

Under the constitution minorities have a special status.
This constitutional status has a specific historical background
(Honourable Supreme Court of Pakistan)



REPORT OF International Religious Freedom & Rights of Minorities Conference in PAKISTAN

19 February 2021 in Pakistan Institute for
Parliamentary Services Islamabad
20 February 2021 at President House Islamabad

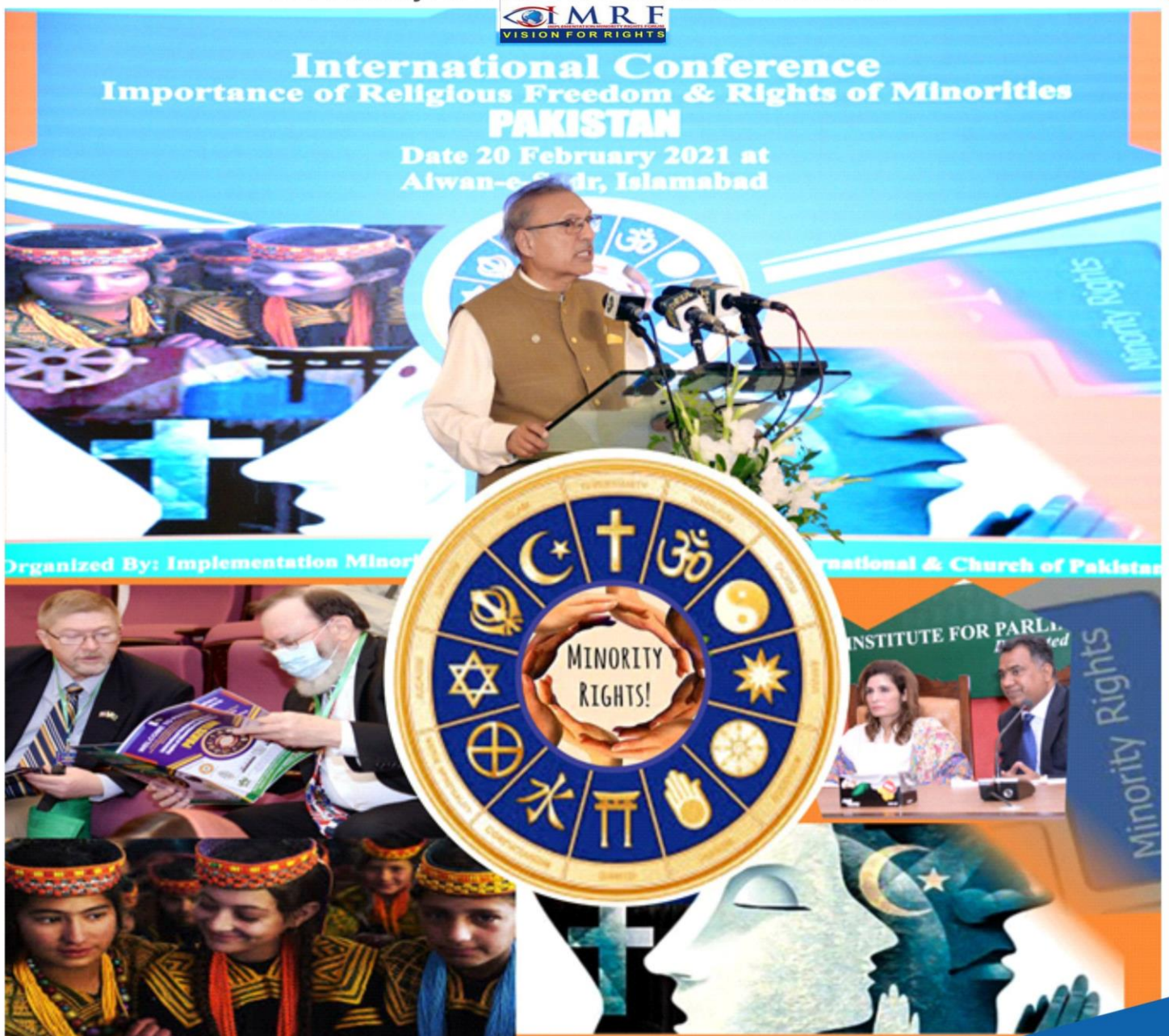


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IMRF is Non-Profit, Non-Political and Non-Religious Forum working for the implementation of the Rights of Minorities in Pakistan.

Aims & Objectives

1. It is the responsibility of the IMRF to raise voice for the rights of the minorities at every Forum through Seminars, Conferences, Electronic & Print media, and Social Media as well so that lack of awareness and ignorance about the fundamental rights might be abolished and the status of the religious minorities deserves may be implemented and executed.
2. Coordinator shall be deployed in all provinces to make sure the awareness program to be organized by the IMRF so that the awareness shall be provided to the Government officials and the Masses as well.
3. It is also the responsibility of the IMRF to constitute delegates to conduct the meeting with the Government Officials both on the Federal and Provincial Level.
4. It is further the duty of the IMRF that it shall keep on working for the implementation of the vulnerable Judgment of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and in case of any failure, IMRF shall approach the Full Bench of The Honorable Supreme Court of Pakistan till its implementation into its true letter and spirit, More over this bench is constituted that it shall hear the complaints of the minorities and IMRF shall take all these applications and complaints and shall place before the Honorable Bench of The Supreme Court of Pakistan as directed in the judgment.
5. The IMRF will provide free legal aid to the deprived sections of minorities.
6. The IMRF shall announce and conduct an award ceremony “Justice Alvin Robert Cornelius” annually.

The main object of establishing “Implementation Minorities Rights Forum” is to assist, guide and attain the rights of the minorities in Pakistan. Its purpose is to execute the rights awarded by the federation, the honorable Supreme Court of Pakistan, Provinces, High Courts and other institutions to raise the voice for the rights of minorities and also provide awareness about their fundamental rights because there is decline of the awareness of the basic rights of the minorities in Pakistan.

The Honorable Supreme Court of Pakistan said, we find that the incidents of desecration of places of worship of minorities could be warded off if the authorities concerned had taken preventive measures at the appropriate time. The Court also found that the inaction on the part of law enforcement agencies was on account of the lack of proper understanding of the relevant law.

“The Honorable Supreme Court of Pakistan got astonished when the Advocate General Sindh said that burning or disgusting the worship places of the minorities is neither blasphemy nor it is a crime according to the Pakistan Penal Code. When He was asked to read Section 295 PPC and he had nothing to say but to keep quiet. Where it is written that any place of worship whether it belongs to any religion is sacred and violating its sanctity is an offence.”

There is a general lack of awareness about minority rights among the people and those entrusted with enforcement of law are also not fully sensitized to this issue either. It needs to reiterate that IMRF is the biggest forum in Pakistan working on the implementation on the direction of

Supreme Court on minorities rights, by the grace of God IMRF has successfully secured the relief claimed from the Honorable Supreme Court of Pakistan including state institutions as and when required. IMRF achieved its all goals. IMRF is the applicant of all cases mentioned below

1. Applicant of Compensation regarding victim of Peshawar church bomb blast through **CMA 1151**
2. Applicant Matter Regarding endowment fund victims of Peshawar Church Bomb Blast HRC No.6965/P/2018.
3. Applicant of security plan for all worship places of minorities.
4. Applicant of registration of Christian marriages in NADRA **CMA 1151**.
5. Applicant of Kot Rahdha Kishan incident where a mob burnt alive Christian couple in Brick kiln (Human Rights case no,**26255-P/2014 CMA No, 6665/2014**).
6. Applicant of Matter Regarding Non-Payment Compensation amount to the Victims of Terrorist Attack of Quetta Church **Human Rights Case No.20171-B of 2018**.
7. Applicant of Matter Regarding Burn House in Gujjar Khan **HRC No.69023/P/2018**.
8. Applicant in Supreme Court of Pakistan, regarding rights of sanitary workers and occupational safety in SUO MOTO 1,2020 regarding combating the Pandemic of corona virus (COVID 19) 3099/2020.

