DIGITAL PERSECUTION

An international interdisciplinary academic conference organised by Open Doors, in partnership with the University of Birmingham and the University of Roehampton

25 March 2022 | 10-11 Carlton House Terrace, London, UK

Call for Papers

Context: the changing technoscape of religion or belief discrimination

Global threats to Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) are not new. However, as cyber capabilities, information diplomacy, at-scale data management and a convergence of wider technological capacities accelerate, new patterns of risk are emerging for religious minorities. These powerful, technology shaped dimensions of human rights are characterised by:

- Censorship

- Disinformation

- Surveillance.

As this new technoscape of coercion, control and nascent resistance grows, it adds to the complexity of analysis and response required of diplomacy, governments, nation-states, international law, civil society, private sector and other social actors. Religious leaders and marginalised belief communities, themselves under threat in many local contexts, stand perplexed by the scale and pace of the technological challenges which increasingly render old modes of human rights advocacy as irrelevant and in need of renewal.

Call for Papers and expressions of interest: A multi-disciplinary opportunity

Papers are invited from researchers in diverse sectors and disciplines which are intended to assist with the task of:

- Better understanding of the extent and methods harnessed to advance one or more of censorship, disinformation and surveillance to reduce Freedom of Religion or Belief. This includes lessons to be learnt from other dimensions of digital persecution and discrimination.

- Critically analysing the regimes of governance (broadly defined) that guide and shape the invention, authorisation, and promotion of technologies deliberately or accidentally applied to reduce Freedom of Religion or Belief.

- Increasing the cases studies available from which to learn about trends and trajectories regarding abuse perpetration, risk reduction and international action in this new technoscape of persecution

- Recording, designing or developing frontline, legal, policy, advocacy, diplomatic, religious, business and global responses to identify, manage and reduce digital persecution and discrimination risks and human rights abuses.

Although an academic conference, this gathering will be applied in its attempt to analyse and generate responses and so is of interest to those in technology companies, government departments, civil society, military services, human rights, cyber diplomacy and investors. Parliamentary and congressional contributions are already confirmed.

Abstracts and timing

- Abstracts of 500 to 1000 words are invited by **10 January 2022**

- Decision by **14 January 2022**

- Accepted papers of 5000 to 6500 words should be in presentable form by **14 March 2022.**

It is expected that papers will form the basis of panel contributions and be collated as: as an edited academic volume and a policy briefing to parliamentarians, government ministers/officials, diplomats and NGOs attending the 2022 International Ministerial to Advance Freedom of Religion or Belief in the UK (London, 5-6 July).

If you wish to discuss your abstract with the organisers before submitting this is entirely acceptable. Submissions and queries can be sent to Professor Francis Davis FRAI f.davis@bham.ac.uk

To register your interest in attending please click here.