



27 October 2023

Deputy Special Secretary for Human Rights

Hon Silvio Luiz de Almeida

Ministry of Human Rights of Brazil

Dear Deputy Silvio Luiz de Almeida,

We write to you as a global network of parliamentarians from diverse political, religious, and geographical backgrounds committed to promoting and protecting the freedom of religion or belief for all. The International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief (IPPFoRB) comprises an extensive network of over 300 parliamentarians, representing 90 countries from North and South America, Africa, Asia, Europe, and Oceania.

On 10 October 2023, the UN General Assembly elected Brazil as one of the 15 new Member States of the Human Rights Council (HRC) for the 2024-2026 term. This appointment reflects the international community's trust in Brazil's commitment to advancing human rights nationally, regionally, and globally. Countries chosen for the Human Rights Council (HRC) are expected to showcase their dedication to the human rights standards, encompassing their complete cooperation with all United Nations mechanisms.

We are writing to emphasize the significance of protecting and promoting freedom of religion or belief, which is an integral part of the human rights framework. Brazil's membership in the Human Rights Council presents a valuable opportunity to reaffirm its dedication to upholding this fundamental right.

While recognizing Brazil's progress in various aspects of human rights implementation, we remain concerned about persistent violations of freedom of religion or belief within the country. As a member of the Human Rights Council, we sincerely hope that Brazil will take concrete steps to address these concerns and work towards fully realizing the right to freedom of religion or belief for everyone everywhere.



International Panel of
Parliamentarians
for Freedom of Religion
or Belief

Although Brazil has established a legal framework to protect religious freedom, regrettably, there have been instances of religious discrimination, most notably against practitioners of Afro-Brazilian religions. These incidents have included hate crimes and cultural marginalization. Additionally, there are concerning reports that shed light on historical violations of the fundamental human rights of indigenous peoples, including their right to freedom of religion or belief. While Brazil celebrates its diverse faiths and religions, it is equally vital to acknowledge the enduring impact of historical structural discrimination and violence, which continue to affect its citizens, particularly members of minority groups.

We request that Brazil consider these issues seriously and take measures to ensure that freedom of religion or belief is upheld and protected for all its citizens. By doing so, Brazil can further strengthen its commitment to human rights and contribute positively to the work of the Human Rights Council. Such restrictions on fundamental human rights being perpetrated by members of the HRC undermine the credibility of the Council as a whole.

We, the Steering Group of IPPFoRB, are willing to engage in a constructive dialogue on this matter and are open to collaborating with Brazilian authorities to find solutions that respect the rights and freedoms of all Brazilian citizens.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. We welcome any discussions on improving the freedom of religion or belief in Brazil.

Sincerely,

Abid Raja
MP Norway
Chair of IPPFoRB Steering Group

Hon Nqabayomzi Kwankwa
MP South Africa
Vice Chair of IPPFoRB Steering Group
Chair of AfriPAHR Steering Group



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