WORKING IN SUPREME COURT OF PAKISTAN ON RIGHTS OF MINORITIES

1. Working on the implementation of Landmark Judgment of Justice Tassaduq Hussain Jilani Former Chief Justice of Pakistan 19-06-2014 regarding Rights of Minorities SUO-MOTO-1/2014
2. Working Done on Matter Regarding Burn House in Gujjar Khan HRC No. 69023/P/2018
3. Working on Matter Regarding Non-Compensation Peshawar Bomb Blast HRC No. 69659/P/2018.

The Criminal Law (Protection) of Minorities Bill, 2020

- 1.Minority Rights Commission Bill Baluchistan
- 2.Minority Rights Commission Bill KPK
- 3.Minority Rights Commission Bill Punjab
- 4.Minority Right commission Bill Sindh

4. Working on Implementation Security Plans Regarding Minority's Worship Places

1. Churches of (Islamabad)
2. Churches of KPK
3. Church of Baluchistan
4. Churches of Punjab

5. Churches of Sindh
6. Churches of Gilgit Baltistan
7. Churches of Azad Kashmir

5. Working on implementation of Five % Job Quota

6. Implementation Order Dated 11-05-2018 regarding Complaint on the use of Word Esai
7. Working done for the implementation on **SUO MOTO Notice** regarding Phool Nagar Harassment of Christian teacher.
8. **IMRF** is working Regarding legislation of Rights of sanitary workers for their occupational safety & health for all Provinces & federal government, IMRF are drafting a Bill for the Rights of Sanitary workers especially occupational safety & Health with Attorney General
13. Supreme Court of Pakistan Established a three-member Bench, on the request of IMRF, to implement on the Landmark Judgment, dated 19 June 2014. PLD 2014 SC 699.
14. Working on implementation of drafting of forced conversion Bill
15. Working on drafting of Minorities Rights commission bill 2020.
16. Supreme Court of Pakistan has taken notice regarding Endowment fund for the victims of bomb blast in church of Peshawar on the application of IMRF. IMRF is working on this order regarding Endowment fund
17. **IMRF** conducted trainings workshops on RIT (Right to information) with Pastors & different schools of thoughts.
18. Conducted press conferences & meetings on forced conversion & Rights of Minorities with Lawyers, and different school of thoughts.
19. Meeting with counsel of Islamic Ideology Pakistan regarding protection of Minorities bill, forced conversion, underage marriages in PIPS. Islamabad
20. International conference on Interfaith harmony Religious conference at Governor house Punjab, on 11th, 12th dec, 2019.
21. Meeting with chief secretary Baluchistan regarding security of Churches.
22. Meeting with Chief Secretary KPK Regarding Endowment fund and security of minorities worship places
23. Meeting with secretary and special secretary regarding issues of sanitary workers
24. Samuel Payara appeared before the three-member bench in Supreme Court of Pakistan Regarding Rape Case Young Christian Girl Sheikhpura Motorway and attack on Christian Colony Chungi Amar Sidhu. The honorable Supreme Court of Pakistan taking notice ordered the submission of reports from the Government of Punjab. (FIR NO578/20 Date 29.12.2020)

Vision of Minority Rights



Importance of Religious Freedom & Rights of Minorities

Religion has played an important role in human history, and faith has influenced the minds and actions of individuals, societies and nations down the ages. By freedom of religion and belief is meant the right of a person to follow a doctrine or belief system which, in the view of those who profess it, provides spiritual satisfaction. However, it is impossible to define the term ‘religion’ in rigid terms. The freedom of religion must then be construed liberally to include freedom of conscience, thought, expression, belief and faith. Freedom, individual autonomy and rationality characterize liberal democracies and the individual freedoms thus flowing from the freedom of religion must not be curtailed by attributing an interpretation of the right to religious belief and practice exclusively as a community-based freedom. The freedom of religion and conscience has been protected in several treaties and declaration⁴. Article 18 of the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966 provides as follows: -

“Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.”

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Minorities

Every country has national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities within its borders. Persons belonging to minorities aspire to participate in the public, social, economic, cultural and religious life of the societies in which they live, on an equal footing with the rest of the population.

Twenty years ago, UN Member States adopted unanimously the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, an acknowledgment that a gap existed in minority rights protection. This gap persists today.

The Minority Rights Declaration established that States have an obligation to acknowledge and promote the rights of minorities to enjoy their own cultures and identities, to profess and practice their own religions and use their own languages.

The Declaration ushered in a new era for minority rights. It sets essential standards for protection and offers guidance to States as they seek to realize the human rights of minorities.



Message by Mr. Samuel Payara

Chairman Implementation Minority Rights Forum & Chief Organizer International Religious Freedom & Rights of Minorities Conference 2021

(In the light of Honorable Supreme Court of Pakistan Judgement 19th June (PLD 699) 2014.)

The right of religious conscience conferred on every citizen is a right conferring three distinct rights i.e. Right to Profess, Right to Practice and Right to Propagate. What this means is that Article 20 does not merely confer a private right to profess but confers a right to practice both privately and publicly for their religion. Moreover, it confers the additional right not only to profess and practice his own religion but to have the right to propagate their religion to others. It is important to note that this propagation of religion has not been limited to Muslims having the right to propagate their religion but this right is equally conferred on Non-Muslims to propagate their religion to their own community and to other communities. This should not be seen as a right to encourage conversions but more importantly, should be seen as a right against forced conversions or imposing beliefs on others because if all citizens have the right to propagate then no citizen has the right of forced conversion or imposing beliefs on others.

Article 20 of must then be interpreted to guarantee the rights of the community as well as the right of the individual against those from his own or other religious communities – the ultimate goal being the eradication of religious intolerance in the society. English political philosopher John Stuart Mill in his treatise ‘On Liberty’ (1859) stated that “the great writers to whom the world owes what religious liberty it possesses, have mostly asserted freedom of conscience as an indefeasible right, and denied absolutely that a human being is accountable to others for his religious belief. Yet so natural to mankind is intolerance in whatever they really care about, that religious freedom has hardly anywhere been practically realized, except where religious indifference, which dislikes to have its peace disturbed by theological quarrels, has added its weight to the scale. “The spirit of pluralism reflected in the Holy Quran constantly points out that Prophet Muhammad ((PBUH)) had not come to cancel the older religions, to contradict their Prophets or

to start a new faith. To the contrary, His message is the same as that of Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon or Jesus. The cherished goal of creating a more pluralistic society where fundamental rights are respected would continue to elude us unless we realize that we are living in a world of globalized interdependence, a world of interconnectivity, of cyber space, of shrunken distances, of cross border migration, and a world of rapidly changing cultural identities. We are all members of one race of humans with common challenges, and we cannot confront these challenges without forging a common alliance. This paradigm shift in the world around us can be achieved at the international and domestic levels SMC No. 1/2014 etc. 30 only by discouraging sectarian, racial and ethnic biases which are violative of shared values and fundamental rights, and by the promotion of and strict compliance with these values and rights.

Religion has played an important role in human history, and faith has influenced the minds and actions of individuals, societies and nations down the ages. By freedom of religion and belief is meant the right of a person to follow a doctrine or belief system which, in the view of those who profess it, provides spiritual satisfaction. However, it is impossible to define the term 'religion' in rigid terms. The freedom of religion must then be construed liberally to include freedom of conscience, thought, expression, belief and faith. Freedom, individual autonomy and SMC No. 1/2014 etc 16 rationality characterize liberal democracies and the individual freedoms thus flowing from the freedom of religion must not be curtailed by attributing an interpretation of the right to religious belief and practice exclusively as a community-based freedom.

The freedom of religion and conscience has been protected in several treaties and declaration 4. Article 18 of the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966 provides as follows: -

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One of the foundational aims of all the major religions in the world has been to eradicate this bias and to preach humanism. However, in practice on account of misinterpretation of some of the religious tenets, religion instead of liberating human beings from these curses of bias have enslaved them which has resulted in violence and human misery. Governments and parliaments in almost all modern democracies have endeavored to undo the injustices done to the minorities in the past.

In 1954 the U.S. Supreme Court in the case reported as Brown Vs. Board of Education of Topeka (347 US 483 (1954) abolished segregation in schools and ensured implementation of its judgment by directing the dispatch of federal troops to the concerned State. In the said judgment, the U.S. Supreme Court came a long way from its earlier judgment in Dred Scott Vs. Sandford (60 U.S. 393 (1857) where a colored was refused a status of a citizen. In not-too-distant past, the country elected a colored as its President i.e., Mr. Barack Hussein Obama.

