

**if God
didn't
invent
human
rights**

why should religious
people support them?

***On International
Day of Religious
Freedom***

27/10/21

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***Conversations
Across Beliefs***

Throughout most of human history the idea that all humans were “endowed with inalienable rights” seemed in no way self-evident. Nor had any god decreed human rights in the form we think of them today. Over the last three generations, however, the idea of human rights has not only gained wide support but come to form

something of an ideological basis for the global community as well as many democratic countries.

Whereas some religious groups flag wholehearted support for human rights, others are hesitant. Isn't human rights becoming a secular religion, they ask, placing individuals' whims and desires at the centre of our reflections about what a good life is, a place that god or religious or philosophical values should occupy?

As a brief starting point (case study) the conversation will begin with the Russian Orthodox Church's official teaching on human rights 'that God must stand above any secular ideology' and will explore the tensions between their religious thinking and secular ideologies. They are, of course, not alone in claiming that God must stand above any secular ideology. However, human rights have served humanity so well, and religious freedom is so good for religious people, that it is critical to find a way to explore this important topic openly.

The conversation will explore possible strategies that both the religious and secular could follow to give human rights their necessary place in our shared global community without absolutising them to the detriment of religious thinking.

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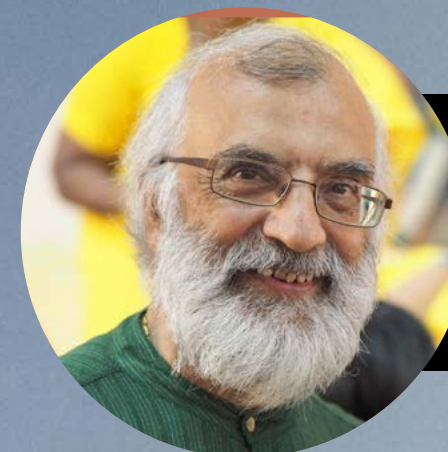
Prof. Vebjørn L. Horsfjord

Professor of religious studies at Inland Norway University formerly the General Secretary of the European Council of Religious Leaders (Religions for Peace)



Dr. Husna Ahamad OBE

CEO of Global One and sits on the international advisory board of the Commonwealth Initiative for Freedom of Religion and Belief (CiFORB).



Dr. Ramesh Pattni

DPhil (Oxford) OBE is a psychologist and a Hindu theologian whose research is in the intersection of traditions.



Mr. Andrew Copsen

Chief Executive of Humanist UK, and President of Humanists International. Author, speaker and spokesperson for Humanists worldwide.



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