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THE RIGHT TO RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND ITS DEFENSE AS A PRINCIPLE OF MODERN GLOBAL POLICY

Andrii Marchenko

*Bohdan Khmelnytsky National University of Cherkasy,
Department of Philosophy, Social and Political Sciences
Shevchenko Boulevard, 81, 18031, Cherkasy, Ukraine*

The article substantiates the position on the universal nature of religious freedom, based on relevant international documents and agreements, and emphasizes the importance of considering the freedom of religion or belief as a fundamental human right in a close relationship with other freedoms and individual rights in the policy implemented by international institutions and particular countries. The opinion is advocated that freedom of religion or belief helps to protect and ensure the right to worldview self-determination of an individual, promoting the realization of the possibility of expressing different views in private and public spaces. It is emphasized that religious freedom is positively and significantly correlated with democracy, guarantees respect for worldview and value diversity, promotes the rule of law, development, peace and stability, while restrictions on religious freedom are closely linked to political instability and can cause intolerance, conflict and violence. The author have analyzed motives and actual practices in activities of state institutions for restricting religious freedom, as well as mechanisms developed by international institutions and individual states for monitoring countries regarding the level of their provision of freedom of religion or belief, evaluating their actions and encouraging or punishing the implemented policies in this area. It is noted that in the modern world, the issues of religious freedom cease to be issues related only to the religious sphere, but acquire a bright political overtone, and not only relations between religious communities or between the state and religious organizations depend on their solution, but also the balance of forces in the political arena, both at the level of individual states and at the international, global level.

Key words: religious freedom, freedom of religion or belief, restrictions on religious freedom, human rights, state, power, global policy.

Introduction. The global growth of religious restrictions and hostility on religious grounds poses a significant in recent decades, but sometimes underestimated, threat to human rights, international peace, and security. As Jason Klocek and Scott Bledsoe note, more than three-quarters of the world's population now live under the rule of governments that establish a high or very high level of regulation on issues of religious freedom, conversion to another faith, or the possibility of not practicing a religious faith at all. Persecution and violence against religious minorities, including in Western democracies, have also increased markedly in recent years [15, p. 3].

Research experts, public and political figures, and representatives of religious communities express deep concern about the practice of restricting religious freedom and attacks on it in various countries of the world, which undermines the people's right to defend their own beliefs following their conscience. Persecution of individuals and groups of believers, religious minorities, repression against them on the basis of religion or beliefs often become the causes of intercommunal conflicts, instability, and even open violence [23, p. 3], and this cannot but cause concern. Among such negative practices are the attitude towards Muslims in India, Rohingya in Myanmar, Uyghurs in China, Yazidis in Iraq, Christians in Pakistan and Syria, Copts in Egypt, etc. Actually, exactly calls for the protection of persecuted Christians in Syria and the Middle East

in general have become one of the cornerstones of modern US and European foreign policy. It should also be recognized that some EU countries implement policies and laws that restrict the rights of religious groups or impact them in a discriminatory manner [6; 10; 19; 25].

The purpose of the article is to analyze the essential features of religious freedom as a fundamental human right, its role and place in the modern socio-cultural and political space, motives and reasons for restrictions on religious freedom, and ways to overcome them at the global and local levels.

Religious freedom: essence and role in the modern socio-cultural and political space.

Freedom of religion or belief is a human right, which finds its justification in a number of authoritative international documents, such as the Declaration of Human Rights, then it is duplicated in the relevant conventions and constitutional norms in the countries of the world. So, for example, Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights emphasizes: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion...” [24, p. 38]. The right to choose and practise religion or belief, or not to do so, is an important part of human life and human community, their fundamental right. This right includes the possibility to choose any religion or belief, including atheistic or non-theistic, to belong to religious minorities, ultimately to believe or not to believe [8]. In this context it is important to realize the significance of religious ideas about human dignity and individual free will for substantiating human rights norms, including the right to religious freedom; that the religious traditions and religious ideas can work to achieve consensus on important articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights documents, such as the issues of religious freedom and ways to ensure it. On the other hand, “ensuring human rights such as freedom of religion and expression of views will contribute to the development and growth of existing religious doctrines and practices” [18, p. 108]. Freedom of religion or belief not only helps to ensure one of the basic human needs – the protection of the right to self-determination but also brings benefits to society related to the possibility of expressing different views, affirming world-view pluralism at the social level.