Theme Song

*The toil, the sweat, the tears and the blood,
Make up the labor for the land begot.
The freedom is won, but the chains are clung,
There are miles to cover,
The voyage is tough and the weather is rough,
The odyssey begins; The Founder declares his vision
Of Democracy, Faith, Tolerance and Compassion.
Discriminate the State shall not
Thou may belong to any religion, creed or caste.
Oh! The vision is distorted, the march is thwarted,
Castles in the sand, babes in the woods,
Recipes of fall abound in the books.
The nation is cut, the land is bled
When the message is lost, a die is cast,
The wages are loud, Beware of the clouds.
Long live the message, the Lamp and the rays
That glow The Temple, which holds the scales,
Pinning the dreams, the hopes and the oath
Of Justice for All*

TASSADUQ HUSSAIN JILLANI
Chief Justice of Pakistan



Message from Coordinator of CONFERENCE Mr. ILYAS MASIH

Vice President and founder of All neighbors International USA

It is highly appreciable that all participants of the conference, dignitaries, ambassadors and particularly the President of Pakistan and IMRF team, who dedicate his precious time to promote INTERNATIONAL Religious Freedom and Rights of Minorities Conference in Pakistan. I highly admire the organizing committee of conference who tirelessly worked day and night for the success of International Conference. I know it was difficult task but it has accomplished with the wisdom of organizing team. It my humble submission that all organizing committee and participants be blessed abundantly Amen

IMRF TEAMS



Welcome Dinner to All Participants and Delegation for International Conference Religious Freedom and Rights of Minorities in Marriot Hotel Islamabad



Pakistan is the sixth most populous country in the world. There are five major ethno-regional communities in Pakistan: Baloch, Muhajir, Punjabis, Pushtuns and Sindhis, as well as several smaller groups. There are also religious and sectarian groups such as Ahmadis, Christians, Hindus, Kalasha, Parsis and Sikhs, and Shia Muslim sects including Ismailis and Bohras.

Religion has played an important role in human history, and faith has influenced the minds and actions of individuals, societies and nations down the ages. By freedom of religion and belief is meant the right of a person to follow a religion or belief system which, in view of those who profess it, provides a spiritual satisfaction. The freedom of religion must then be construed liberally to include freedom of conscience, thought, expression, belief and faith. International Religious Freedom & Rights of Minorities Conference in Pakistan dated 19-20 February 2021, supported by All Neighbors International and organized by IMRF was a reaffirmation of IMRF (Implementation Minority Rights Forum) commitment to rights of religious minorities living in Pakistan and across the globe.

The primary objective of conducting this conference was to understand the current scenario of religious freedom and rights of minorities in Pakistan and at global level; Furthermore, it sought to explore the range of initiatives that have been taken by the recent government of Pakistan to address discrimination or violence in the name of religion committed against those who express their religious identities. Finally, the conference explored new synergies for better future cooperation among the participants in their work.

The speakers from Embassies, National Assembly, human rights organizations, Islamic institutes and different minority groups, shared their valuable thoughts. The presence of over 200 participants affirmed the dedication of IMRF towards religious freedom at national and global level.

DAY 1: February 19th, 2021

Session I: Presided by Ms. Andleeb Abbas

Venue: Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services

Speakers: Ms. Andleeb Abbas, MNA, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf
His Excellency Archbishop Christophe Zakhia El-Kassis, Apostolic Nuncio to Pakistan





Speech by Ms. Andleeb Abbas
MNA, Federal Parliamentary Secretary Foreign
Affairs Government of Pakistan



Constitution of Pakistan guarantees equal rights to all citizens. Quaid-e-Azam laid the foundation for religious freedom and rights of minorities. She quoted Quaid’s statements, you are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other places of worship in the State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed – that has nothing to do with the business of the State”. The white part of flag of Pakistan represents minorities living in Pakistan. If you look at all religions, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) or Jesus Christ, they all stood for injustice., all stood for the rights of minorities. If you study any religion, the teachings are the same. Centuries ago, the people used to live together in harmony, so why are we divided today. We really need to think on it. We are confronted with many challenges. Most recently COVID 19 is a wake up, shake up call. Most developed countries and developing countries have become equal. The inhuman actions in occupied Kashmir have made more than 80,000 Kashmiri children orphans and women are molested daily. The Kashmiri people have a miserable existence in the world’s heaviest militarized zone, more so than Gaza, Iraq and even Afghanistan. Over 700,000 Indian soldiers are stationed in the valley

This gives us an opportunity to rethink on our lives. Even if one person in the planet is affected with COVID 19, it will spread. So rich countries have to take care of poor countries. The ten commandments or farz of Islam, they all teach us an integrity, respect, tolerance, harmony, coexistence, and forgiveness. These are the principles which we need to practice. The world is now more divided as it was; Islamophobia is all time high; racial discrimination is all time high. This conference should address these issues. She also suggested seek first to understand and then to be understood and emphasized on taking care of all phobias (Islamophobia, cultural phobia, class phobia etc.). We should use religion to spread Inter-faith harmony and inter-faith understanding. Let us bring religious institutions together to create inter-faith harmony.



Speech by His Excellency Archbishop Christophe Zakhia El-Kassis

Apostolic Nuncio to Pakistan:



The issues of religious freedom and communal violence in South Asia are complex and deeply rooted in history. Issues in Pakistan range from a lack of access to education, sanitation, transportation and health care, to occupational discrimination and more direct experiences of violence such as abductions and forced conversions, accusations of blasphemy, targeted killings, and frequent attacks on places of worship. Prime Minister Imran Khan is committed to making changes that will help uproot support for extremism and enhance protection for religious minorities. From the time Imran Khan took the office of the Prime Minister, he had persistently claimed that minorities in Pakistan are equal citizens and were under state protection in many of his tweets and interviews. The opening of Kartarpur corridor for Sikh pilgrims and government support to protect and renovate worship places of religious minorities are good examples. Still there are many issues of the minorities living in Pakistan which need to be discussed and addressed.

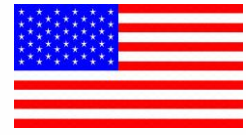


Session II: Presided by Rt. Rev. Humphrey Sarfraz Peter,
Moderator Bishop Church of Pakistan

Venue: Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services Islamabad

Speakers:

- Dr. Muhammad Elsanousi, Executive Director Network of Religious and Traditional Peace Makers
- Pastor John Issac, USA
- Dr. Qibla Ayaz, Ex Chairman Islamic Ideology Council
- Ms. Ayesha Khan, USA
- Wazir Zada, MPA-KPK
- Dr. Seema Najmi, Bahai Community



- Baba Gural Singh, Sikh Community
- Archbishop Sebastian Francis Shaw
- H.E Mr. Benedict de Cerjat, Ambassador of Switzerland
- Rev. Bishop Humphrey Sarfraz Peter
- Mr. Philippe BRONCHAIN, Ambassador of Belgium
- Mr. Samuel Payara, Chief Organizer of Conference

Dr. Muhammad Elsanousi

Executive Director Network of Religious and Traditional Peace Makers –Washington DC-USA



I am the Executive Director of the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers, a global network that bridges grassroots peacemakers and global players to work towards sustainable peace. My sincere appreciation to All Neighbors

International and all others involved in convening this conference. Pakistan has a special place in my heart. Religious freedom protects people's right to live, speak, and act according to their beliefs peacefully and publicly. All human beings are born equal; All human beings must enjoy the freedom of religion with dignity. The current government under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan is very supportive for minorities living in Pakistan and believes in co-existence, social justice, education, and protection of minorities, according to international instruments. The role of different religious leaders is very important for promoting religious freedom.

The Sustainable Development Goal # 17 reminds us to **revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development**. The UN explains: A successful sustainable development agenda requires partnerships between governments, the private sector and civil society. These inclusive partnerships built upon principles and values, a shared vision, and shared goals that place people and the planet at the center, are needed at the global, regional, national and local level. Through such conference we can identify tangible steps for human rights such as making Peace Committees. I congratulate Samuel Payara and All Neighbors International for this wonderful conference.

