



**RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND
INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT:
A GLOBAL PLATFORM TO
CHANGE THE CONVERSATION**

ROME

11 | JUNE
2025



Atlantic Council

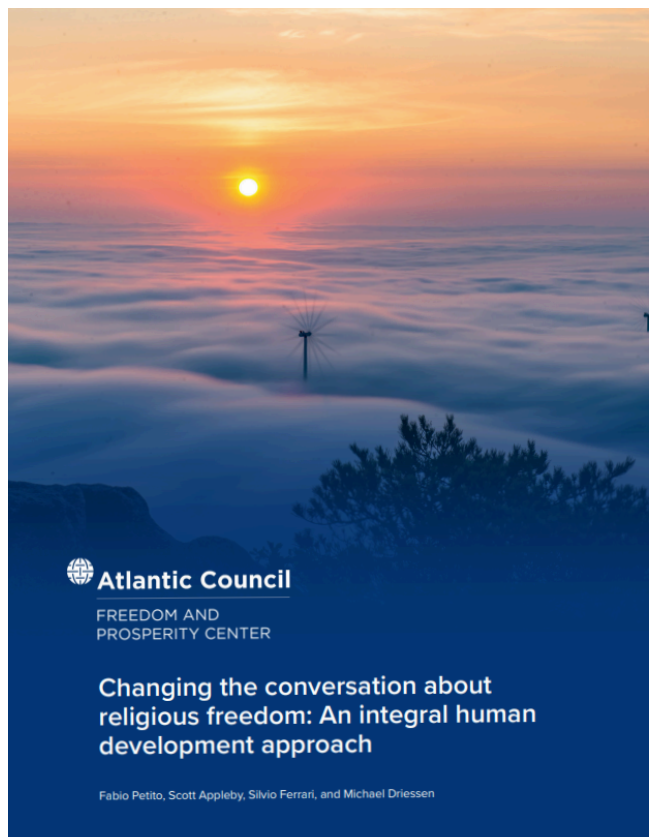
**FREEDOM AND
PROSPERITY CENTER**

CHANGING THE CONVERSATION ABOUT RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: AN INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

Freedom of religion or belief is not a niche issue—it lies at the core of what it means to be human and how societies flourish. In that sense, persecution of religion and religious minorities is an injustice that hampers sustainable development and weakens political stability. Such discrimination not only infringes on the rights of millions to practice their faith but it also imposes severe socio-economic restrictions on religious minorities. It can limit access to healthcare (SDG 3), education (SDG 4), food (SDG 2) as well as clean water and sanitation (SDG 6). When religious minorities are forced into unsafe and low-paid economic sectors, their right to decent work is jeopardized (SDG 8), pushing many into poverty (SDG 1).

Unfortunately, global efforts to protect and advocate for religious freedom remain largely ineffective. In some circles, the campaign for religious freedom is perceived as a partisan political tool, favoring certain groups while sidelining others. It is time to change the conversation.

Integral human development—a holistic model of human flourishing rooted in the inherent dignity of each person and every person—offers a vision that resonates across many of the world’s religious, philosophical, and cultural traditions. It provides strong conceptual foundations for building a global, religiously literate platform to re-engage religious and policy leaders on this critical policy issue.



Seen through the lens of integral human development, religious freedom appears not merely as “freedom from” persecution or discrimination but also as “freedom to” realize the common good of the society by giving voice to all of its members. This framework promotes interreligious and cross-cultural dialogue, placing efforts to combat persecution within a broader, multi-level collaboration between religious and secular actors. To develop effective policies against religious discrimination and persecution, this kind of comprehensive, inclusive approach that can foster true human flourishing is greatly needed.

READ THE REPORT



JUNE 11

CHANGING THE CONVERSATION ABOUT RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: AN INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT APPROACH APPLIED TO INDIA, ITALY, AND NIGERIA

CONFERENCE: UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME ROME

TIME: 9:00 A.M.



Notre Dame Rome is located in Via Ostilia—in the heart of the Eternal City—one block from the Colosseum. The newly renovated, 32,000 square-foot facility serves as a hub supporting the academic, educational, and cultural mission of the University.

8:30 a.m.

