

PETITION

Protect the Right to Believe: A Global Call for Religious Freedom

Addressed to:

The Secretary-General of the United Nations (António Guterres)/The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (Volker Türk)/ The UN General Assembly

The President of the European Council (António Costa)

Leaders of democratic governments

Ambassadors and diplomatic representatives

Petition Text:

We, the undersigned, raise our voices to call for the urgent protection and continued promotion of the fundamental right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion worldwide, as enshrined in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, which states:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”

Yet, in many parts of the world we continue to witness **severe violations** of this fundamental human right.

Today, according to the ACN *Religious Freedom in the World Report 2025*, some 5.2 billion people — almost two-thirds of humanity — live in 60 countries where there is persecution, oppression, and discrimination perpetrated by the state and/or non-state actors.

Members of almost every religious group, including Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, and Muslims,¹ have suffered discrimination (especially, but not only, in the workplace and school), physical violence, arrest, abduction, sexual abuse — and have even been killed — for simply wanting to live out their faith.

¹ Religious groups are listed in alphabetical order.

This grave human rights crisis can no longer be ignored.

In the name of human dignity, **we therefore appeal to all countries** to implement Article 18 in full. Specifically, we call on:

1. International institutions and democratic governments to:

- Publicly condemn all forms of religious persecution.
- Make religious freedom a priority in foreign policy and diplomatic relations.
- Enforce appropriate measures against regimes that repeatedly violate this fundamental right.
- Take concrete steps, including educational and legal initiatives, to prevent violations, ensure the effective protection of this right, and promote the socio-economic development of religious minorities.

2. At-risk religious communities to be granted protection, especially in countries suffering from sectarian violence or religious extremism. This is aimed at preventing forced migration, thereby enabling communities to stay in their ancestral homes and lands.

3. Individuals and groups suffering religious persecution to receive the emergency and legal aid they need.

 Religious Freedom is not a privilege. It is a human right.

Please sign this petition and stand up for this, our fundamental human right.

#FaithFreedomNow

#RightToBelieve

#Article18

#ReligiousFreedomIsAHumanRight