Julien Harneis

United Nations Resident Coordinator
Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Through Email



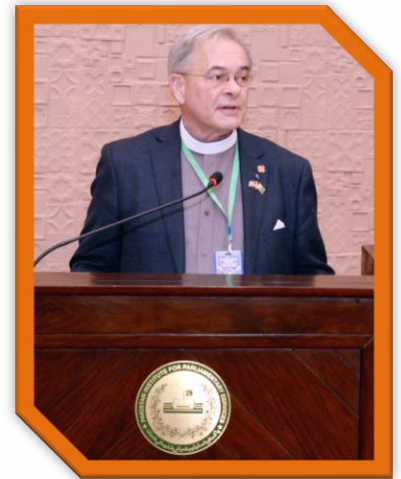
Dear Mr. Payara,
Thank you for having thought of me and my congratulations on putting together such an important event.
Regrettably All my best wishes for the success of this event.
Yours ever,

Dr. Qibla Ayaz
Chairman, Islamic Ideology Council



Excellencies, Ambassadors, and very honorable Bishop Humphrey Sarfraz Peter, and delegates from USA and different parts of Pakistan, good morning to all of you. Good to hear that we are talking on diverse issues; Father of nation set a roadmap for religious freedom in Pakistan. Pakistani minorities are equal citizens and integral part of Pakistan. I would like to share few examples. We admit few sad incidents of attacks on Churches and Christian localities. These incidents do not represent the whole behavior of the Pakistani community. The opening of Kartarpur Corridor is a big example of care for minorities living in Pakistan. In KPK a Muslim mob demolished Hindu temple. The Ministry of Religious Affairs followed up this matter and resolved the conflict and government ordered rebuilding of the temple. Minorities living in Pakistan are equal citizens; Islamic Council of Ideology recommended immediate redesigning of temples despite extremism elements. With great pride I would like to tell you that there are reserved seats of minorities in University of Peshawar and other educational institutes across the country. There was a compliance issue but now students from minority groups are benefitting. This will not only change entire scenario in KP Province but in whole of Pakistan.

Pastor John Nuzum
Director of International Ministry, USA



I am grateful to the government of Pakistan for giving the sponsors: Implementation Minority Rights Forum, the Church of Pakistan, Bright Future Society, and All Neighbors the freedom to speak at this important Conference.

Since God is light and light was created by God therefore the created light is not the same as the creator of the light. Each are radically different. The Scripture tells us in John 8:12, *“Jesus said I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you will not have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.”*

I support and I embrace religious harmony. Christians along with our Muslim friends and others are conducting this conference to shed light on the need for minority religions not to be trampled on and to live freely to worship in safety and peace.

May God bless you and yours; may He watch over you and protect you, may His face shine upon you. May God bless Pakistani and the United States of America!

Dr. Seema Najmi
Representative of Bahai Community



Honorable Excellences, distinguished guests and audience, I would like to extend my appreciation to the Chief organizer for this important conference. It is indeed an honor for me to be here with you all. I would

also like to congratulate the organizers for their vision. But there is still much to deliver and analyze the situation of minorities living in Pakistan. Religious harmony comes through unity. United and harmonious culture is important for religious freedom and respect of minorities. We need to embrace and respect each and every person irrespective of religious or ethnic background. Unity can be supported by legislation. There is a concept of oneness of God in all religions. All divine prophets of God should be respected; we cannot afford blasphemy for any prophet; The first step is to create awareness to facilitate each person; We need to recognize spiritual truth which abandons prejudice of every kind on the basis of race, color, religion and gender etc.

Baba Gurpal Singh
Representative of Sikh Community



I am thankful to Samuel Payara for inviting me in this conference. I am happy to meet and listen to different people working for minorities. Some years back, the situation was bad for minorities but now under the leadership of Imran Khan, many good initiatives like Kartarpur Corridor have been taken to uplift minorities. My mother tongue is in Punjabi and our religion book is also in Punjabi. After 1947 partition, my forefathers and majority of Sikhs decided to settle in Pakistan. It was because of vision and love of Mohammad Ali Jinnah for the minorities. Sikh's representatives are present in the provincial assemblies; I am delighted that some good work is done for minorities. There are different Committees at provincial and national level to address minority issues through table talk. I thank Imran Khan government for starting Baba Guru Nanak University and Kartarpur Corridor. I am thankful to Samuel Payara for showing good face of Pakistan to the world through this conference.

Archbishop Sebastian Francis Shaw
Archbishop of Lahore



First of all, I would like to appreciate all the efforts made by Samuel Payara and Ilyas Masih. I also thanks parliamentarians and Ambassadors. This forum is very important for us. There are two important days in every person's life. One is when person is born and second is when persons realize, "why he/she is made". That day is more important than when he/she was born. When he/she realizes, then he/she loves God's creation. God has made me not to destroy anything and I am the custodian of this planet. When one realizes this, then peace and love will flourish/prevail. I would like to stress on power of love. I have green passport. Passport does not talk about any religion. When you travel you are recognized by your passport? In Lahore we had a strong group of inter religious dialogue. All religious leaders and prophets preached respect, love, and care. We are talking about culture of tolerance again and again. Let us move one step ahead and talk about acceptance. Let us learn to accept others. We are different in many ways; we have to move towards acceptance. May this journey bring peace and harmony. When Pope Francis visited Abu Dhabi, he met with Imam of Al Azhar University and a document was made to work together. We have translated this document. Let us promote this idea and work together for peace and harmony.

H.E Mr. Benedict de Cerjat
Ambassador of Switzerland



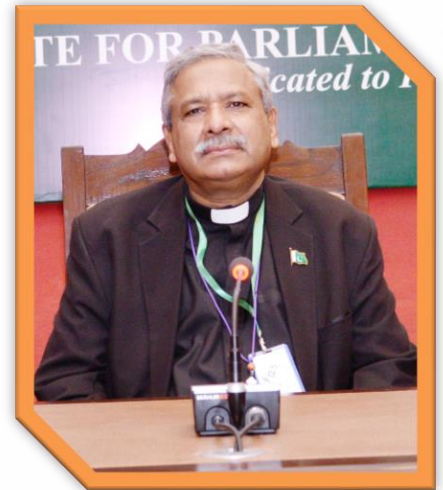
Thanks, you to organizers for inviting me. As a representative of Swiss Embassy, I know well how to accept diversity. I was impressed by the speech of Andleeb Abbas. She clearly explained what can be done for minorities in Pakistan. I would like to encourage you to continue this way not only focusing on positive messages but also look at concrete steps to make life easier for minorities. Wish you a successful conference.



Rt. Rev. Humphrey Sarfraz Peter
Moderator Bishop Church of Pakistan



It's a joy and blessing to be here. Thanks to Samuel Payara and Shunila Ruth for this timely and encouraging initiative. I am delighted to see the way organizers are compassionate about tolerance, harmony and working together. Obviously, acceptability and tolerance are most important. Let's focus on how can we further promote it. Formula of inclusiveness will help us to promote togetherness and harmony. We have to see how we can practically promote and execute inclusiveness. We know what is importance of harmony and tolerance but what are the practical steps which are required to be taken. We have to go together, work together to continue our journey towards religious freedom and interfaith harmony. We need to involve grass root people; women; youth; to promote acceptability, tolerance and inclusiveness. We are very proud of our country and current Government is very supportive for minorities. Thanks for your participation and may God bless you all.



Mr. Philippe BRONCHAIN
Ambassador of Belgium



Thanks, you very much to the organizers and all the speakers. Religious freedom must be guaranteed. The EU charter of fundamental rights clearly reveals, "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right includes freedom to change religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or in private, to manifest religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance for me, religious freedom is a human right. Tolerance and respect for all religions should be taught in schools. Let us make good use of print and electronic media to promote rights of minorities. I wish good luck for this conference.