REGISTRATION

9:00 a.m.

GREETINGS AND INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Michael Fisch, *Chairman*, Freedom and Prosperity Center Advisory Council, Atlantic Council

Joseph Lemoine, *Senior Director*, Freedom and Prosperity Center, Atlantic Council

9:15 a.m.

OPENING ROUNDTABLE: DISCUSSION OF THE REPORT “CHANGING THE CONVERSATION ABOUT RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: AN INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT APPROACH”

Chair: **Fabio Petito**, *Professor of Religion & International Affairs*, University of Sussex; *Nonresident Senior Fellow*, Atlantic Council

Kishan Manocha, *Head of the Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department*, Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)

Rita Moussallem, *Director*, Centre for Interreligious Dialogue, Focolare Movement

Timothy Shah, *Co-Founder and Director*, Strategic Initiatives, Center for Shared Civilizational Values, University of Dallas



ROME
KEOUGH SCHOOL OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS



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10:00 a.m.

PANEL ONE: RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN ITALY

Chair: **Michael D. Driessen**, *Professor of Political Science and International Affairs, John Cabot University; Director, Rome Summer Seminars on Religion and Global Politics*

Cenap Aydin, *Director, Tevere Institute*

Elena Dini, *Senior Program Manager, the John Paul II Center for Interreligious Dialogue*

Alessandro Ferrari, *Professor of State Laws and Religions, University of Insubria*

Massimo Introvigne, *Co-Founder and Director, Center for Studies on New Religions*

11:15 a.m.

COFFEE BREAK

11:45 a.m.

PANEL TWO: RELIGIOUS FREEDOM & INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

Chair: **Rajeev Bhargava**, *Director, Parekh Institute of Indian Thought, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies*

Vinu Aram, *President, Shanti Ashram; Co-Moderator and Executive Committee Member, Religions for Peace*

Archbishop Felix Machado, *Bishop Emeritus of Vasai, Roman Catholic Diocese of Vasai, India*

Ram Madhav, *President, India Foundation*

Faizan Mustafa, *Vice-Chancellor, Chanakya National Law University*

Rebecca Shah, *Co-Director, Program for Indo-American Understanding and Friendship, University of Dallas*

1:15 p.m.

LUNCH BREAK



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2:15 p.m.

PANEL THREE: RELIGIOUS FREEDOM & INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Chair: **Mohamed Elsanousi**, *Commissioner*, US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF); *Executive Director*, Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers

Bulama Bukarti, *Vice President of Programs and Disarmament*, Demobilization & Reintegration, Bridgeway Foundation

Shaykh Nuruddeen Lemu, *Director of Research & Training*, Da'wah Institute of Nigeria, Islamic Education Trust

Emmanuel Ojeifo, *Priest of the Archdiocese of Abuja*, Doctoral student affiliate, University of Notre Dame

Sr. Anthonia Bolanle Ojo, *Vicar General of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Michael the Archangel*, Good Shepherd Major Seminary, Kaduna, Nigeria

3:30 p.m.

CONCLUDING ROUNDTABLE: LESSONS LEARNED FROM CASE-STUDIES

Chair: **Scott Appleby**, *Keough-Hesburgh Professor of Global Affairs; Founding Dean*, Keough School of Global Affairs, University of Notre Dame

Sir Malcolm Evans, *Principal*, Regent's Park College, University of Oxford

Adam Seligman, *Professor of Religion*, Boston University; *Founding Director*, Communities Engaging with Difference and Religion (CEDAR)

Kristina Stoeckl, *Professor of Sociology*, Luiss Guido Carli University

4:15 p.m.

END OF EVENT



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JUNE 11

THE SOCIETAL VALUE OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: AN INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

PUBLIC ROUND TABLE AND DINNER: THE S.M. ORDER OF MALTA, MAGISTRAL VILLA

TIME: 6:00 P.M.



The Magistral Villa has been in the possession of the Order of Malta since the 14th century and, together with the Magistral Palace, is one of its two institutional seats. The Villa has been host to some of the most significant events in the Order's institutional life in recent times: the elections of the last six Grand Masters were held in its splendid Chapter Room and the Feast of St John the Baptist – the Order's patron – has been celebrated annually in the gardens on 24th June for centuries.