The issue of ensuring religious freedom correlates with the principle of non-discrimination because no unjustified or disproportionately differentiated treatment should be applied based on religion or belief. Everyone has the right “either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance” [24, p. 38]. Accordingly, the right to freedom of religion or belief extends to both individuals and groups of persons. It is important to emphasize that this right extends to believers, not to the religion itself. In this case, it is not about the ‘value’ or significance of one or another religion or beliefs and determining the attitude towards them on this basis, but about guaranteeing the observance of the right to believe or not to believe in a human person or community. In particular, it is important to understand that violence does not arise from the nature of religion as such or its individual varieties, because crimes are not committed by religions, but by human beings [11, p. 41]. Freedom of religion implies tolerance of religious differences. After all, the tolerance of one religion towards others is important for the protection of its own assets and its own deep-rooted religious beliefs from external manipulations or attempts to overcome them, in particular, from other religions that advocate a different and sometimes opposite viewpoint. Accordingly, “Christians should look at the needs of Muslims or Jews with understanding, and kindness should be reciprocated” [22, p. 331]. The modern concept of religious freedom is essentially that tolerance of one’s religion on the part of others is a human right, and also a very important basis for the world’s religious pluralism.

Therefore, freedom of religion or belief includes the right to choose, adhere to and change the chosen religion or belief, which is a fundamental human right and cannot be restricted, as well

as the right to practice one's religion or belief in private or public, alone or together with other people [8], which may be limited, but only if this limitation is provided by law and is necessary for a democratic society to protect public safety, health or morals of the population or to protect the rights and freedoms of others. Necessary in democratic society means that the intervention, as a tool, must correlate with the legitimate aim pursued and must satisfy an urgent social need; i.e. that "there must be a reasonable relationship between the aim of the restriction and the means used to achieve that aim" [7, p. 2]. Article 29(2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights allows for restricting the implementation of religious rights and freedoms, which are defined by law and exclusively "for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society" [24, p. 60].

The principle of respect for each other's right to believe is a key factor in assessing the necessity of any interference with the practice of religion or belief; it provides for the creation by the state of equal conditions both for those who have certain beliefs, religious or non-religious, and for those who do not have them, as well as ensuring the right of each of the parties to freely express their point of view and not to agree with the opponent's position [7, p. 17]. If restrictions on religious freedom are due to the need to protect public morality, they must be based on principles that do not derive exclusively from one source, since the concept of morality usually has its origins in many social, religious and philosophical traditions. There are no exclusive rights for followers of any particular religion or belief. The universality of the right to religious freedom is based on the decisions of international institutions, as well as regional treaties on human rights.

Ensuring freedom of religion or belief presupposes that the state and relevant state institutions are called upon and obliged to protect this right. At the same time, many religious minorities are subjected to harassment, discrimination, violence, and cruel treatment by both state and non-state actors, and in this connection, in recent years, the world has been increasingly focused on issues of religious freedom and the search for ways to ensure its observance basic requirements and principles. The issue of religious freedom has become not only a worldview, but also a powerful political trend, a benchmark for the democratization of a particular state or political system. And countries aspiring to be democratic, or at least appear to be so, regularly emphasize the importance of guaranteeing religious freedom, even when they regularly refuse to provide it in practice.

One cannot help but notice the fact that religious freedom is becoming the place of politics, or what Lori G. Beaman and Winnifred Fallers Sullivan called the 'religious establishment' [5]. Religious freedom becomes the language used to gain international political legitimacy. In recent decades, the right to religious freedom has become, in the words of Lila Abu-Lughod, a 'dialect of universality' [1, p. 87]; religious freedom is actively spread through international institutions and practices. Simultaneously, for example, according to data from the Association of Religious Data Archives on religious restrictions, it was found that 9% of countries failed to provide guarantees of religious freedom, 86% of the world's states had at least one law restricting freedom of religion or belief, and 38% had four or more such laws [9, p. 299]. In this regard, the question arises as to the motives and reasons for supporting or restricting religious freedoms on the part of government institutions.