Remarks by Samuel Payara Chairman IMRF and Chief Organizer of the Conference

We want to produce a declaration that can be presented at international level. We also want implementation of decisions made by Pakistani Courts and UN instruments. Pakistani constitution is the best constitution, in which article 20 gives complete religious freedom to all the minorities. I want to deliver a message through diplomats to ensure implementation of UN Declarations. We also want a detailed explanation of freedom of speech. Our speech should not hurt religious beliefs of anyone. Decision of Court of European Union Human Rights regarding blasphemy is important for us to stop hurting Muslim brothers. US Supreme Court also gave a judgment to abolish racial discrimination. The court also ordered complete implementation of it. As a result, we have seen Barack Obama taking over the reins of USA during 2009 to 2017. I am proud of being Pakistani and I admire Mr. Ilyas Masih who brought you here. I am thankful for your participation in this conference. I am very happy that diplomats and participants from different parts of the country have joined us. I request you to contribute whatever you can to achieve our goal of religious freedom.

Session III: Presided by Archbishop Sebastian Francis Shaw Venue: Marriott Hotel, Islamabad



- **Speakers:** Fr. James Channan, Director Peace Center Lahore
- Pir Shafaat Rasool, Markaz-e-Bilal Lahore
- Parvez Masih, United Christian Federation, Canada
- Archbishop Sebastian Francis Shaw
- Ayesha Siddiqui
- Baba Gurbal Singh, Representative from Sikh Community
- Dr. Jeff Jacob, Representative from US Delegation
- Mr. Hermon, Australia
- Jung Jae Hwa, Korea

Rev. Fr. James Channan
Director Peace Center



Today is a historic day in Pakistan as people of different religions, cultures and nations have gathered in Islamabad to participate in the international conference on the theme of “International Religious Freedom and Rights of Minorities Conference”. It is so wonderful to see that scholars and religious leaders have gathered from many countries. I congratulate Mr. Samuel Payara and his team who has worked hard to make this international conference a reality, in spite of ongoing dangers of COVID-19 Pandemic. All of you are very brave people indeed. Each one of you is an Ambassador of Peace. You are the people who build bridges of love, tolerance, peace, harmony, respect and religious freedom, interfaith harmony and dream from the equal status and rights of minorities. You have committed your lives to break the wall of hatred, violence, discrimination and terrorism in all its forms. Last but not the least I congratulate Mr. Samuel Payara and his team for working very hard to make this international conference a reality. I am sure this International Conference will bring many significant results, which will be good for Pakistan and rest of the world. I am sure this conference will bring many positive results

Brig. (R) Azam Effendi
 Pattern Chief Bright Future Society



I am really glad to see the efforts made by Mr. Samuel Payara and Team organized International Religious Freedom & Rights of Minorities Conference in Pakistan Let me at the very outset declare The Allah is Merciful for Mankind (humanity) and not only merciful for Muslims. With this clarity of thought we now move to the global stage to highlight the issue of Religious suppression and denial of Human and Religious freedom internationally.

First let me assure you that under the constitution of Pakistan minorities have a special status with a specific historical background. Today we have no more the concept of minorities or Religious freedom as we all are Pakistanis first with equal rights. Second International understanding of religious freedom and Rights of minorities. The freedom of religion thus must be construed liberally to include freedom of conscience has been protected in several treaties and declaration. Article 18 of the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political rights. Similarly, United Nations Declaration on Rights of Minorities declaration established that states have an obligation to acknowledge and promote the rights of minorities to enjoy their own cultures and identities, to profess and practice their own religions and use their own language. It sets essential standards for protection and offers guidance to states as they seek to realize the human rights of minorities it also serves as a yardstick to identify the defaulters.

The main issue is that the scholars and preachers who have this sacred duty are not worthy of this distinction. The modern clerics need to be in command of history, economics and sociology plus master the literally and philosophical heritage of their nation. Ladies and Gentlemen now I would request you all to reflect on what I have said and then apply the yardstick to your respective countries.



Remarks by Mr. Parvez Masih

(United Christian Federation Canada): I am thankful to Mr. Samuel Payara and all the organizers who worked tirelessly to organize such a wonderful event to promote interfaith harmony in Pakistan. Unfortunately, I could not physically attend this event due to Covid 19 restrictions. While, I have been discussing with Mr. Payara about this conference almost every day and it has been our vision to bring people of different faiths on one platform to foster interfaith dialogue. By the grace of Almighty God, we organized a similar conference at the Punjab governor's house last year which could have not been possible without the help of the Governor of Punjab Ch.Sarwar and other respected friends. Only way to bring peace in this world is by promoting interfaith harmony. We need to continue interfaith dialogues to remove the misunderstandings about the other religions. Participating in interfaith dialogue does not mean we are undermining our own faith or religious traditions. Today it is my request to all respectable leaders who have the passion to bring peace in Pakistan and around the world. Let's make a pledge to continue such events in Pakistan and around the world. I greatly appreciate that the government of Pakistan is taking a keen interest to promote interfaith harmony in Pakistan



Remarks by Jeff Jacob on behalf of US Delegation:



Thanks to Samuel Payara for organizing such a big and unique conference. People from different religions, sects and parts of the world are here. We want to thank the President of Pakistan, Prime Minister of Pakistan and the people of Pakistan for welcoming us. It has been very inspiring to see people from different faiths and culture coming together for protection of rights of minorities. Religious freedom is need of the world and we need to be united for this purpose.



Remarks by Jung Jae Hwa, Korean Representative:



I have no words to express my appreciation for such an event. I am honored to be part of this conference. I met with different religious leaders and enjoyed their conversation in every section. I was raised up in Korea as Buddhist until when I was 17 years old. Later I met God through Jesus Christ. Now I am a follower of Jesus Christ but some of my family members are still Buddhist. But our family life in Korea has no problem at all. I learned this truth which comes from Bible, "Love each other, Forgive each other".



Group & Panel Discussion



Venue: President House, Islamabad

Session I: Chief Guest: Mr. Khalid Jawed Khan, Attorney General

Speakers:

1. Dr. Joseph Paul Knight, Scholar from USA
2. Mr. Khalid Jawed Khan, Attorney General
3. Herman Roborgh, Religious Education Scholar, Australia
4. Rt. Rev. Bishop Samuel Azaraiha
5. Pir Shafaat Rasool, Markaz-e-Bilal, Lahore
6. Mr. Nand Kumar, MPA Sindh
7. Mr. Wazir Zada, MPA KPK

The session started with recitation from Holy Quran and a joint prayer by representatives from Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Bahai, and Kalash Community. It was followed by an introduction of the Conference and declaration of UN on the rights of minorities, read by Rev. Anil John.



When it comes to rights for religious minorities, Pakistan is the focus of much international controversy, even though Pakistan's religious minorities constitute just 3.7% of its total population. These rights include freedom of religion, economic opportunities, political representations, and socio-identical acceptability of minorities by the Muslim majority and state. Freedom, individual autonomy and rationality characterize liberal democracies and individual freedoms thus flowing from the freedom of religion I am just not be curtailed by attributing an interpretation of the right to religious belief and practice exclusively as a community-based freedom. The freedom of religion and conscience has been protected in several treaties and declaration.



Dr. Joseph Paul Knight Scholar from US

I am delighted to be here for participation in this conference arranged by IMRF & Ministry of Religious Affairs and Inter-Faith Harmony. The freedom of religion protects rights of all individuals. In 1947, Mohammad Ali Jinnah was the first person to recognize rights of minorities. Jinnah's speech of 11 August 1947, laid the foundation for the rights of religious minorities living in Pakistan. The

Universal Declaration of Human Rights addresses four **key areas**: personal rights, such as freedom and equality; relationship rights, such as nationality and having a family; spiritual and political rights such as the freedom of religion and voting; and economic, social and cultural rights, which cover work, wages, education and social security. The Marrakesh Declaration is made in January **2016** by "more than 250 Muslim religious leaders, heads of state, and scholars", which champions "defending the rights of religious minorities in predominantly Muslim countries. Actual compliance to these declarations is a challenge and still there are many gaps between different sects and religious leaders. Therefore, peaceful co-existence is necessary. According to Gospel of Matthew, Jesus said, 'Love your neighbor as yourself' and pray for those who hurt you. Let us love each other and may peace prevail in Pakistan.