The new Atlantic Council Report entitled *Changing the conversation about religious freedom: An integral human development approach*, argues that integral human development—a holistic model of human flourishing rooted in the inherent dignity of each and every person—offers a vision that highlights the importance of driving sustainable development by promoting religious freedom and encouraging interreligious collaboration.

The roundtable seeks to discuss this broader societal value of religious freedom and the hypothesis that, a robust regime of religious freedom helps us understand that while economic viability is a requirement to make life livable, authentic flourishing and development for the peoples of the world is not merely material in nature. In other words, “How can we talk of ‘leaving no one behind’—the central promise of Agenda 2030 of the United Nations—if we neglect all those who are marginalized, discriminated against, and persecuted owing to their very beliefs?” And how can we invest in holistic models of human development without taking account of the human person's religious and spiritual needs?



SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER ORDER
OF ST JOHN OF JERUSALEM OF RHODES AND OF MALTA



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THE SOCIETAL VALUE OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: AN INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

5:00 p.m.

COFFEE BREAK

6:00 p.m.

OPENING REMARKS

HE Count Riccardo Paternò di Montecupo, *Grand Chancellor*, Sovereign Military Order of Malta

Joseph Lemoine, *Senior Director*, Freedom and Prosperity Center, Atlantic Council

ROUNDTABLE

Chair: **Fabio Petito**, *Professor of Religion and International Affairs*, University of Sussex; *Nonresident Senior Fellow*, Atlantic Council

Sir Malcolm Evans, *Principal*, Regent's Park College, University of Oxford
Mohamed Elsanousi, *Commissioner*, United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF); *Executive Director*, Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers

Rita Moussallem, *Director*, Centre for Interreligious Dialogue, Focolare Movement

Msgr. Daniel Pacho, *Undersecretary for the Multilateral Sector of the Secretariat of State*, Holy See

Adam Seligman, *Professor of Religion*, Boston University; *Founding Director*, Communities Engaging with Difference and Religion (CEDAR)

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Scott Appleby, *Keough-Hesburgh Professor of Global Affairs*; *Founding Dean*, Keough School of Global Affairs, University of Notre Dame

8:00 p.m.

SEATED DINNER



SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER ORDER
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Nonresident Senior Fellow, Freedom and Prosperity Center, Atlantic Council; Professor of Religion and International Affairs, University of Sussex



SPEAKERS



VINU ARAM

President, Shanti Ashram; Co-Moderator and Executive Committee Member, Religions for Peace



CENAP AYDIN

Director, Tevere Institute



RAJEEV BHARGAVA

Director, Parekh Institute of Indian Thought, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies



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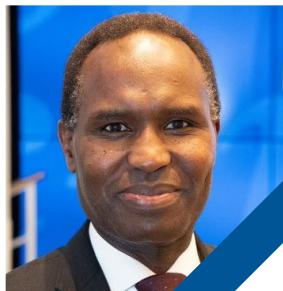
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Bishop Emeritus of Vasai, Roman Catholic Diocese of Vasai, India



RAM MADHAV

President, India Foundation



SPEAKERS



KISHAN MANOCHA

Head of the Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department, Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)



RITA MOUSSALLEM

Director, Centre for Interreligious Dialogue, Focolare Movement



FAIZAN MUSTAFA

Vice-Chancellor, Chanakya National Law University



**SHAYKH
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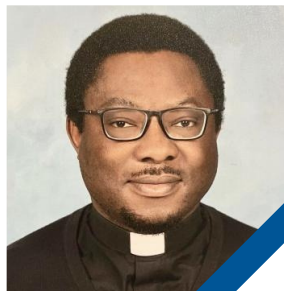
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Undersecretary for the Multilateral Sector of the Secretariat of State, Holy See



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RICCARDO PATERNÒ
DI MONTECUPO**

Grand Chancellor, Sovereign Military Order of Malta



EMMANUEL OJEIFO

Priest of the Archdiocese of Abuja, Doctoral student affiliate, University of Notre Dame



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Vicar General of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Michael the Archangel, Good Shepherd Major Seminary, Kaduna, Nigeria



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