



Focus on Religious Freedom

"Man has the right to act in conscience and in freedom so as personally to make moral decisions. He must not be forced to act contrary to his conscience. Nor must he be prevented from acting according to his conscience, especially in religious matters."

Catechism of the Catholic Church #1782

World Health Organization Recommends End to Conscience Rights

In a direct threat to conscience rights and religious freedom to all countries, the World Health Organization (WHO) released a document in March 2022 that stated, "If it proves impossible to regulate conscience objection in a way that respects, protects and fulfills, abortion seekers' rights, conscientious objection in abortion provision may become indefensible." Alyssa Koren, director of United Nations advocacy at Alliance Defending Freedom International said, "Put bluntly, the WHO is looking to leverage its enormous influence and budgetary power to chip away at international provisions and eventually work to establish a new legal regime ... with no right to conscientious objection." ⁽¹⁾

Koren explained, "International human rights law recognizes the unborn child as a rights-holding person, ... (therefore) no right to abortion exists." ⁽²⁾ In addition, the WHO acknowledges that 75% of countries have legal penalties for abortion. "... it is imperative that we consistently assert that international law is pro-life," said Koren. "Authentic respect for human rights requires safeguarding the right to life of the unborn, in addition to ensuring that mothers and their families have the resources and support necessary to welcome new life." ⁽³⁾

Freedom of conscience and religion are assured by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international declarations. However, "the fact that the World Health Organization would promote a frontal assault on such a fundamental right as freedom of conscience shows how irresponsible it has become," wrote the Catholic League. ⁽⁴⁾

(catholicworldreport.com, 3/21/22(1)(2)(3); catholicleague.org, 3/28/22(4))

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