. Islam has made obligatory duties about marital contact, unborn child, genetic purity, maternity, birth, food and nutrition of mother and child, suckling milk, only to protect the rights of children. Protecting from all kinds of alarming situations and dangerous diseases are also among the important duties of the guardians. For the lack of love and affection to the child, they may become physically and mentally disable and backward. Recently, we observe that most of the educated people are careless and insincere to the rights of children particularly in the society of Bangladesh. The educated rich households appoint the child for domestic work in Bangladesh and deprive them from their educational and cultural rights and even torture them mercilessly. In this paper, the research focuses on how Islam ensures the rights of child and what are the obligatory duties of the Muslim parents, individuals and society towards them.

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Dr. Abdalhadi Alijla (Sweden)

Regional Manager, the Gulf and MENA Region
Gothenburg University, Sweden

Theme 1: Human Rights in Religions (Vision and Concept)

Subtheme: 1-3 Human political, economic, and social rights

Title: Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem)

CV

AbdalhadiAlijla is a Palestinian - Swedish academic, writer and essayist. Abdalhadi is the Regional Manager of Varieties of Democracy Institute(Gothenburg University) for MENA and Gulf countries. He is the director of Institute for Middle East Studies, Canada(IMESC). He has a PhD in political studies from state university of Milan. He holds a M.A. degree in Public Policy and Governance from Zeppelin University- Friedrichshafen, Germany. During his studies, Abdalhadi was awarded a two years DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) scholarship. Prior to his doctoral studies, Abdalhadi was involved in political research on volunteerism at United Nations Volunteers in Bonn, Germany. In 2010, he was a visiting researcher at ICCROM in Rome, Italy. He worked as a sessional lecturer at Alazhar University- Gaza. Abdalhadi was a fellow of Soliya network for dialogue and selected as a junior scientist at the 30th Alternative Noble Prize by Right Livelihood College. He is DAAD fellow of Public Policy and Good Governance, and a fellow of Royal Society of Art and Science, UK. He worked for many NGOS and INGOS in the Middle East and Europe. His writings appears on Open Democracy, Huffpost, Qantara, Your Middle East, Jaddaliya and other media outlets. In 2017, he was selected as one of the most influential on Social Media in Palestine. His main research interests are divided societies, democracy, social capital, Middle East studies, comparative politics and philosophy of religions.

Abstract

About V-Dem

Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) is a new approach to conceptualizing and measuring democracy. We provide a multidimensional and disaggregated dataset that reflects the complexity of the concept of democracy as a system of rule that goes beyond the simple presence of elections. The V-Dem project distinguishes between seven high-level principles of democracy: electoral, liberal, participatory, deliberative, egalitarian, majoritarian and consensual, and collects data to measure these principles.

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Ms. Jill Drzewiecki (US)

The International Campaign and Philanthropy Officer for the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)

Theme 1: Human Rights in Religions (Vision and Concept)

Subtheme: 1-3 Human political, economic, and social rights

**Title: the Human Political, Economic and Social Rights, the right to asylum
Education and Displacement: *the right and real-life challenges of providing access***

CV

Jill Drzewiecki has served as the International Campaign and Philanthropy Officer for the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) since 2016. However, she has worked for and with the refugee community in Rome, Italy since 2012. Drzewiecki also teaches the course, 'Human Rights: the View from Rome' for Loyola-Chicago University's John Felice Rome Center (JFRC). This course focuses on forced migration and engages students in service-learning, including dialogue with the local Muslim community as a key component to promoting healthy integration of refugees into Rome, Europe and beyond. Drzewiecki's work with displaced people began in 1997 as a student interning with street children and studying the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Bogota, Colombia. She is a graduate of Harvard University's Global Mental Health: Refugee Trauma and Recovery program. She also holds degrees in Environmental Education (MS) and International Studies (BA). Jill is most proud of her daily work as a mother. She is originally from Wisconsin (USA) but has worked for environmental, interfaith and humanitarian organizations on three continents. In her free time, she enjoys practicing yoga, long swims and walks, and studying.

Abstract

One of every two displaced persons is a child. Of these refugee children, only 60% have access to primary education. That number drops to 25% for access to secondary education and only 1% of refugees have access to higher education. This constitutes a denial of human rights, but also aggravates and perpetuates root causes of displacement that foster further human rights violations. Alternatively, education is a human right that fosters protection, individual agency, and long-term solutions. On average, refugees are displaced for 21 years, more than an entire academic life. Many children are born, grow up and reach adulthood in refugee camps or in urban environments where access to education. The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) strives to address this violation of a basic human right and reshape global reality through educational projects that allow refugees to live in hope, journey with dignity, and realize their fullest potential.

