

International Interreligious Conference on Freedom of Religion and Rights of Religious Minorities in Asia

16-20 September 2025 | Jakarta, Indonesia

Communiqué

More than eighty participants of the International Interreligious Conference on Freedom of Religion and Rights of Religious Minorities in Asia, organised by the Christian Conference of Asia and the Communion of Churches in Indonesia, in collaboration with partner organisations, gathered from 16 to 20 September 2025 in Jakarta, Indonesia. The participants, representing different religions and beliefs included representatives of churches, religious communities, government bodies, civil society, and non-governmental organisations across Asia.

Guided by our understanding on our religions and beliefs, we, the participants belonging to Buddhist, Christian, Confucian, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Taoist, and Indigenous religions in Asia, reaffirm our commitment to the universality of human rights and to the right to freedom of religion for all people, especially in accordance with Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We consider that our meeting together in Jakarta, Indonesia will strengthen more interreligious cohesion on human dignity, rights of religious minorities, freedom of religion, justice, and peace.

Current Situation in Asia

The positive developments we observe from different Asian contexts include:

- Governments and communities, in general, profess, protect, and practice religious freedom and mutual respect.
- Freedom of religion is affirmed in countries' constitutions and foundation documents.
- Religious communities share a commitment to the well-being of people and the betterment of society.
- There is a recognition that all religions share a desire to care for people, both their adherents and others.

However, the negative developments that are evident in different situations include:

- Despite protection under the rule of law, there are consistent and flagrant patterns of violation of freedom of religion and the human rights of religious minorities in various parts of Asia.
- Religious intolerance, and the misuse of blasphemy law, is on the rise.
- Religion is increasingly politicised and weaponised, and adherents are subject to the actions and control exercised by state agents.
- Increasing violent extremism is a menace to peace and security for all. It undermines the human dignity of religious minorities across Asia.
- In several countries in Asia, religious nationalism is on the rise.

- Both blasphemy and anti-conversion laws intensify discrimination against, and the persecution of, religious minorities.
- In many instances, there is impunity in the perpetration of violations of the right to freedom of religion.
- Women and youth are underrepresented and lack meaningful participation in interreligious collaboration.

The wide range of challenges we have to face in Asia include:

- The contravention of the right to the freedom of religion weakens social cohesion, development, and peace.
- Religion is being misused to advance gender inequality, sectarianism, political agendas, hatred, and violent extremism.
- Religious minorities lack sufficient protection under domestic law so that they can thrive.
- Education curriculum in some countries assists in the growth and spread of fear, prejudice, and hatred of minority religions and communities.
- Peaceful coexistence among people of different religions and beliefs is undermined due to the lack of interreligious understanding and collaboration.

As we firmly believe that we must work together on Four Fronts – Natural Law, Dialogue, Protest Action, and Legislative and Judiciary Deliberation – we strongly affirm that:

- All people share the same human rights, and we recognise that we were all naturally born naked and equal.
- Religious minorities need open and safe opportunities to engage in dialogue with other religious communities and have the right to religious freedom.
- When security forces violate human rights and restrict religious practice, people protest and seek justice and respect for their rights.
- When governments deliberate and dialogue occurs, legislation is prepared that promotes and protects the right to freedom of religion and the rights of religious minorities.
- We believe that the independence of the judiciary in its ongoing work is vitally important.

Moving Forward

We appeal to Governments

- To make real the relevance of Article 18, common to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, that affirms people's freedom of religion, including their freedom to commit to a religion, to change their religion or to not have a religious identity.
- To repeal discriminatory laws and not impose restrictions on the freedom of people to practice and live out their religion and belief.
- To guarantee the accountability of law enforcement agencies for their treatment and protection of religious minorities groups including through improved legal protection mechanisms.
- To ensure that blasphemy laws do not limit religious freedom.

- To advance civic and interreligious education to overcome prejudice and discrimination and for governments to create platforms for ongoing interreligious dialogue.
- To train the police and security forces in interreligious awareness and understanding so that all people are treated with respect.

We urge Religious Leaders and Religious Entities

- To strengthen interreligious collaboration and create opportunities for shared contact and relationships with people of other religions and beliefs.
- To affirm that people have full religious freedom.
- To ensure that conversion practices respect the rights of people to make religious and belief decisions for themselves.
- To denounce hate speech and religion-based discrimination.
- To advocate for the human rights of ethnic minority groups including the protection of their freedom to worship.

We request the Civil Society

- To resist the politicisation of religion.
- To allow the practice of religion and permit the construction of places of worship and other facilities.
- To initiate interreligious grassroots collaboration and affirm and share the results of the collaboration.
- To monitor and address violations of religious freedom and to address the root causes of the violations.
- To hold accountable those who violate the religious freedom of others.
- To support survivors of violations of religious freedom including their freedom to practice their religion and belief.
- To celebrate religious, linguistic, and cultural diversity to build bridges and not barriers.
- To reject intolerance and discrimination in all its forms.
- To promote pluralism and grow in respect for the understanding of other religions.
- To ensure that media in all its forms, electronic, published, and social, contribute to the building of interreligious dialogue, understanding and respect.
- Strengthen bodies already involved in interreligious work and activities.

We appeal to Scholar-Practitioners

- To conduct collaborative research on important current religious matters and provide guidance to Civil Society bodies and State Actors so that their understanding can grow.
- Through research to challenge the misuse of religious concepts, and the growth of intolerance and discriminatory practices.
- To actively promote interreligious understanding and awareness, and modify academic curriculum to create tools, resources, and actions to promote interreligious understanding.
- To provide training for community leaders so that the marginalised experience freedom and respect.

We call on ecumenical bodies and interreligious entities to

- Establish and adopt an Asian Interreligious Agenda on the Freedom of Religious and Minority Rights.
- Establish an Asian Interreligious Observatory to monitor the promotion, respect, and violations of religious freedom and the rights of minorities, and publish the results in an annual report, including monitoring of the effectiveness of interreligious education.
- Ensure the active involvement of women and youth in interreligious networks.
- Develop actionable recommendations to support the protection and preservation of the rights of religious minorities.

As we believe that freedom of religion provides protection to individuals, groups, and communities, not religions alone, we urge the adherents of all religions to uphold diversity as one basis of peace in Asia and in the world in general.

We pledge collaborative efforts across diverse religions, countries, and segments of society to defend, advocate for, and protect religious freedom for all.