Mr. Khalid Jawed Khan Attorney General, Government of Pakistan

The founder of the nation, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah set the tone for loving and caring minorities in his historical speech of 11 August 1947. Compliance with the statement of Mohammad Ali Jinnah and international obligations is need of the day. **Article 14(1)** of the Constitution confirms that "the dignity of man and, subject to law, the privacy of home, shall be inviolable." As a fundamental constitutional right, the right to privacy is meant to take precedence over any other inconsistent provisions of domestic law. **Article 20** of the Pakistani Constitution guarantees freedom of religion. Pakistan is a signatory to the UN Charter of Human Rights. The government is under obligation to safeguard the fundamental rights of all without discrimination based on religion, faith, or belief. **Article 21** safeguards against taxation for purposes of any particular religion. **Article 22** safeguards as to educational institutions in respect of religion, etc. (b) no citizen shall be denied admission to any educational institution receiving aid from public revenues on the ground only of race, religion, caste or place of birth. **Article 26** clearly highlights that there shall be no discrimination against any citizen on the ground only of race, religion, caste, sex, residence or place of birth.



Tassaduq Hussain Jillani, the former Chief Justice of Pakistan, was a strong proponent of civil liberties and fundamental rights, authoring landmark decisions on women's rights, honour killings, and the right to education. He also authored the *suo moto* decision on the protection of minorities and freedom of religion after the Peshawar church attack in 2013, widely held as the broadest interpretation of religious freedom laws in Pakistan's history. The government of Pakistan has taken number of good initiatives for the protection of religious minorities living in Pakistan. I pay tribute to unsung minority heroes and reaffirm commitment of Pakistani government to protect minorities.





Mr. Herman Roborgh
Religious Education Scholar, Australia

The creation of Pakistan in 1947 brought hopes not only to Muslims but also to religious minorities. The founding father, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, envisioned a state that represents all communities in policy making. Often, we study religion to defend our own point of view. We look religions from our own perspective. There are many good gestures shown by the government. I have experienced that there is a Muslim voice for the protection of equal citizenship rights for religious minorities, and it is encouraging that at least some Muslim religious leaders and other groups recognize they need to play an active role in this regard.

Rt. Rev. Samuel Robert Azariah

This gathering is a great celebration of inter-faith harmony and peaceful co-existence. The beauty of such conferences and seminars lies in the true implication of recommendations and international instruments. Best creation of God is human being. We should not violate or disrespect any prophet or religion. The practical steps will lead us towards goal of religious freedom and equal rights of minorities. Love your neighbor as yourself is a wonderful example of bringing love, justice and peace in the society. All religions value peace, love justice. The supreme courts of different countries have given wonderful judgments but this does not trickle down in an effective manner. Let us be united with our commonalities, respect diversity and break the walls which divide us.



Pir Shafaat Rasool
Markaz-e-Bilal, Lahore



All prophets and all religions are respectable. The nature of every religion is same. The teachings of all prophets taught respect, tolerance and love. We should not consider anyone superior or inferior on the basis of difference in color, caste or religion. All those who want to create hatred and spread religious intolerance should be discouraged. I request IMRF to create a



Commission which should visit different religious centers and talk to each other. The way Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) treated Christian delegation from Najran is one of the best examples of inter-faith dialogue. There is a need to quote and refresh such examples time and again to break the barriers hindering religious freedom.

Mr. Nand Kumar



MPA Government of Sindh

The founder of the nation, Muhammad Ali Jinnah gave the vision to respect and protect minorities. In the context of Sindh province, the minors are kidnapped for forced conversion. This is a big issue for us. For me, the biggest religion is humanity, then why discrimination is made. Minorities have equally contributed in the creation and development of Pakistan. In 2016, with my efforts, a bill on forced conversion was drafted to protect minority girls. The government of Pakistan deserves appreciation for opening Kartarpur Corridor and taking other initiatives for minorities living in Pakistan.

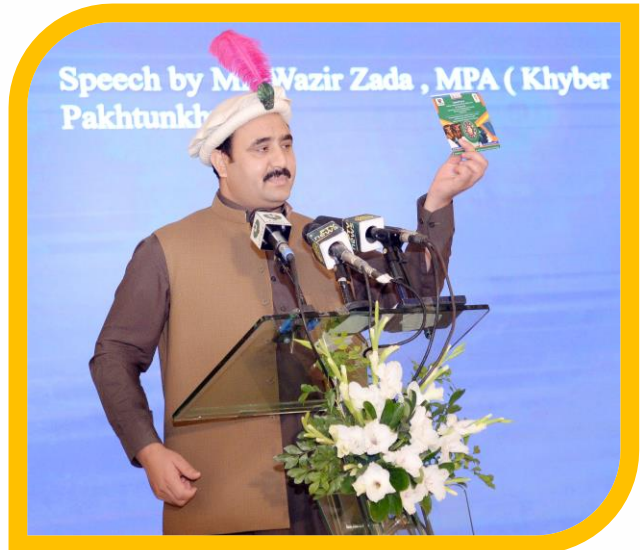


Mr. Wazir Zada

Special Assistant to Chief Minister, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province (KPK)



The organizers of this conference deserve thankfulness for inviting delegate from KPK. I am from Kalash community. The Muslim community respects Kalash community. This is why we survived. The Kalasha culture is unique and tourist come from all over the world here to see the beauty of this unique culture. Under the leadership of our Prime minister, Imran Khan, the government is committed on the implementation of laws which protect minorities. For first time in the history of Pakistan, Kalash community has been given representation in the KPK provincial assembly. In KPK, we celebrate religious festivals (Christmas, Holi, Diwali). The US delegate is suggested to visit temples and churches in KPK to witness their freedom of religion.



Executive Lunch at President House Islamabad International Conference on Religious Freedom and Rights of Minorities



Welcome Honorable Dr. Arif Alvi, President of Islamic Republic of Pakistan,



Session II:
Chief Guest: Honorable Dr. Arif Alvi, President Islamic Republic of Pakistan



Mr. Samuel Payara Chairman IMRF Chief Organizer of the Conference



I warmly welcome Honorable Dr. Arif Alvi, President of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Pir Noor-ul-Haq Qadri, Ms. Shunila Ruth and all the delegates. I extend my deepest thanks to honorable Dr. Arif Alvi for opening doors of President House for the Conference. Justice Tassadduq Hussain Jilani authored a landmark judgment concerning the rights of religious minorities. The judgment, delivered on June 19, 2014, was delivered while taking suo moto action after bombing attack in Peshawar Church in 2013. This judgment of Supreme Court and Articles 20 & 25 of Constitution of Pakistan give religious freedom to minorities living in Pakistan. Respect for the rule of law, the Constitution, and Pakistan's international human rights obligations require that the government should promptly take steps to implement the judgment in letter and spirit. Taking this opportunity, I also thanks Ms. Shunila Ruth for organizing this Conference with IMRF. My sincere thanks to Mr. Ilyas Masih, US Delegation and all the Ambassadors for their generous support and participation.



Maulana Abdul Khabir Azad Khateeb Badshahi Mosque



I congratulate Mr. Samuel Payara and Ms. Shunila Ruth for organizing this Conference. The doors of Pakistan are always open for inter-faith harmony. We need to tell international community that Pakistan is a peaceful country which is providing equal opportunities to minorities. This Conference has given a very strong message of bringing unity and harmony. Pakistan is our country and we have to keep playing our role for its betterment. Together we observe Minority Day on 11 August. The presence of Imams, bishops, priests and other figures including Hindus, Sikhs, Bahai's, and Kailash at the platform of President House gives a positive vibe about the country's spirit of inter-faith harmony. Let us proceed together for dialogue and table talk. The doors of Badshahi Mosque are open for inter-faith dialogue.





Ms. Androulla Kaminara
Ambassador to European Union Delegation to
Pakistan

Honorable Mr. President, Minister Qadri, Member of Parliament Ms. Ruth, honorable Maulana Azad, professor Qibla Ayaz and esteemed Chair of IMRF, esteemed faith leaders, academics, colleagues and partners from near and far. I am honored to be here today to offer my concluding remarks to the two-day conversation on the Importance of Religious Freedom and Rights of Minorities. I am glad that so many parts of Pakistani society join hands together thanks to IMRF and Samuel Payara to start a conversation on how to exchange knowledge, awareness and concrete suggestion on how to ensure safe, secure, peaceful and tolerant societies for ALL citizens regardless of faith, race, creed or gender.



