



SEAFORB

SEAFORB Webinar 3:

What do women's rights have to do with Freedom of Religion or Belief? Stories from women of faith in Southeast-Asia.

Date: November 25th, 2021

Time: 08.00-10.00 GMT/15.00-17.00 Bangkok (GMT +7). Find your time zone [HERE](#)

Registration: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEIc--trDguEtXm3D7jw33S9rCg0KZBbsXo>

When talking about freedom of religion or belief (FORB) violations, women's experiences are often overlooked. Men often occupy leadership positions in religious communities and therefore are more exposed to FoRB violations that are public and visible, such as harassment, physical attacks, or incarceration. Discrimination against women, on the other hand, are more subtle and often less visible. FoRB challenges faced by women are related to different aspects of private life, such as dress code, family life (marriage, divorce, custody rights), access to worship places, and right to practice their faith freely. Often women are subjected to double discrimination and suffer because of their gender *and* religious identity.

FORB violations against women occur worldwide, within all religions and belief communities. Some would argue that restrictions of women's rights in general and religious praxis in particular, are part of their religious teachings and therefore are protected by the right to freedom of religion or belief. Others think that women's freedom and equality can only be achieved if they leave their religious communities and faith behind. Is it then possible to champion FORB and women's rights at the same time? Why should we include a gender perspective when addressing FORB issues? How would synergies between FoRB and women's rights look like?

In this webinar we will give a short introduction to the intersection of FoRB and women's rights. We will also hear stories from women of faith from Thailand, Myanmar and Malaysia, sharing their experiences of being targeted, discriminated or excluded because of their religious identity and of their gender. After each presentation there will be time for group reflections.

Speakers



Vija Herefoss is a mission adviser at Stefanus Alliance International (SAI) where she has worked for the last six years. Vija co-authored the booklet “FORB for Everyone: Women in focus” and has a background in Christian theology.



Venerable Dhammada Bhikkuni is the first fully ordained Theravadin nun in Thailand. As a lay person and a monastic, she has worked tirelessly for more than forty years to establish the Theravada bhikkhuni lineage in Thailand so that women may become fully ordained. Formerly known as Dr. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh, she was a professor of Buddhist studies at Thammasat University for three decades.



Rozana Isa is Executive Director of Sisters in Islam. Rozana has been in the women’s rights movement for two decades. She believes that knowledge, engagement and community building are part of the key ingredients to address ethno-religious extremisms and to raise consciousness on gender equality.



Nang Moet Moet is the Joint General secretary of Women’s League of Burma.

This event is organized by



The Southeast-Asia Freedom of Religion or Belief (SEAFORB) Network is a coalition of organizations working to protect and promote the Human Right of Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) in Southeast-Asia. Members come from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds, nevertheless they stand together in unity to promote FORB for all.