

ENGLISH only

Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting  
Freedom of Religion or Belief: Issues, Opportunities and the Specific Challenges of  
Combating Anti-Semitism and Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians,  
Muslims and Members of Other Religions

Closing Session

As delivered by

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OSCE

Mr. Moderator,

We thank the OSCE Austrian Chairmanship and the ODIHR for successful conduct of the first Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on topic of freedom of religion or belief.

Our thanks go to distinguished speakers for shaping the conceptual framework of our discussions.

We were pleased to note that vast majority of participants underlined the inalienable nature of the freedom of religion. Freedom of religion is not a negotiable right and interfaith dialogue, tolerance and non-discrimination should not be considered as safe heaven and a field for window dressing exercises for those countries with dire record of violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Another important conclusion was that there can be no security without respect of inalienable human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of religion or belief.

The Delegation of Armenia stressed inadmissibility of violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of religion or belief under the pretext of countering terrorism. The necessity of compliance of the OSCE participating States to their commitments on return of religious property was underlined.

We drew the attention of participants to the gross violation of human rights of religious groups in the Middle East. Since recent years we witness mass atrocities of Christian and Yazidi communities in Syria in Iraq *in the name of religion*. Last year in Hamburg the OSCE participating States condemned numerous atrocities and persecutions of individuals and communities on the basis of religion or belief, by terrorist organizations, such as ISIL, ANF/Jabhat Fatah al-Sham and Al Qaeda. The genocidal nature of these atrocities was recognized by the UN, the European Parliament, the US Congress and other members of international community.

Thank you.