We as the European Union are committed to advance both Knowledge-exchange and inter/intra-faith harmony and co-existence globally. In Pakistan, we have defined interfaith harmony as one of the key priority areas in our strategic engagement plan with Pakistan and EU's foreign policy and development cooperation with Pakistan is driven by a value-based agenda in which Freedom of Religion or Belief is a key priority.

In 2019 I was appointed ambassador to Pakistan, the same year that the Strategic Engagement Plan was signed between European Union and Pakistan. This plan or rather roadmap is important because it upgraded EU-Pakistan relationships and reaffirmed our **joint** determination to further strengthen the long term, forward looking and broad-based partnership for peace, development and prosperity. A partnership which is rooted in shared values, principles, and commitments. The SEP is based on the **principles of the UN Charter, international norms and law, principles of mutual respect and trust, as well as common interests**. It is also building upon the progress achieved so far under the Cooperation Agreement between the European Community and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on partnership and development of 2004, as well as the EU-Pakistan Summit Joint Statements of 2009 and 2010, and the 5-Year Engagement Plan (2012 - 2017).

As mentioned, two key priorities in this plan relevant for our discussion today include:

1. Promoting and protecting human rights including minority rights
2. Enhancing intercultural and inter-faith dialogue and understanding to promote tolerance and harmony, in particular through a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge, people-to-people contacts and education.

Since I have been appointed Ambassador to Pakistan, I have committed to the above goals by reaching out to those with whom we can realize these priorities including politicians, civil

society, religious leaders, and representatives from minority faiths. What makes my job as ambassador a bit ‘special’ is that it’s also about meeting, listening to and discussing with many religious actors and – leaders.

One milestone in our ongoing efforts in this area has been catalyzing conversations together with the Council of Islamic Ideology about the role of academic institutions in promoting peaceful and tolerant citizens and societies. I believe that education is key to uniting nations and reforming societies into progressive and inclusive societies. University campuses can contribute towards a building a culture of peace, diversity and harmony and of a tertiary education in building a knowledge economy. Being at the center of ideas, innovation and knowledge creation, universities must play a vital role in inculcating the values of responsible citizenship, peace, tolerance, harmony, pluralism and co-existence amongst youth – the potential future leaders of society.

A more recent initiative and milestone has been a roundtable on interfaith and intra-faith harmony co-organized by EU and Maulana Azad on December 9, 2020, which culminated in a Joint Statement (which all of you have in your hands). While the statement has 8 equally important agreed commitments, I believe one commitment that is of key importance to any society is no. 5 “... *the condemnation of hate speech against religion, race and colour which can result in any form of harm*”.

- Today, I would like to share a few reflections and two points with you:
- **Firstly, research informs us that 80% of the world’s population, women and men, profess to belong to one religion or another.**

Religious actors, including religious leaders are influential, often among the most critical cultural gatekeepers in many societies and communities around the world. They can and must play an important role in advocating for or against – gender equality and also gender-based violence and harmful practices, such as child marriages or forced conversions. There are exceptions to this global trend, notably in Europe, where I have witnessed people turning away from religious affiliations – sometimes because of regressive opinions on gender equality held by religious authorities and communities.

For all the above reasons, it’s imperative to take into account, and critically appreciate when we speak about the rights of religious minorities, why and how religions intersect with the lives of citizens, women, men, girls and boys positively or negatively?

Secondly, Human Rights actors and religious actors are getting closer.

My second point is that there are many encouraging initiatives connecting human rights actors and religious actors/leaders. Just look around us here today. I wish to mention the unprecedented roundtable again organized on December 9, 2020 by Maulana Azad, myself and convened by the ex. Chairman of CII Dr. Qibla Ayaz in the presence of Minister Qadri, religious leaders and human rights actors and European diplomats as a prime example that while the conversations may be hard, it is possible and its necessary. The EU’s Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) is also stepping in the area of religion and human rights in Europe, which is both necessary and *important. In 2019 EU’s former Foreign Minister Mogherini launched a Global Exchange platform on Religion and Society, some of you here today were present at the launch. This*

platform reaffirmed the need for different actors (religious and non-religious) to actively exchange positive experiences of inter/intra-faith harmony and co-existence.

I am a firm believer that bringing closer religion and human rights can open innovative and unexpected common grounds which is something EU is committed to in Pakistan. My intention is to continue catalyzing inter/intra-faith roundtables with Pakistani partners during my tenure and I hope these initiatives can generate real changes in peoples’ lives.

Thank you very much for your attention and congratulations to the organizers and participants for committing to finding ways to promote religious freedom – we all have to do our part. I am looking forward to continue engaging with all of you.

Aisha Khan
Member Democratic Central State
Committee, Baltimore, USA



I am honored to be part of this Conference. I am glad that participants from different parts of the country have joined us. The teachings of Islam and Founder of the Nation, Quaid-e-Azam, emphasize on giving equal rights to the minorities living in Pakistan. Emulating the Quad’s vision in letter and spirit the Government of Pakistan observes August, 11 each year as the **Minorities Day** to reaffirm commitment to all our minority fellow citizens. The Government has reserved 5% job quota for minorities in government services and provided them reserved seats in the Senate, National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies so that they are able to convey their standpoint to the national audience. Now it’s time to contribute our part for the welfare and development of minorities.





Ms. Shunila Ruth
MNA & Parliamentary Secretary for Religious Affairs
& Interfaith Harmony Government of Pakistan

A very honorable Dr. Arif Alvi, President Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Pir Noor-ul-Haq Qadri, and all the delegates, thank you for opening doors of the Presidency for us and providing all the required support for this important Conference. Worldwide there are increasing challenges. The widespread violation of religious freedom affects daily life of individuals and families and especially co-existence. Pakistan is a home to 22 million population which consists of 4% minorities. Article 20 of constitution of Pakistan guarantees freedom of religion. Our present regime, under the leadership of honorable Dr. Arif Alvi & Prime Minister Imran Khan is struggling to revive Pakistan in the light of Charter of Madina. Let us struggle together to eliminate terrorism, violence and pave the way for harmony, justice and love.



Pir Noor-ul-Haq Qadri
Federal Minister for Religious Affairs
& Interfaith Harmony Government of
Pakistan

The minorities living in the neighbor country are treated poorly and cruelly. Here in Pakistan, we provide equal opportunities and care for minorities. The government of Pakistan under the leadership of Imran Khan, has formed a National Minority Commission. The Pakistan National Commission for Minorities is a commission for the preservation of religious minorities in Pakistan. It is under Ministry of Religious Affairs and Inter-faith Harmony. The government will further empower the Minority Commission. We are also drafting a law to stop forced conversion. We do not believe on war and terrorism on the basis of religion. May this Conference serve as a milestone in promoting religious freedom and rights of minorities nationally and globally.



AWARD DISTRIBUTION:

Honorable Dr. Arif Alvi, President Islamic Republic of Pakistan distributed awards to following persons on account of their services rendered for Religious Freedom and Rights of Minorities



Aisha Khan, Member Democratic Central State Committee, Baltimore, USA



Dr. Raheem Awan, Secretary Law and Justice Commission, Supreme Court of Pakistan



Mr. Insar Barni Pakistani Human Rights Activists



Mr. Nand Kumar, MPA Sindh



Rt. Rev. Bishop Ernest Jacob



Pir Shafaat Rasool, Markaz-e-Bilal, Lahore



Brig (R) Azam Effendi



Mr. Nadeem Sheikh, Advocate Minority Rights



Mrs. Rubina Nadeem



Mr. Ilyas Masih, Founder All Neighbors International, USA



Mr. Boota Imtiaz Receive Award Behalf of Mr. Parvez Masih (UCI)

“Creating Harmony Among Religions Goes in The Interest of The State”: A Concluding Speech by Honorable Dr. Arif Alvi, President Islamic Republic of Pakistan

I thank Implementation Minority Rights Forum (IMRF) and Ministry of religious affairs for organizing this conference and I welcome delegates from throughout the world who have come here.

When we talk about inter-faith harmony, this is a subject which is very dear to me. Every discussion starts from what God and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has ordained and practice which was prevalent in those times; then the history of inter-faith harmony in the sub-continent and then looking at Constitution of Pakistan. So, this is the general spread of my discussion with all of you.