Motives and practices of restricting religious freedoms in the modern world. The basis of one of the powerful motives for limiting the right to religious freedom should be sought in the plane of relations between the state and state institutions with the leading religion(s). After all, for the sake of achieving and maintaining political stability in society, strengthening support for its actions from the community, the possibility of controlling the religion, the state some-

times enters into an alliance with it. Such alliances may endow state institutions with religious authority, as in Iran. However, even countries with an official atheistic ideology, such as modern China, form peculiar alliances with certain religions, allowing them to more effectively control the activities of favored religions and more strictly regulate those that do not pander to the state. These alliances with religion usually come at a price and consequences, since the government is often expected to promote the chosen religion and to control and limit its religious rivals.

And even when alliances with dominant religions are not formed, the state often resorts to the practice of restricting religious freedom. An example can be communist regimes that rely on atheism as their official ideology and seek to neutralize the importance of religion, eventually eradicating it. And even when the state does not have a competing ideology in the form of one or another religion, at times already teaching itself and formal organization of a religious association can be seen as a political threat or competitor.

A rather powerful motive of the state is to limit the rights of religious minorities due to strong cultural and religious pressure, accusing them of activities that harm society. Even mature democracies (saying nothing about authoritarian regimes) sometimes indulge in accusations against religious associations of using 'brainwashing', and 'consciousness manipulation' to ensure their influence on community members [21], sectarianism, extremism, etc. So, for example, in 2017, the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation recognized the activity of the Jehovah's Witnesses organization as an extremist group and prohibited it. Dozens of Jehovah's Witnesses were detained, and relevant religious literature was banned. Representatives of other religious minorities were also detained by the Russian authorities, in particular, followers of the Muslim theologian Said Nursi, some of whom were brought to justice, and several were convicted on charges of belonging to the Hizb ut-Tahrir party. However, the states often resort to restricting or denying religious freedoms even in the absence of their alliances with dominant religions [9, p. 301], in particular in the case of existing social and cultural pressure against certain religions.

Restrictions on religious freedoms also increase when secular, cultural, social, and religious groups mobilize against religious minorities. For some countries, the dominant religion serves as the basis of cultural unity or national identity; accordingly, granting equal status to religious competitors is seen as a threat to the traditional value system.

In 2020, the Pew Research Center analyzed the relationship between religious restrictions and the type of political regimes. The Center found that this relationship is quite strong between authoritarianism and restrictions on religion by state institutions and more mixed between authoritarianism and such restrictions by non-state actors [17, p. 17]; there is also a close relationship between religious restrictions and violent conflicts [4]. This correlation is the strongest in countries where relations between the state and religion are poor or where the state is aggressive toward religious minorities or dissenters within the religious majority. Systemic violations of freedom of religion or beliefs against certain groups can cause social instability, horizontal inequality, and lead to increased discontent, resulting in violent actions and extremism in its various forms [12, p. 5]. The Pew Research Center highlighted that government restrictions on religion have reached their highest global level in more than a decade and reported government use of force against religious communities in nearly 100 countries. The violators of religious freedom include China, Turkey, Nigeria, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Rwanda, Syria, Uzbekistan and, unfortunately, a large number of other countries [17, p. 28]. In many countries, religious minorities are subject to abuse and discrimination and are deprived of the right to manifest their religion or belief; the state authorities often are the source of systematic discrimination and restrictions. Discrimination can be direct or indirect. The overt, direct discrimination often includes an element of exclusion

from, for example, political or public office, health care, education, etc. Indirect discrimination may take the form of public rules, such as burial rules, which prevent certain categories of believers from fulfilling their religious duties.

Employment and property ownership rules or import rules can also have a discriminatory nature. Other rules may make it impossible for a religious leader to be employed, own a place of worship, or lead to a ban on importing religious literature. In addition to discrimination by the authorities, religious groups may experience abuse and persecution by non-state actors, that is, by individuals or groups. The authorities are obliged to prevent such actions, provide protection and, if necessary, bring the perpetrators to justice. However, in states where the authorities are unwilling to provide protection or the government is weak, religious groups often receive less protection than the state should provide under its international obligations. Such a policy of impunity for violators of religious freedom makes religious minorities quite vulnerable in many countries of the world. Sometimes religious associations, on the one hand, are persecuted in their social environment, and on the other, they suffer from oppression by the authorities [20, p. 11].

