

Dear Friend of Religious Freedom,

As western societies become increasingly secular, how will the change in worldview impact religious freedom? Can religious freedom remain a treasured value even when religion itself loses its allure? When new rights regimes clash with religious freedom rights, which will prevail in the secular society?

You will not want to miss this opportunity to meet and hear the experts who have thought about the issues of secular challenges to religious freedom around the world.

Dr John Graz
Secretary General, IRLA

Purpose

To promote a better understanding of religious freedom in the context of a secular society.

Goals of the Congress

1. To study the interaction of the practice of religious freedom and secular society from a holistic perspective, taking into account a wide range of disciplines including theology, law, history, political science, and philosophy.
2. To examine ways of reaffirming the commitment to maintaining religious freedom as enunciated in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
3. To explore strategies for sharing the importance of maintaining the religious freedom of the individual.
4. To prepare a statement on Religious Freedom in Secular Societies.

From the IRLA Declaration of Principles

We believe in the natural and inalienable right of freedom of conscience—to have or not have a religion; to adopt the religion or belief of one's choice; to change religious belief according to conscience; to manifest one's religion individually or in community with others in worship, observance, practice, promulgation, and teaching—subject only to respect for the equivalent rights of others.

We believe that religious liberty and the elimination of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief are essential to promote understanding, peace, and friendship among peoples. We believe that citizens should use lawful and honorable means to prevent to reduction of religious liberty.

We believe that the spirit of true religious liberty is epitomized in the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.



**International
Religious
Liberty
Association**

The Secular Challenge to Religious Freedom

INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS LIBERTY ASSOCIATION

**7th World Congress
April 24-26, 2012**

PUNTA CANA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



Program

The World Congress will consist of 12 plenary sessions, and 54 papers will be presented in six parallel sessions. More than 30 experts, religious leaders, and government officials will make presentations. At the end of the congress a statement on Religious Freedom in Secular Societies will be voted by congressional delegates. In addition, some of the most helpful presentations will be edited and prepared for publication as a book.

The Congress will include topics such as:

- ✦ International Religious Freedom Advocacy
- ✦ Religious Institutions and the Secular State
- ✦ Liberal Pluralism and Religious Freedom
- ✦ The Religious Voice in the Public Sphere
- ✦ Religious Freedom and Human Rights in International Law
- ✦ Secular Challenges to and Responses from World Religions
- ✦ Religious Group Rights and Individual Rights
- ✦ The UN and European Human Rights Law and Religion
- ✦ Rights of the Child to Religious Freedom in the Secular State
- ✦ Religious Legal Traditions and Secular Challenges
- ✦ The Clash of Religions in the Secular State
- ✦ The Secularist Threat to Religious Freedom
- ✦ Proselytism
- ✦ Defamation of Religions
- ✦ Secularization, Progress and Modernity
- ✦ Pluralism and Tolerance
- ✦ NGO Reports and Testimonies

General Information

Dates:

April 23, 2012 – Arrival and Registration

April 24-26, 2012 – Congress

Venue:

Barceló Bávaro Beach & Resort Convention Center, Punta Cana, Dominican Republic

Cost:

\$250 per person

(\$275 if registering after December 31, 2011)

Accommodation and travel expenses are NOT included and all these arrangements are the responsibility of individuals.

Discounted hotel room rates are available at the Barceló Bávaro Beach & Resort Convention Center when booking through www.irla.org. Room cost includes three meals a day and free food at snack stations and in the hotel room.

Number of Attendees:

Due to space and logistical constraints, the Congress is limited to 1,000 participants. It is expected that spaces will fill quickly.

Registration:

Registration will begin in September 2011 and must be done at the website: www.irla.org.