Dr. Arif Alvi President Islamic Republic of Pakistan



I must start with what Holy Quran asks us to do justice in all affairs. The Quran says, “Do not let the hatred of the people deviate you from justice”. Then the Prophet (PBUH) said, “beware I myself shall awake the justice of the Almighty, the day of the judgment against the person who oppresses.

Ten to fifteen years back, I did some research on a document which exists in St. Catherine’s Monastery in Sinai. I call this document a charter of Christian-Muslim harmony. St. Catherine’s Church is established at a place where it is believed that God communicated with Moses at the burning bush. That document which contains stamp of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and another document which contains stamp of Hazrat Umer, the second Caliph. According to this document it was responsibility of the Muslims to safeguard Churches and protect Christians. Throughout the era of Islamic history, the rights of the minorities were reserved. Now coming to India, let me take it 70 or 80 years back. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan wrote in his pamphlet, “When the rulers do not take care of their people, it is natural that people revolt against the government. Now the Muslims in India are 14% of the total population.

In 1906, Sultan Mohammad Agha Khan, the Nawab of Dhaka organized a Conference of Muslims from all over India. All-India Muslim League (AIML), popularly known as the Muslim League was founded in Dhaka, British India (now in Bangladesh) The party’s chief aim was to promote and secure civil rights for Muslims.

Now when Pakistan was formed; it is incumbent on us to ensure that rights of the minorities be protected and therefore according to speech of Quaid-e-Azam dated 11 August, 1947, all are equal before the law. The same thing is mentioned in **Article 20 of Constitution of Pakistan** which guarantees freedom of religion. Pakistan is a signatory to the UN Charter of Human Rights. The government is under obligation to safeguard the fundamental rights of all without discrimination based on religion, faith, or belief.

“
Article 21 of Constitution of Pakistan, safeguard against taxation for purposes of any particular religion.

Article 25 of the Constitution of Pakistan, states "The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such manner as may be determined by law.”

Article 27 safeguard against discrimination in services, and **Article 36** states, “The State shall safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of minorities, including their due representation in the Federal and Provincial services”

To ensure representation of minorities ,10 seats for minorities in the National Assembly and four seats in the Senate have been reserved. But the Muslims in India are struggling for such rights.

There are issues in Pakistan. Everything is not fine. This is a struggle which is going on to ensure the fact that there should be harmony and people like you and leadership sitting from different faiths is responsible for that. I am glad that Government of Pakistan and primarily Prime Minister Imran Khan is committed for minorities. This is a struggle which will continue. There are differences within the Muslim community as well. But Pakistan is changing; Pakistan is

coming to a new era but at the same time we had made tremendous sacrifices. We have learnt that we cannot divide our people. Look at our Eastern borders, the things are happening which will create tension in India between majority and minorities. It is actually happening and to some extent laws are being changed. But when you see the laws are being changed in favor of majority to isolate the minority, that's a dangerous precedent. Mr. Imran Khan has spoken about it. We are not changing the laws in a negative direction in Pakistan. While in India laws are being changed giving negative direction.

I urge the political leadership of France “not to entrench discriminatory attitude against Muslims into laws” and warned that such steps would lead to serious repercussions in the shape of hatred and conflict. “You [France] need to bring people together and not to stamp a religion in a certain manner to create disharmony and bias.

The French legislation was not in line with the United Nations Charter and contradicted the spirit of social harmony that Europe previously instilled in its society. “Let there not be a retrogressive step for situations which arise out of animosity and for situations which are carried forward by the people who do not know about the real Islam.

The damage might not be evident at present, but would ultimately end up in a terrible scenario of hatred and hostility. “To label the entire religion in a different manner and to start taking precautions against the entire community sparks the fact that if not now, it will have very bad repercussions in the next 10 years.

The West was communicated by the government of Pakistan that blasphemy of Prophet Muhammad [(PBUH)] in the name of freedom of expression and religion was considered by entire Muslims Ummah an insult to the revered personality. The President emphasized that the world instead needed to divert energies on addressing other serious challenges such as climate change, poverty, hegemony, and exploitation. He said humanity needed to rise above its vested interests and live up to the ideals of mosque and church as no Prophet, whether Prophet Muhammad [(PBUH)] or Jesus Christ gave a message about animosity, instead, they spoke about peace among people.

The government believes in an emerging Pakistan with peace and harmony among people with all religions, faiths, and colors merged into the ideals of peace and prosperity. In Pakistan, we believe today, there is the morality behind every decision. At the same time, it is in our self-interest that the people of Pakistan must be together and, in all laws, and everything we do, we must ensure that we will promptly fight incidents raising differences,” There could be accidents and incidents attempting to create disharmony but the nation would fight those “very promptly”. The reconstitution of Minorities’ Rights Commission to protect the worship places of religious minorities is a positive step by the government. “Pakistan is entering a new era with lessons learned that we cannot live with divisions among our own people



DECLARATION OF THE CONFERENCE

To take appropriate measures to ensure the implementation of the General Assembly resolution 47/135 of 18th December, 1992 which reads as follows :-(with special reference to Religious Freedom and Rights of Minorities)

- a) Article 1 of Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities Adopted by General Assembly resolution 47/135 of 18th December, 1992.
 1. All member States shall protect the existence and national ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories and shall encourage conditions or the promotion of that identity.
 2. States shall adopt appropriate legislative and other measures to achieve those ends.
- b) All member States should ensure implementation of the rights of Minorities according to United Nations Charter and constitutions of their respective countries.
- c) United Nations, European Union and Relevant Forums should organize such Conferences and must develop a strategic policy for implementation around the world.
- d) A Declaration executed by European union delegation to Pakistan in collaboration with interfaith council for peace and harmony Pakistan dated 09.12.2020 in Islamabad should be implemented in letter and spirit in Pakistan.



**Dr. Joseph Paul Knight Presents A Book to Excellency Dr. Arif Alvi
President Islamic Republic of Pakistan at President House**



WAY FORWARD / FOLLOW UP MECHANISM

IMRF & Ministry of Religious Affairs & Interfaith Harmony Government of Pakistan and All Neighbors International USA will organize International level conferences on religious freedom and rights of minorities in different parts of the world.

Following meeting with Choudhary Muhammad Sarwar & Madam Firdous Ashiq Awan Special Assistant to Information Chief Minister Punjab

Governor Punjab in Lahore Regarding International Conference Religious Freedom and Rights of Minorities Islamabad in Awan-e-Sadr



Meeting with H.E Imran Ismail Governor of Sindh & Mr. Naveed Qamar MNA Member National Assembly Pakistan



Meeting with Law & Justice Commission Supreme Court of Pakistan

Delegate has received request from Mishal Khan w/o Yasin Malik for intervention on humanitarian basis. Mr. Muhammad Yasin Malik is a prominent political leader and human rights activist of Kashmir



**International Delegation Visit KPK & Attend National Interfaith Harmony Conference
Organized by Religious & Minority Affairs Government of KPK**



Special Thanks

1. Special Thanks to Excellency Dr. Muhammad Arif Alvi President Islamic Republic of Pakistan
2. Special Thanks to Pir Noor Ul Haq Qadri Federal Minister Religious Affairs, Interfaith Harmony Government of Pakistan
3. Special Thanks to Excellency Philippe BRONCHAIN Ambassador of Kingdom of Belgium
4. Special Thanks US Delegation
5. Special Thanks to Excellency High Commission Malaysia
6. Special Thanks to Excellency Androulla Kaminara, Ambassador to Pakistan Delegation of the EU
7. Special Thanks to Excellency Bernhard Schlagheck Ambassador of Republic of Germany
8. Special Thanks to Excellency Wouter Plomp Ambassador of Netherlands
9. Special Thanks to H.E Mr. Benedict de Cerj at Ambassador of Switzerland
10. Special Thanks to Excellency Archbishop Christophe EL-Kassis Apostolic Nuncio Embassy of Holy See
11. Special Thanks to Katrina McCreadle Second Secretary political Human Rights British High Commission Islamabad

12. Special Thanks to Mr. Amir Irfan





REPORT OF International Religious Freedom & Rights of Minorities Conference in PAKISTAN

19 February 2021 in Pakistan Institute for
Parliamentary Services Islamabad
20 February 2021 at President House Islamabad



CONFERENCE ORGANIZED BY

Implementation Minority Rights Forum & All Neighbors International

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