

The Defamation of Religions Resolution may be no more!

We are delighted to tell you that there has been a significant move away from the Defamation of Religions concept at the United Nations Human Rights Council.

A few days ago a new resolution was tabled by Pakistan on behalf of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (the OIC) and adopted by the Human Rights Council* in Geneva. It reaffirms the right to freedom of religion or belief, including the right to change religion and the right to freedom of expression. The new wording was the result of the leadership of Pakistan and the USA in drafting the resolution, and follows the shock of the murder of Pakistan's Minorities Minister, Shahbaz Bhatti.

Last year over 428,000 people worldwide signed Open Doors' *Right to Believe* global petition, saying YES to religious liberty and NO to the UN's Defamation of Religions Resolution – a resolution that undermined individual rights to freedom of religion and expression and provided international legitimacy for national laws that punish blasphemy or otherwise ban criticism of a religion.

The awareness that you helped to raise through this global petition added weight to our private lobbying efforts and those of other agencies. The result? A further loss of support for the resolution at the UN General Assembly last December... and now Pakistan have tabled a significantly different resolution!

The new resolution 'Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence, and violence against persons based on religion or belief' appears to be an exceptionally positive move and meets most demands of the *Right to Believe* campaign.

The resolution no longer contains the terms 'defamation' or 'vilification' nor singles out specific religions. Instead it reinforces member states' existing international human rights obligations, including the right to freedom of religion.

[Read more here >>](#)

Open Doors will continue to follow developments and work to ensure this progress is maintained into the autumn when the UN General Assembly meets again.

Your campaigning has helped make a difference – thank you.

Alice J
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