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Rabbi Menachem Genack (US)

Theme 1: Human Rights in Religions (Vision and Concept)

Subtheme: 1-3 Human political, economic, and social rights

Title: Judaism and Human Right: The Biblical Proposition that All Men Are Created Equal

CV

Rabbi Menachem Genack has served as the Rabbinic Administrator of the OU's Kashruth Division since 1980, overseeing the certification program of some 10,000 food production facilities in 90 countries around the world. He also serves as Rabbi of Congregation Shomrei Emunah in Englewood, New Jersey, and gives a Yoreh Deah shiur for ordination students at Yeshiva University.

Himself the author of a number of halachic works, including *Birkat Yitzchak al Masechet Sanhedrin*, *Birkat Yitzchak al Hatorah*, *Gan Shoshanim*, and *Chazon Nachum*, Rabbi Genack is the co-editor of the Torah journal *Mesorah*. He also edited *Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, Man of Halacha, Man of Faith*, has published over 180 articles on Jewish thought and law, and serves as a member of Tradition's editorial board. Rabbi Genack serves as the General Editor of the OU Press. He edited "The Seder Night: An Exalted Evening" – the Passover Haggadah with commentary by Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, as well as *Shiurei HaRav: Keriat Shema u-Tefillah*.

Rabbi Genack is a member of the Board of Trustees and Professor of Talmud at Touro College, from which he received an Honorary Doctorate in 1998.

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Dr. Oliver leaman (UK)

Professor of Philosophy at the University of Kentucky

Theme 1: Human Rights in Religions (Vision and Concept)

Subtheme: 1-3 Human political, economic, and social rights

CV

Oliver Leaman is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Kentucky. He is the author and editor of books on Islamic philosophy and theology, and his most recent books are the second edition of the *Bibliographical Encyclopedia of Islamic Philosophy*, Bloomsbury 2015 and *The Qur'an: a philosophical introduction*, same publisher 2016 . He is the author of *Controversies in Contemporary Islam*, Routledge, 2013, has edited for Routledge *The Qur'an: An Encyclopedia*, 2006, Ninian Smart's *World Philosophies*, 2008, and co-written *Islam: the Key Concepts*, with Kecia Ali, 2008. He is the author of *Islamic Aesthetics*, Notre Dame University Press, 2004. He is the book review editor for Islamic philosophy for the journal *Philosophy East and West* and on the editorial board of the Islamic Studies section of Oxford Bibliographies Online.

Abstract

Religious tolerance and its source in Abrahamic hospitality

Having the right religious views are often seen as necessary for salvation, and it might seem acceptable to oblige someone to adopt those views. Abraham/Ibrahim is a good example of why this is not true, according to the Qur'an and the Bibles he was open to everyone to come and share his hospitality, an excellent example of tolerance. There is a famous story that on one occasion he cast out a guest who refused to share his prayers, only to be criticized by God for doing so. God pointed out that if He could live with the man all his life then surely Abraham could put up with him for one day! It will be shown that all the Abrahamic religions should be seen as constructing a meaningful notion of tolerance through the institution of hospitality.

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Mr. Claudio Epelman (Argentine)

Executive Director of the Latin American Jewish Congress

Theme II: The Position of Religions on Human Rights Violations

Subtheme: 2-1 Religious views on extremism and terrorism

CV

Claudio Epelman is the Executive Director of the Latin American Jewish Congress, regional branch of the World Jewish Congress, and Commissioner for interreligious dialogue & Representative to the Holy See of the World Jewish Congress. Epelman had a personal relation with the then Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, when the Cardinal occupied the position of archbishop of Buenos Aires.

Epelman is a member of the Advisory forum of KAICIID, a member of the Executive Committee of the Latin American and Caribbean Council of Religious Leaders, and a member of the International Advisory Board of the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID).

He is very committed to inter-faith initiatives both promoting Jewish and Muslim dialogue, and building bridges with the Catholic community. Epelman also represents the Jewish Communities of Latin America at meetings with heads of state, and at international forums like the UN, OAS, OSCE, World Economic Forum.

Understanding the importance that the Internet and social media have in our days, Epelman promoted the creation of tools that monitor and denounce online anti-Semitism and all forms of discrimination, which can be found on the Web.

Epelman is also responsible for actively promoting the incorporation and participation of young people in the political actions of Jewish communities, forming them to be the leadership of the future.

The Government of Argentina awarded Epelman a recognition in 2007 for his valuable work in the interfaith field.