Ways and means of counteracting restrictions on religious freedom: global and local dimensions. The scope of violations and restrictions of religious freedom in different countries prompts searching for ways and means to combat these negative phenomena at the local and global levels. In this connection, it should be noted that in the modern world, there are essentially two main centers for promoting and defending the principles of religious freedom at the international level, and at the level of international political practice: The United States and the European Union. In the United States, religious freedom is usually considered the ‘first freedom’, or that without which modern democratic politics and civilization itself are impossible [13, p. 225]. The United States, by and large, was founded on the principle of religious freedom – at the beginning of the country’s history, lawmakers sanctioned the rights of believers, giving and guaranteeing them the opportunity to express their various religious beliefs without interference from authorities. Protecting religious freedom continues to be a priority for most Americans now, the vast majority of them emphasize the need for a ‘strict separation’ between the state and the church and believe that one of the cornerstones of the United States existence is universal religious freedom, which extends to all religious associations and representatives of all religions [16, p. 2].

One can see, especially since the late 1990s, the constant influence of religion on US public policy, when international religious freedom becomes one of the defining foundations of national security and foreign policy of this country. For decades, US policymakers have sought to promote religious freedom abroad, thereby demonstrating both the prioritization of human rights in US foreign policy in general and the emphasis on religious freedom in US domestic law and political culture. An important decision to ensure the continued support of religious freedom as a focus of American foreign policy was the adoption of the International Religious Freedom Act in 1998, which gives the United States government the authority to combat the problem of religious persecution around the world, to defend the freedom and support of the persecuted, and specifies that the US will use all levers of government, including political, diplomatic, commercial, educational, cultural, charitable and other channels, to uphold the priorities of religious freedom and promote respect for them by all peoples and governments [14]. The Act of International Religious Freedom provides a list of the US government’s actions that may be taken in response to violations of religious freedom committed by foreign governments or were tolerated by them. The law gives the executive branch considerable discretion in determining what action to take if violations occur and envisages support for defenders of religious freedom through foreign aid funds.

It should be noted that given the constant challenges to international religious freedom, two leading approaches to this issue prevail in American politics: recognition of the importance

of the state institutions activities with ensuring international religious freedom for the national security and national interests of the US in general; all kinds of promotion of an approach that has a solid value base and considers religious freedom in the context of inherent human dignity, in the context of human rights [23, p. 8]. Two main institutions that deal with issues of religious freedom in the United States are called upon to implement these approaches. The first of them is Office of International Religious Freedom. Its mission is to promote the spread and provision of religious freedom as a fundamental human right and an important basis for stability; support new democracies, human rights non-governmental and religious organizations in ensuring freedom of religion or belief; identify regimes that limit the religious rights of individuals and communities, give a principled assessment of their activities [3, p. 143]. The US Commission on International Religious Freedom is an independent institution that monitors and reports on the laws and policies of foreign governments that justify or carry out particularly serious violations of religious freedom and formulates policy recommendations on that basis. It publishes an annual report focusing on 'Countries of Particular Concern' and 'Special Watch List' countries.

Thus, in March 2025, such Annual Report was published, which presented the results of monitoring the status of affairs with religious freedom in about 200 countries of the world for the previous year. According to the results, 16 countries were classified as countries of particular concern. Among them Afghanistan, China, India, Iran, Nigeria, North Korea, Russia and others [2].

When considering the mechanisms developed by the United States to ensure religious freedom, it should be recognized that despite the ambitious requirements for monitoring and reporting, these mechanisms remain mainly in the hands of politicians and political groups who have the opportunity to choose them [3, p. 143], often care not about the actual punishment of violators of religious freedom, but about the political support of potential political partners. For example, apart from annual reports and sporadic dialogues on the situation of religious minorities, discrimination on religious grounds does not have major consequences for Egypt, Pakistan, and Myanmar. The United States and the EU regularly respond to and condemn cases of violence against religious minorities in these countries in public statements. Beyond that, however, the only additional response is to redistribute aid to different target categories from time to time. In Pakistan, for example, after a mid-term review referred to serious problems for the rights of religious minorities, the EU proposed to direct more funding to governance and human rights. Pakistan has also received extensive trade concessions, despite serious concerns about the country's human rights record, including for religious minorities. However, the EU appears ready to use these concessions to increase pressure on the Pakistani authorities on religious minority issues.

