Declaration on Human Dignity for everyone everywhere
Reaffirming the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights

IN COMMEMORATION OF the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the J. Reuben Clark Law School’s International Center for Law and Religion Studies (ICLRS), joined by an international organizing committee and under the auspices of the European Academy of Religion, convened a conference in Punta del Este, Uruguay, during the first week of December 2018. The Punta del Este Conference was the culmination of a series of conferences co-organized by the ICLRS over the course of 2018 that explored the notion of human dignity, its relation to freedom of religion or belief, and the important role it has played in forming, guiding, and sustaining consensus on core human rights values despite tensions in a highly pluralized world.
Discussing the Declaration, Brett G. Scharffs, Professor of Law and Director of the ICLRS, observed, “We live in a world where human rights are too politicized and not widely enough viewed as being truly universal. The Declaration aims to address this issue by emphasizing the many ways that human dignity is a useful concept.” Professor Scharffs added, “The Declaration identifies numerous ways that the concept of dignity is powerful, such as in defining and specifying human rights, emphasizing both rights and duties, advancing human rights education, and seeking common ground in resolving competing human rights claims and as a guiding principle in legislation and adjudication.”

Ján Figeľ, Special Envoy for the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the European Union and a driving force behind the initiative, stated, “Despite the achievements of the landmark document that the UDHR is, it is clear that we need a positive change to the human rights climate. The Declaration is an active step to trigger this transformation.” —JÁN FIGEĽ

Conference delegates plan to introduce the Declaration to a wide range of government, parliament, civil society, religious, and academic groups with the aim of achieving a broad consensus about the centrality of human dignity. Over the next year, conference participants will engage in several initiatives at global, regional, and national levels to present and discuss the Declaration and re-energize the commitment to human rights by way of reinforcing inherent and inalienable human dignity for everyone everywhere.

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION of Human Rights (UDHR)—adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948—begins by recognizing “the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.” In keeping with this acknowledgment, a group of prominent experts and government leaders specializing in human rights and constitutional law built upon preparatory drafts to revise, refine, and issue the Punta del Este Declaration on Human Dignity for Everyone Everywhere. Opened for signature at the conclusion of the conference, the Declaration was initially signed by 68 original signatories from 35 countries.
THE DECLARATION IS the culmination of several preliminary events on human dignity held over the course of 2018, including at Central European University in Budapest, at Oxford University, and at the 25th Annual International Law and Religion Symposium at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah.

Europe Regional Conference
“Human Dignity for Everyone Everywhere: From Tensions and Conflict to Reconciliation”

Central European University
Budapest, Hungary
June 1-2, 2018
Europe Regional Conference
“Human Dignity for Everyone
Everywhere: Founding Figures,
Foundations, and the Uses of
Human Dignity”
Christ Church College, Oxford
United Kingdom
August 3–4, 2018

25th Annual International Law
and Religion Symposium
“Protecting Religious Freedom and
Dignity: The Universal Declaration of
Human Rights at 70”
BYU Law School and the
International Center for Law
and Religion Studies
Provo, Utah, United States
October 6–10, 2018
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948

Mrs. Shrimati Lakshmi Menon of India (left) and Dr. Charles Malik of Lebanon (right) address the General Assembly prior to the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; December 9–10, 1948, Paris, France.

Children of United Nations staff members look at the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. All nations in the world have been invited to set aside December 10 of every year as Human Rights Day and, through programs in schools and community centers, to pay homage to the principles of freedom and of the dignity of men; December 1, 1950, United Nations (Lake Success), New York.

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt of the United States (top) holding a Universal Declaration of Human Rights poster in Spanish; November 1, 1949, United Nations (Lake Success), New York.
SEVENTY YEARS AFTER THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

The Punta del Este Declaration on Human Dignity for Everyone Everywhere

December 2018

**PREAMBLE**

**Whereas** seventy years ago in the aftermath of World War II, the nations and peoples of the world came together in solidarity and solemnity and without dissent adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations;

**Whereas** the Preamble of the UDHR declares that “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world”;

**Whereas** Article 1 of the UDHR proclaims that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood”;

**Whereas** the equal human dignity of everyone everywhere is the foundational principle of human rights and reminds us that every person is of value and is worthy of respect;

**Whereas** it is important to remember, reaffirm, and recommit ourselves to these basic principles;

**Recalling** that it was grave violations of human dignity during the wars of the twentieth century that preceded and precipitated the UDHR;