Abstract

Today's world presents us with a phenomenon that, although it is not new, has worsened in recent times: terrorism. That search for control by violent acts with the purpose of instilling fear. Terrorism, therefore, seeks to coerce and pressure governments or society to impose their claims. This extremist vision clashes with the values of all religions, of Human Rights and of Peace as the guiding principle of the Abrahamic religions. It hits against what we understand must be, over any other, the tool to resolve all disputes: Dialogue.

Dr. Wong Kim Kong (Malaysia)

Theme II: The Position of Religions on Human Rights Violations

Subtheme: 2-1 Religious views on extremism and terrorism

Title: Coexistence among followers of different religion

CV

Rev. Wong Kim Kong was the Secretary General of the National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF) Malaysia for 12 years prior to being named its Executive Adviser. He is now the Founding Principal Consultant of the Leadership Transformation Academy, which seeks to train pastors and leaders in different parts of the world. He was also the founding chairman of the Christian for Peace and Harmony of Malaysia (CPHM), officially launched by the Prime Minister of Malaysia in June 2015, that aimed to bring peaceful and harmonious co-existence among all races in the country.

Abstract

The rich diversity of the multi-ethnic religions in many nations places a demand on us as citizens of the nation to find amicable ways of living together peacefully and harmoniously. However, the manner or approach by which we assert our personal views or claim of rights may unconsciously or inadvertently convey antagonism or confrontation rather than cordial expression of views or concern. Therefore, many times it triggers suspicions, misunderstandings and breakdown of communication; and if not checked, it will cause distrust and animosity.

We need to seek to outline the causes of such tension and stress. The thesis will provide the believers of all faiths the amicable and constructive ways not only to diffuse the tension, but to promote unity in diversity, to enhance understanding of our differences and to foster acceptance and tolerance.

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Dr. Clifton Clarke (UK)

Associated Professor of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena

Theme II: The Position of Religions on Human Rights Violations

Subtheme: 2-2 Religious tolerance and the rejection of religious intolerance

Title: Ubuntu: An African Vision of Humanness

CV

Dr. Clifton Clarke was born and raised in the UK. Dr. Clarke completed his Ph.D. at the University of Birmingham, with his dissertation focused on African indigenous churches in Ghana. After teaching theology at the University of Nottingham in the UK for five years, Dr. Clarke Moved to Ghana, West African in 1997 to teach theology at the Good News Theological Seminary and Akrofi-Christeller Memorial Center of Applied Theology. In 2008 Dr. Clarke was invited to join the faculty of Regent University as the Associate Professor of Intercultural Theology and Director of the Center for Intercultural Studies. In 2017 Dr. Clarke was invited to join the faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena as the Associate Dean of African American Church Studies and the Professor of Black Church Studies.

Abstract

In this short brief paper, I would like to introduce the African philosophy and way of life called Ubuntu (humanness), as a useful starting point for the development of interreligious relations between Christian and Muslims in Africa. Ubuntu is a Zulu word that captures the spirit and philosophical foundation for African living. It is a unifying vision or worldview enshrined in the Zulu maxim *umuntungumuntungabantu*, i.e., “a person is a person through other persons.” The essence of this African aphorism is the basic respect and compassion for others. It asserts our ability to co-exist goes to the very core of our humanity. A longer definition by Archbishop Desmond Tutu says, “A person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated.

Dr. Ahmad Bello Dogarawa (Nigeria)

Associate Professor of Accounting at Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, Nigeria

Theme II: The Position of Religions on Human Rights Violations

Subtheme: 2-2 Religious tolerance and the rejection of religious intolerance

Title: The role of the Muslim scholars in achieving peaceful co-existence in multi-religious societies through interfaith Dialogue: the case of Kaduna state, Nigeria

CV

Dr. Ahmad Bello Dogarawa is an Associate Professor of Accounting at Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria, Nigeria. He obtained a B.Sc. Degree in Business Administration, Master Degree in Banking and Finance, M.Sc. Accounting and Finance and Ph.D. Accounting and Finance. He is an alumnus of Al-Azhar University, Cairo and Imam of Jumu'at mosque in his town.

Dr. Dogarawa has travelled throughout Nigeria and some neighbouring countries to present papers, give sensitisation lectures and conduct workshop on various topical issues particularly Islamic banking and finance, peaceful coexistence, moderation and tolerance, ethics of disagreement/diversity management and Islamic perspective of economic empowerment, investment and poverty eradication.