It is important to emphasize that the events of September 11, 2001, in the USA and, as a result, the strengthening of anti-terrorism objectively led to a change in the attitude of state institutions towards certain religious faiths, to new, although not entirely unprecedented, levels of state-sponsored foreign religious intervention. We are talking about a kind of religious interventionism, which should be understood as the government's efforts to support 'moderate' religion and suppress 'intolerant religion'. The United States and most of its allies maintain the position that the flourishing of free and tolerant religion, interfaith dialogue, and the protection of the rights of religious minorities are the main prerequisites for liberating society from violence, economic decline, gender discrimination, and other social problems. From this viewpoint, a correct, moderate religion supported by the state is seen as a means to solve social and political problems, a panacea for failed states. That is, we face a paradox when, on the one hand, freedom of religion or belief is proclaimed, and on the other hand, the state itself (which thinks of itself as a stronghold of democracy) evaluates religions for their moderation, 'correctness', etc. Sometimes governments see it as their task to promote good, right religions and to discipline bad, wrong

religions. Religious and social ways of free existence in the world are being restricted to meet the global demand for tolerant religious nationals who enjoy their 'freedom' under the law.

Elizabeth Shakman Hurd is rather critical in this regard, noting that in the USA there is not religious freedom, but a kind of combination of blatant prejudice against Islam and Christian supremacy. Under these conditions, religious freedom is transformed from a guarantee of ensuring religious and worldview pluralism, the basis of religious security, to a tool for protecting the religious interests of the American majority from perceived threats from religious minorities [13, p. 232]. The reason for building such a model of religious freedom lies, in particular, in strengthening the positions of religious authorities who are in power at the expense of dissenters, those who doubt, and those who are on the margins of the community. This can be a threat to democracy and is one of the paradoxes of religious freedom. Promoting religious freedom can undermine democracy, not because democracy is necessarily secular, but because the hierarchical, institutionalized forms of religion supported in the United States by individual church and state institutions can become a significant obstacle to the flourishing of non-standard, diverse forms of minority religion.

It should be emphasized that the European Union followed the example of the USA in accentuating particularly on religious freedom as a fundamental human right in the EU Council Conclusions on Freedom of Religion or Belief and in the Guidelines approved by the Council. This is about the documents in which the basic rights and freedoms found their justification both within the European Union and in its relations with third countries. Despite the diversity of Member States' approaches to religion, the Guidelines demonstrate a strong commitment to the principle of freedom of religion and belief and were the culmination of a long process in consultations with civil society groups, both religious and non-religious. In particular, they uphold the universal character of religious freedom, and emphasize the importance of considering the freedom of religion or belief in the relationship with other fundamental rights of the individual in the implemented European Union's policy. The Guidelines affirm an individual's right to practice religion or other beliefs, as well as the right not to have religious beliefs, thereby recognizing that "in today's world, freedom from religion may be as important as freedom of religion" [3, p. 140]. The Guidelines also call for the elimination of financial aid and other preferences for countries that violate religious freedom, and on the other hand, encourage religious freedom in foreign policy programs, in particular by adding provisions that guarantee commitment to religious freedom, to bilateral trade agreements.

It should be recognized that despite the desire to influence the situation with religious freedom in various regions of the world, the EU still has the greatest influence on the countries that applied for membership. The enlargement process provides European institutions with unprecedented opportunities to verify compliance with human rights. The European Commission challenges applicant countries to respect freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, as well as other fundamental rights and freedoms and insists that candidates meet the applicable standards. Since all candidate countries essentially emphasize from the outset that they guarantee freedom of religion or belief, checks of observance often focus on more specific issues. These include the property rights of religious organizations, the prosecution of persons who sow the seeds of hatred and hostility towards members of other religious communities, and the elimination of measures that could be the basis for discriminatory treatment, for example, requirements to indicate one's religion on identity cards. As a result, significant progress has been made since the mid-2000s in encouraging candidate states in the Western Balkans to adopt provisions that define a clear format for the separation of church and state, fair registration of religious organizations, and regulation of their activities, as well as perfect laws and legal mechanisms for the protection of religious minorities.

