



The International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief (IPP) is an informal coalition of parliamentarians from around the world committed to combatting religious persecution and advancing freedom of religion or belief, as defined by Article 18 of the UN Universal Declaration for Human Rights.

Article 18 declares, “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.”

At a time of rising violations of freedom of religion or belief around the globe, the IPP seeks to advance this fundamental freedom for everyone everywhere.

The IPP for FoRB is centered around the Oslo Charter for Freedom of Religion or Belief. All parliamentarians participating in the coalition must agree to the Charter's principles to advance religious freedom for all, including the right to believe or not, change faith, and share faith with others. In November 2014, the Oslo Charter was signed by over 30 parliamentarians from around the world at the Nobel Peace Center in Oslo, Norway.

All participating parliamentarians are committed to accomplishing shared goals of advancing freedom of religion or belief, as outlined below in the Oslo Charter:

- Promote freedom of religion or belief for all persons through their work and respective institutions;
- Enhance global cooperation by endeavoring to work across geographical, political, and religious lines; and
- Undertake efforts to jointly promote freedom of religion or belief, share information, and mobilize effective responses.

The Charter guides the work of parliamentarians joining the IPP and commits them to action. Towards this goal of being action oriented, the IPP has written several letters to heads of state to raise concerns about religious freedom issues – Burma, Pakistan, and North Korea.

There is no formal membership, but the IPP welcomes parliamentarians from around the world committed to combatting religious persecution and advancing freedom of religion or belief for all, as defined by UDHR Article. The IPP is committed to regional, political, and religious diversity.

There is no official IPP office. Parliamentarians participate as individuals not representing their parliament or government. Meetings occur on an ad hoc basis, subject to funding. The IPP is led by an informal steering committee and a volunteer secretariat of policy advisers.



Terms of Reference for IPP Participants, Steering Committee, and Secretariat

The IPP is a loose coalition of like minded parliamentarians committed to advancing freedom of religion or belief as defined by Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and described in the Oslo Charter for Freedom of Religion or Belief.

There is no formal membership in the IPP. Interested parliamentarians are asked to show their commitment to freedom of religion or belief and the IPP's objectives by signing the Oslo Charter.

The IPP is bipartisan and religiously and geographically diverse. The IPP serves to act as a catalyst and convener of joint action amongst parliamentarians who are signatories to the Oslo Charter. No one parliamentarian can speak for the IPP, nor does their involvement represent their parliament or government. The voice of the IPP comes from its individual participants joined together at any one time in support of freedom of religion or belief.

As membership in parliament can change, those signatories to the Oslo Charter who are no longer serving parliamentarians can continue to support the efforts of the IPP through the alumni network.

The IPP has an informal Steering Committee that helps guide its work. The Steering Committee can make decisions on a range of issues, including but not limited to:

- Letters to circulate for signature by IPP participants;
- When meetings will be deemed "official" IPP events; and
- When to create sister or affiliate IPP chapters in domestic parliaments.

The Steering Committee is comprised of 3-5 parliamentarians, ideally representing different regions, political persuasions, and religions. There is no chair of the Steering Committee and decisions are made by consensus.

The work of the IPP and the Steering Committee is supported by a volunteer Secretariat of policy advisers. Each member of the Steering Committee may appoint a policy adviser either from their staff or from an outside organization to serve on the Secretariat. Each policy adviser appointee will be responsible for liaising with their appointing Steering Committee member about Secretariat activities and updates. In addition, other policy advisers may be admitted to the Secretariat as needed, based on the consensus of the Steering Committee.