**Recalling** the international consensus that domestic law alone had not been sufficient to safeguard against and avoid the human rights violations of the World Wars;

**Whereas** seventy years ago in the aftermath of World War II, the nations and peoples of the world came together in solidarity and solemnity and without dissent adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations;

**Recalling** that in spite of all of their differences, nations of the world concurred that the dignity of all people is the basic foundation of human rights and of freedom, justice, and peace in the world;

**Recalling** that human dignity is the wellspring of and underpins all the rights and freedoms recognized in the UDHR as fundamental;

**Recalling** that the UDHR has served as the inspiration for an array of international and regional covenants and other instruments, as well as numerous national constitutions, bills and charters of rights, and legislation protecting human rights;

**Recognizing** that human dignity is not a static concept but accommodates respect for diversity and calls for a dynamic approach to its application in the diverse and ever-changing contexts of our pluralistic world;

**Recognizing** that although the notion of dignity has been criticized by some as being too abstract, it actually has been and remains a powerful organizing force that points humanity towards its highest ideals and has proven itself as an influential heuristic in constitutional and human rights discourse;

**Recognizing** that the concept of human dignity emphasizes the uniqueness and irreplaceability of every human being; that it implies a right of each individual to find and define the meanings of his or her own life; that it presupposes respect for pluralism and difference; and that it carries with it the responsibility to honor the dignity of everyone;
Recognizing that severe violations and abuses of human dignity continue to this day, including through wars, armed conflicts, genocides, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the global crises concerning refugees, migrants, asylum seekers, and human trafficking, and that such depredations continue to threaten peace, justice, and the rights of all;

Recognizing that human rights can easily be fragmented, eroded, or neglected and that constant vigilance is necessary for human rights to be implemented, realized, and carried forward in the world;

Recognizing that human dignity for everyone everywhere and at every level is threatened when the needs, interests, and rights of one group or individual are placed ahead of those of other groups and individuals;

Emphasizing that equal human dignity is a status with which all human beings are endowed, but also a value that must be learned, nurtured, and lived;

Emphasizing that violations of human dignity require appropriate redress;

Emphasizing that human dignity is now a time-tested principle that can help find common ground, reconcile competing conceptions of what justice demands, facilitate implementation of human rights, and guide adjudication in case of conflicts, and that can also help us respond to distortions, abuse, and hostility towards human rights;

Believing that human rights discourse might be less divisive than it often is and greater efforts might be made to find common ground;

Believing that human rights must be read and realized together;

Believing that the concept of human dignity can help us understand, protect, and implement human rights globally; and

Hoping that the present century will be more humane, just, and peaceful than the twentieth century;

We, the undersigned, do solemnly reaffirm:

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights continues to be “a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping the Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, local, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance.”
We, the undersigned, do solemnly issue the following Declaration on Human Dignity for Everyone Everywhere:

**Foundation, Objective, and Criterion.**

The inherent human dignity of all people and the importance of respecting, promoting, and protecting human dignity for everyone everywhere is the foundational principle and the key objective or goal of human rights, as well as an invaluable criterion for evaluating laws, policies, and government actions for how well they accord with human rights standards. Protecting, promoting, and guaranteeing respect for the human dignity of everyone is a fundamental obligation of states, governments, and other public bodies, whether local, regional, national, or international. Promoting human dignity is also a responsibility of all sectors of society, and of each of us as human beings. Doing so is the key to protecting the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family, and remains the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world.

**Generating Agreement and Building Common Understanding.**

The inherent dignity of every human being was the key idea that helped generate agreement and a common understanding at the time of the adoption of the UDHR about human rights of all people, in spite of diversity and deep differences, notwithstanding divergent political and legal systems. Human dignity for everyone everywhere is valuable as a point of departure for exploring and understanding the meaning of human rights, as a basis for finding common ground regarding human rights and consensus about their content and meaning. It provides an approach to building bridges between various normative justifications of human rights, including those with religious and secular theoretical groundings. Respecting human dignity for everyone everywhere facilitates discussions on different conceptions of shared values. Human dignity is a broad concept that nevertheless invites in-depth reflection within differing traditions and perspectives. Human dignity for all reminds us that human rights are universal, inalienable, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated.