Abstract

Nigeria is a heterogeneous country comprising of several pluralities mainly ethnic and religious. Though, a country with federal structure of government, Nigeria is yet to find a lasting solution to the problem of inter-communal and inter-religious conflicts among its more than 280 ethnic groups and different religious communities. As a result, the relationship between members of many communities and followers of different faiths in its multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies is characterized by suspicion, fear, lack of cordiality and a tendency towards violent confrontation and crisis with all its attending consequences. Ethno-religious crisis has become a common feature of the Nigerian society especially in the North.

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Prof. AnneWingenter (Italy)

Assistant Professor, Department of History, Loyola University Chicago, Rome Center

Theme II: The Position of Religions on Human Rights Violations

2-2 Religious tolerance and the rejection of religious intolerance

CV

She has been teaching Modern and Contemporary Europe, Women's and Gender History, Fascism and War, Development of Human Rights in Historical Perspective. She published a number, and delivered talks, including: "Benito Mussolini in Italian High School Textbooks" *Globalisation and Historiography of National Leaders: Symbolic Representations in School Textbooks*. Springer: 2017, "From Soldier's Guides to Student Handbooks: Rome as Classroom during the Early Cold War," in *A Tale of Two Cities: Florence and Rome from the Grand Tour to Study Abroad*. Edisai: 2017.

Abstract

If the selection committee finds that it would fit with your program, I would like to participate as a speaker on the subject "The uses (and abuses) of history in the dialogue on human rights." As currently conceived, my talk will look briefly at how history as a discipline has long been used both to assert a conflictual relationship between different religions (or for that matter, different peoples) and to define who is included or excluded in the discourse on human rights. It will conclude by suggesting ways that such historical perspectives can be challenged and the discipline itself used to promote a more ethical and inclusive vision. I will send a full abstract by the deadline. Naturally, if the paper turns out not to be a good fit, I will still be happy to attend the conference as an observer only.

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Mr. Sotirios Roussos (Greece)

Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science and International Relations of the University of Peloponnese

Theme III: Human Rights Issues between Heavenly Laws and International Covenants

3-3 Responsibility of international law in the protection of vulnerable religious groups

Title: The situation of minoritarian religious communities as political “barometer”

CV

Sotirios Roussos is Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science and International Relations of the University of Peloponnese and Head of the Centre for Mediterranean, Middle East and Islamic Studies (CEMMIS). He has been in charge of the organization of the 1st and the 2nd International Conference on Religious and Cultural Pluralism and Peaceful Coexistence in the Middle East. Since 2015 he has established the Centre for Religious Pluralism in Middle East (CRPME) in endeavor to create a mechanism which would examine the regional situation, in terms of freedom of religion or belief and cultural pluralism, codify the various problems and positive developments and elaborate concrete proposals and viable solutions. conflict.

Abstract

As the winds of extremism blow on their ancient cities and towns, many communities in the East Mediterranean and the Middle East look on fearful that their dwindling numbers will be further depleted. The paper will argue that the situation of “religious minorities” could be seen as a “barometer” that provides the world with an accurate measurement of the political atmosphere in the region. This barometer shows that the safer and more prosperous these minorities feel, the higher is the probability that the region becomes more free and stable, linked to world trends and hospitable to minorities. It will also endeavor to sketch out some terms and conditions for an all-inclusive regional consensus for alleviating the pain of these communities in both Syria and Iraq and for protecting endangered religious minorities, while staying in their homes.

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Dr. Grace Ji-Sun Kim (US)

Associate professor Associate Professor of Theology at Earlham School of Religion

Theme II: The Position of Religions on Human Rights Violations

Subtheme: 2-2 Religious tolerance and the rejection of religious intolerance

Title: Redeeming Women: Subordination, Sex Trafficking and Women's Rights

CV

Grace Ji-Sun Kim is an Associate Professor of Theology at Earlham School of Religion. She is the author or editor of 12 books most recently, *Intercultural Ministry; Planetary Solidarity; Embracing the Other: Here I Am; Contemplations from the Heart; and The Grace of Sophia*. She is a co-editor for the Palgrave Macmillan Book Series, "*Asian Christianity in Diaspora*". She writes regularly for The Huffington Post, and have written for TIME, The Nation, and The Feminist Wire. More of her work can be found on

Abstract

Since the death of Hugh Hefner at the age of 91 on September 27, 2017, there has been some literature on his role in the sexual revolution and in the freedom of speech movement. However, another topic that is being discussed is how he exploited women as sexual objects. His death brings us to revisit the dialogue of women's rights, since women continue to be viewed by their nature to be subordinate to men. Women continue to be used by men for their sexual pleasure, at times against the interests and dignity of women

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Ms. Shannon Maree Torrens (Australia)

PhD Candidate / International and Human Rights Lawyer, The University of Sydney, Australia

Theme III: Human Rights Issues between Heavenly Laws and International Covenants

Subtheme: 3-3 Responsibility of international law in the protection of vulnerable religious groups

Title: The Response of International Criminal Law to Religious Minorities and Ethnic Cleansing

CV

Shannon Maree Torrens is a PhD Candidate at the University of Sydney Law School and is admitted as a lawyer of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, Australia. Her doctoral thesis is on international criminal law and justice, focusing on the international criminal courts and tribunals. She has a BA (Media and Communications, Government and English) and a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) (Honours) also from the University of Sydney, with a specialisation in public international law, international criminal law, international humanitarian law, international human rights law and legal theory.

