



R20 Princeton Declaration

Towards a Global Consensus that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Embodies a Civilizational Vision that the World's Diverse Peoples, Faiths, and Nations Should Strive to Fulfill



14 December 2023 • Princeton, New Jersey USA

“Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world....”

~ Preamble, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (10 December 1948)

1. Whereas on 13 – 14 December 2023 faith leaders and scholars from around the world gathered in Princeton, New Jersey to discuss the future of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in conjunction with the 75th anniversary of the UDHR’s adoption by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948;
2. Whereas participants shared their wisdom and expertise concerning how best to achieve the following high-level objectives:
 - Ensuring that religion functions as a genuine and dynamic source of solutions, rather than problems, in the 21st century;
 - Clarifying, strengthening, and disseminating sources of inspiration and support that exist within our respective traditions for the principles articulated by the UDHR, in order to promote broader acceptance of those principles;
 - Reinterpreting and/or otherwise addressing elements of religious teachings that encourage hatred, supremacism, and violence towards those of other faiths, or none;
 - Identifying shared values and establishing reciprocity among the world’s diverse peoples, cultures, and religions, by treating one another in accordance with the highest moral standards embraced by our respective traditions;
 - Preventing the weaponization of identity, whether on the basis of ethnic, religious, national, and/or ideological affiliations; and
 - Recovering ethical and spiritual resources, within our respective faith traditions, that will enable the world’s diverse religions and cultures to co-exist peacefully;
3. Whereas these senior religious and academic leaders concluded that the post-World War II international consensus — represented by the UN Charter and the UDHR — embodies, reflects, and even provides a political structure for realizing the most fundamental and noble values promoted by all religions, including universal love and compassion (Arabic: *rahmah*; Hebrew: *rachamim*; Greek: *agápē*; Sanskrit: *karuṇā*), equality, honesty, justice, and peacemaking;

4. Whereas it is, therefore, eminently feasible for religions to acknowledge the principles of this international consensus and incorporate these principles within their respective teachings and worldviews;
5. Whereas there is an urgent need to apply religions' ethical and humanitarian teachings to the treatment of others, and affirm that all human beings, without exception, and not only members of one's own community, are entitled to benefit from the application of these teachings, including love, compassion, equality, honesty, justice, and peacemaking;
6. Whereas religious authorities have a moral and spiritual responsibility to ensure that their respective faiths serve as vehicles of mutual understanding and reconciliation rather than perpetuate the primordial cycle of identity-based hatred, tyranny, and violence;
7. Whereas the international consensus embodied within the UN Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides the only currently existing and viable framework for resolving identity-based conflicts — including those that occur between religions, and violence perpetrated in the name of religion;
8. Whereas the failure of global actors to respect and uphold the post-WWII international consensus as embodied in the UN Charter and UDHR framework is a primary cause of instability and conflict worldwide;
9. Whereas religious authorities — acting in service to God and humanity — should persistently and decisively work together to validate, preserve, and strengthen the post-war international consensus and demand consistency from all parties in its application;
10. Whereas it is not sufficient for these efforts to be confined to traditional religious appeals alone; they must be complemented by a deliberate, long-term strategy to mobilize the collective power of religion — including the support of people from all faiths — in a joint movement to attain this noble objective, in cooperation with governments and other civil society actors;
11. THEREFORE, we urge the United Nations General Assembly to recommend that all UN Member States distribute an electronic and/or hard copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in their national language(s), to all school children, through their respective ministries of education; and
12. We urge religious authorities of every faith and nation to marshal the power and influence of their respective spiritual traditions and communities to impact decision-making circles; halt armed conflicts raging in the Middle East, Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, and other regions of the world; develop effective mechanisms for dialogue and negotiation that may lead towards the peaceful resolution of such conflicts; and join Nahdlatul Ulama as well as the G20 Religion Forum (R20) in expanding and strengthening the global Movement for Shared Civilizational Values.

Princeton, New Jersey (USA), 14 December 2023

Signed by:

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