**Defining and Specifying Human Rights.**

Dignity is an essential part of what it means to be human. Respect for human dignity for everyone everywhere helps us define and understand the meaning and scope of all human rights. Focusing concretely and in actual situations on human dignity and its implications for particular human rights claims can help identify the specific content of these rights as well as how we understand human dignity itself.
Duties and Responsibilities.

Human dignity for everyone everywhere emphasizes the concept in the UDHR that rights include accompanying obligations and responsibilities, not just of states but also of all human beings with respect to the rights of others. Dignity is a status shared by every human being, and the emphasis on everyone and everywhere makes it clear that rights are characterized by reciprocity and involve corresponding duties. Everyone should be concerned not only with his or her own dignity and rights but with the dignity and rights of every human being. Nonetheless, human dignity is not diminished on the ground that persons are not fulfilling their responsibilities to the state and others.

Education.

Recognition of human dignity is a vital basis for teaching and education. Human rights education is of importance to promoting respect for the equal dignity of everyone. Such education is essential for sustaining dignity and human rights into the future. Equal access to education is a crucial aspect of respecting human dignity.

Seeking Common Ground.

Focusing on human dignity for everyone everywhere encourages people to search for ways to find common ground regarding competing claims and to move beyond exclusively legal mechanisms for harmonizing, implementing, and mutually vindicating human rights and finding solutions to conflicts.

Implementing and Realizing Human Rights in Legislation.

Recognition of human dignity for everyone everywhere is a foundational principle of law and is central to developing and protecting human rights in law and policy. The richness of the concept of dignity resists exhaustive definition, but it encourages the pursuit of optimum mutual vindication where conflicting rights and values are involved. It is critical for moving beyond thinking exclusively in terms of balancing and tradeoffs of rights and interests.
**Reconciliation and Adjudication.**

Recognition of human dignity for everyone everywhere is an important constitutional and legal principle for reconciling and adjudicating competing human rights claims, as well as claims between human rights and other important national and societal interests. Mutual vindication of rights may be possible in adjudication and may be further facilitated if all involved focus on respecting the human dignity of everyone. When mutual vindication of rights is not possible, dignity for all can help us to delineate the scope of rights, to set the boundaries of permissible restrictions on the exercise of rights and freedoms, and to seek to bring into fair balance competing rights claims. Respect for dignity plays an important role not only in formal adjudication but also in mediation or other forms of alternative dispute resolution.

**Potential Difficulties Involving Competing Human Rights Claims.**

Respecting the human dignity of everyone everywhere supports effective human rights advocacy. Recognizing the universal and reciprocal character of human dignity is a corrective to positions claiming rights for some but not for others. It helps to defuse the hostility that is often associated with human rights controversies and to foster constructive dialogue. It also helps mitigate the distortion, avoidance, and selective recognition of human dignity.

**Most Egregious and Most Feasible.**

Human dignity for everyone everywhere reminds us to work toward the elimination of the most egregious abuses of the human rights of individuals and groups, including genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and other atrocities. It also reminds us to protect those human beings most at-risk of human rights violations. At the same time, it encourages efforts to respond to problems that may be amenable to practical and feasible solutions.
Original Signatories to the Declaration

Rodrigo Vitorino Souza Alves (Brazil), Director, Brazilian Center of Studies in Law and Religion

Kristina Arriga (United States), Vice Chair, United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)

Carmen Asiain Pereira (Uruguay), Alternate Senator, Parliament of Uruguay; Professor of Law and Religion, University of Montevideo

Paul Babie (Australia), Director, Law and Religion Project, Research Unit for the Study of Society, Ethics, and Law, Adelaide

Andrew Bennett (Canada), Program Director, Cardus Law; Former Ambassador for Religious Freedom and Head of the Office of Religious Freedom, Canada

Thomas C. Berg (United States), James L. Oberstar Professor of Law and Public Policy, University of St. Thomas School of Law

Heiner Bielefeldt (Germany), Professor of Human Rights and Human Rights Policy, University of Erlangen; Former UN Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Religion or Belief

Sophie van Bijsterveld (Netherlands), Senator, Dutch Upper House of Parliament; Professor of Religion, Law, and Society, Radboud University

Ana María Celis Brunet (Chile), Associate Professor, Center for Law and Religion, Faculty of Law, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile; President, National Council of the Chilean Church for the Prevention of Sexual Abuse and Accompaniment of Victims