Abstract:

This paper looks at how international criminal law responds to ethnic cleansing and the attempted suppression and removal of religious minorities, through the creation of modern international criminal tribunals and courts. In doing so, it addresses whether international criminal justice is effective in responding to these crimes, particularly in light of numerous instances of religious persecution being largely ignored and for those that have been responded to through the creation of an international court, accusations that the justice response is ineffective and influenced by geopolitical issues. At this important juncture in the progression of international criminal justice, this paper focuses on how the lessons learned thus far from the prosecution of crimes against religious minorities can improve future responses to international crime and in particular how politics, international collaboration, community engagement and a better understanding of religious differences through interfaith dialogue can assist in this process, politically, judicially and locally.

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Dr Sabrina Lei (Italy)

Director, Tawasul Europe Centre for Dialogue and Research Rome

Theme III: Human Rights Issues between Heavenly Laws and International Covenants

Subtheme: 3-3 Responsibility of international law in the protection of vulnerable religious groups

Title: Constitutional and Legal Framework in Italy and the Question of Religious Freedom and Human Rights in Relation to Italian Muslim Minority

CV

Currently, the director of Tawasul Europe Centre for Dialogue and Research, Rome, Dr Sabrina Lei is an Italian Muslim public intellectual and philosopher trained in classical Greek and Latin. She has a PhD in ancient philosophy. Active in the field of interfaith dialogue and human rights issues, she has translated over 15 classics on Islam into Italian, apart from producing a good number of her own books on Islam, human rights, the history of Islam, etc.

Abstract

Italian Constitution is fully democratic and pluralistic in its spirit, however, there is a growing realization among many jurists and public intellectuals in Italy that it approaches the question of religious freedom in a categorized way.

There seems to be at least three different constitutional mechanisms, besides other legal provisions, that control, systematize and define the areas of religious freedom in a piecemeal fashion, thus having different impacts on the religious freedom and human rights of citizens and others living in Italy.

This fragmentary or piecemeal approach to religious freedom, as it is tentatively called, reflects the specific evolution of the state-church relation in Italy, going back to the 1929 accord (it is part of the broader Lateran Pacts) that Italy had with the Vatican. And this accord was modified in 1984 with a new Italian state accord with the Vatican, guaranteeing and restructuring the religious freedom of Roman Catholics.

Dr. Ali Adam (South Africa)

Two Oceans Education Foundation, South Africa

Theme III: Human Rights Issues between Heavenly Laws and International Covenants

Subtheme 3-1 Religious teachings and the promotion of international Human rights laws

Title: Human Rights between Heavenly Laws and International Covenants

CV

Ali Adam was born in 1942. After schooling, he proceeded to study at Nadwatul Ulama in India. He was fortunate to be personally trained and tutored by Sheikh Sayyid Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi. On his return to South Africa, he completed his B.ED degree and in 1984 founded the now famous, Islamia College Cape Town. He is still its director. In 2010 he established the Two Oceans Education Foundation to promote quality education for those who were denied good education under Apartheid. The University of Gloucestershire in the United Kingdom conferred on him an honorary P.HD for his work in curriculum development which provided for a values-based education teaching children to respect all human beings, regardless of race, religion or colour. In 2016 he established the Two Oceans Graduate Institute for higher education. This university currently provides a 4 year B.ED Degree.

Abstract

The nightmarish atrocities around the world drive us to look for ways to promote respect for human rights. The 17th Century thinker John Locke who founded the theory of rights believed rights are embedded in our duties to God. For him human freedom was divinely ordained. All revealed religions enjoined peace and preach non-violence. If believers in divine law practice their religion in its pristine purity, there would be no need to enforce human rights. Unfortunately inequities that have plagued mankind continue to exist and lead to untold human suffering. This makes the subject of human rights especially pertinent, in particular, during both peace and conflict, during a state of siege, for victims of war and for war criminals.

Human rights legislated by human laws and declarations can be changed but rights conferred by God cannot be changed and when fully implemented leaves no room for oppression, suppression, extremism and intolerance.