S. David Colton (United States), Chair, International Advisory Council, International Center for Law and Religion Studies

Simona Cruciani (United States), Political Affairs Officer, United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect

Fadi Daou (Lebanon), Chair and CEO, Adyan Foundation, Beirut

Ganoune Diop (Senegal), Secretary General, International Religious Liberty Association

Gary B. Doxey (United States), Associate Director, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Brigham Young University

Thomas David DuBois (China), Visiting Research Fellow, Fudan University Development Institute, Shanghai

W. Cole Durham, Jr. (United States), Founding Director, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Brigham Young University

Boris Falikov (Russia), Associate Professor, Russian State University for the Humanities

Alessandro Ferrari (Italy), Associate Professor, Department of Law, Economy, and Culture, University of Insbruck

Silvio Ferrari (Italy), Emeritus Professor of Canon Law, University of Milan; Founder and Honorary Life President, International Consortium for Law and Religion Studies

Ján Figel (Slovakia), Special Envoy for the Promotion of Freedom of Religion or Belief Outside the European Union

Gabriel González Merlano (Uruguay), Professor and Coordinator of the Humanities, Universidad Católica del Uruguay

T. Jeremy Gunn (Morocco), Professor of Law and Political Science, International University of Rabat

Muhammed Haron (Botswana), Professor, Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Botswana

Charles Haynes (United States), Vice President, Freedom Forum Institute / Religious Freedom Center; Senior Scholar, First Amendment Center

Mark Hill QC (United Kingdom), Professor, Centre for Law and Religion, Cardiff University

Aminah Ahmed Hoti (Pakistan / United Kingdom), Executive Director, Dialogue and Action

Scott E. Isaacson (United States), Senior Fellow and Regional Advisor for Latin America, International Center for Law and Religion Studies

Merilin Kiviorg (Estonia), Senior Research Fellow in Public International Law and Human Rights, University of Tartu Faculty of Law

Douglas Laycock (United States), Robert E. Scott Distinguished Professor of Law and Professor of Religious Studies, University of Virginia

Tore Lindholm (Norway), Emeritus Professor, Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, University of Oslo

Nikos Maghioros (Greece), Assistant Professor of Canon and Ecclesiastical Law, Faculty of Theology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Tahir Mahmood (India), Distinguished Jurist Chair and Professor of Eminence, Faculty of Law, Amity University

Kishan Manocha (Poland), Senior Adviser on Freedom of Religion or Belief, OSCE/ODIHR

Javier Martinez-Torrón (Spain), Director, Department of Law and Religion, Complutense University Madrid School of Law

Nicholas Miller (United States), Director, International Religious Liberty Institute, Andrews University

Dato’ Dr. Mohd Asri Zainul Abidin (Malaysia), Associate Professor, Universiti Sains Malaysia

Juan G. Navarro Floria (Argentina), Professor of Law, Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina

Jaclyn L. Neo (Singapore), Assistant Professor of Law, National University of Singapore Faculty of Law; Deputy Director, Asian Law Institute

Ewelina Ochab (United Kingdom), Author of Never Again: Legal Responses to a Broken Promise in the Middle East

Norberto Padilla (Argentina), President, Latin American Consortium for Religious Liberty

Patrick Parkinson (Australia), Dean of Law, TC Beirne School of Law, University of Queensland

Fabio Petito (United Kingdom / Italy), Senior Lecturer in International Relations, University of Sussex; Scientific Coordinator, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs–ISPI Initiative on Religions and International Relations
Peter Petkoff (United Kingdom), Director, Religion, Law and International Relations Programme, Regent’s Park College, Oxford; Law Lecturer, Brunel Law School

Andrea Piti (Italy), Associate Professor in Comparative Law, University of Padua

Clelia Piperno (Italy), Professor of Comparative Constitutional Law, University of Teramo

Ann Power-Forde (Ireland), Human Rights Jurist

Frank Ravitch (United States), Professor of Law and Walter H. Stowers Chair of Law and Religion, University of Michigan College of Law

Gerhard Robbers (Germany), Emeritus Professor, University of Trier; Former Minister of Justice and Consumer Protection of Rhineland-Palatinate

Neville Rochow SC (Australia), Barrister / Board Member, University of Adelaide Research Unit for Society, Law and Religion

Melissa Rogers (United States), Nonresident Senior Fellow in Governance Studies, Brookings Institution

Hans Ingvar Filip Roth (Sweden), Professor of Human Rights, Stockholm University Institute for Turkish Studies (SUITTS)

Vanja-Ivan Savić (Croatia), Associate Professor, Department for Legal Theory, University of Zagreb, Faculty of Law

Brett G. Scharffs (United States), Director, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Brigham Young University

Chris Seiple (United States), President Emeritus, Institute for Global Engagement

Ahmed Shaheed (Maldives), United Nations Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Religion or Belief

Marek Šmid (Slovakia), Rector, Trnava University; President, Slovak Rectors’ Conference

Dicky Sofjan (Indonesia), Indonesian Consortium for Religious Studies, Graduate School, Universitas Gadjah Mada

Pinghua Sun (China), Professor, China University of Political Science and Law

Katrina Lantos Swett (United States), President, Lantos Foundation for Human Rights & Justice; Former Chair, United States Commission on International Religious Freedom

Nayla Tabbara (Lebanon), Director, Institute of Citizenship and Diversity Management, Adyan Foundation, Beirut

Eiichiro Takahata (Japan), Professor of Law, Nihon University College of Law, Tokyo

Jeroen Temperman (Netherlands), Professor of Public International Law, Erasmus University Rotterdam

Rik Torfs (Belgium), Chair, Faculty of Canon Law, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

Renáta Uitz (Hungary), Chair/Director, Comparative Constitutional Law Program, Department of Legal Studies, Central European University

Marco Ventura (Italy), Professor of Law and Religion, University of Siena; Director, Centre for Religious Studies, Fondazione Bruno Kessler

Juan Martin Vives (Argentina), Director, Center for Studies on Law and Religion, Universidad Adventista del Plata

Dmytro Vovk (Ukraine), Director, Center for Rule of Law and Religion Studies, Yaroslav the Wise National Law University

Robin Fretwell Wilson (United States), Director, Program in Family Law and Policy, University of Illinois
THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Article 1
All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2
No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 3
Everyone has the right to freedom from bodily污辱 or any form of violence, torture, or punishment.

Article 4
Everyone is entitled to the equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 5
Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and independent of frontiers.

Article 6
Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

Article 6
Everyone has the right to freedom from homelessness and the right to an adequate standard of living, including housing, and the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

Article 7
Everyone is entitled to the recognition of his or her identity and national origin.

Article 8
Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent authorities for acts in violation of Article 2 or 5 of this Declaration, and the right to have such acts compensated for, and the right to have an enforceable right to effective remedies.

Article 9
Everyone is entitled to freedom from coerced change of allegiance.

Article 10
Everyone is entitled to the exercise of freedom of religion or belief.

Article 11
Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to manifest his or her religion or belief, either alone or in community with others, and in public or private.

Article 12
Everyone has the right to a公正的 and equitable hearing in any procedure affecting him.

Article 13
Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 14
Everyone is entitled to equal protection against discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 15
Everyone has the right to a fair and public hearing in any proceeding affecting him.

Article 16
Everyone has the right to marry and to found a family, and to equest the free development of their personality.

Article 17
No one shall be convicted of any crime except by the law in force at the time of its commission.

Article 18
No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 19
Everyone is entitled to the exercise of freedom of opinion and expression.

Article 20
Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

Article 21
Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Article 22
Everyone has the right to freedom of education.

Article 23
Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in his or her country the benefits of medical care and assistance in case of sickness or injury.

Article 24
Everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family and to improve his situation, including security in the enjoyment of his property and protection against undue interference with his property.

Article 25
Everyone has the right to a fair and public hearing in any proceeding affecting him.

Article 26
Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to manifest his or her religion or belief, either alone or in community with others, and in public or private.

Article 27
Everyone has the right to freedom from coerced change of allegiance.

Article 28
Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

Article 29
Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to manifest his or her religion or belief, either alone or in community with others, and in public or private.

Article 30
Everyone is entitled to the protection of the law against inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 31
Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

Article 32
Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

Article 33
Everyone has the right to freedom from coercion and from any form of violence, whether physical or moral, which interferes with his or her freedom or ability to act.

Article 34
Everyone has the right to freedom from coerced change of allegiance.

Article 35
Everyone has the right to freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 36
Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Article 37
Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

Article 38
Everyone has the right to freedom from coercion and from any form of violence, whether physical or moral, which interferes with his or her freedom or ability to act.