A noteworthy study by Anne Jenichen focuses on the role played by the promotion of religious freedom in the European Union and the United States. She compares how Brussels and Washington respond to the persecution of religious minorities in Egypt, Pakistan, and Myanmar to test the assumption that religion figures more prominently in US foreign policy than in EU foreign policy. The researcher studies differences in individual religiosity, the relationship between religion and the state, and the political significance of religion in Europe and the United States. Empirical research conducted by her and based on the analysis of official documents shows that religious minorities and their rights, as a rule, do not occupy a decisive place in both programs and are subordinated to other political and economic interests. In addition, in her opinion, the EU has been more active in this issue than the United States. This contradictory conclusion suggests that the differences in US and EU foreign policy on religious freedom issues are primarily the result of existing differences in the goals of their 'secular' foreign policy, and not differences in the understanding of the important role of religion in American and European societies. Thus, European politicians, who focus on human rights, pay more attention to the rights of religious minorities and actively respond to their violations, while American politicians consider religious issues through the prism of national security [3, p. 117–118].

So, as you can see, an impressive array of institutions and state authorities across the political spectrum, secular and religious, have taken up the cause of promoting religious freedom. In addition to the US and EU religious freedom institutions mentioned above, some governments and international institutions now have offices which are engaged in the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief. Moreover, in recent years the US Agency for International Development, the UK Department of Foreign Affairs, Commonwealth and Development, and several other development agencies have allocated funds specifically for projects related to freedom of religion or belief. An important role in ensuring and protecting religious freedom is played by non-governmental organizations and initiated by them authoritative forums, in particular, the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance, the International Religious Freedom Roundtable, International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief, the International Contact Group on Freedom of Religion or Belief, etc.

Conclusions. The world community is at the responsible point in standing up for freedom of religion or belief at the global and local levels. Today, the right to religious freedom is being tested, millions of people around the world are being brutally persecuted for seeking the truth according to their conscience or for belonging to a particular religious community. These circumstances require both new commitments and new approaches.

The fundamental right to freedom of religion or belief is enshrined in all basic international human rights instruments. It implies freedom to choose, practice or change one's religion. The free use of this freedom directly contributes to the rule of law, peace, development, and stability, guarantees respect for diversity, while its violations can exacerbate intolerance and are often signs of potential or actual violence and conflict.

There are various reasons and forms of the governments' activity in different world countries to limit the freedom of religion or belief, in particular, it is the restriction of the freedoms of individuals and communities by state institutions to support religions that are in tandem with them; restrictions on the rights of religions that the authorities consider as threatening its stability, challenging the official ideology and harming public order and the welfare of citizens; restriction of religious freedoms due to the need to defend one of the religions, which is considered the spiritual foundation of national unity and identity, from other religions, since guaranteeing equal religious rights and freedoms for all under these circumstances can be considered as a challenge to cultural identity and traditional value system, etc.

In the modern world, the issues of religious freedom cease to be issues of the purely religious sphere of human existence and community, and acquire a powerful political, local and global, dimension. The USA and the EU today, first of all, and in general, are important effective factors influencing the situation with religious freedom or beliefs. Relevant American institutions and those established within the European Union have focused their efforts on ensuring compliance with freedom of religion or belief requirements at the local and global levels.

To improve the performance of international and regional institutions focused on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief, it is necessary to more effectively integrate their policies and programs into broader efforts to promote democracy and human rights. These efforts require dialogue and coordination between advocates of freedom of religion or belief, and representatives of state, community, and religious institutions at the global, national, and local levels. One of the unconditional principles of prevention in the area of freedom of religion or belief is also interreligious dialogue. It is incredibly important that meetings with and between religions create a space for mutual understanding to promote or strengthen the full and sincere acceptance of freedom of religion or belief as defined and guaranteed by international human rights standards. In this way, interreligious dialogue should contribute to the peaceful resolution and prevention of conflicts, violations, and restrictions of religious freedom throughout the world. In the end, it is important to understand that ensuring religious freedom at all levels can become a guarantee and prerequisite for peaceful coexistence and contribute to the prosperity of individuals and communities in relations with the authorities.

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ПРАВО НА РЕЛІГІЙНУ СВОБОДУ ТА ЙОГО ВІДСТОЮВАННЯ ЯК ПРИНЦИП СУЧАСНОЇ ГЛОБАЛЬНОЇ ПОЛІТИКИ

Андрій Марченко

*Черкаський національний університет імені Богдана Хмельницького,
кафедра філософії, соціальних та політичних наук
бульвар Шевченка, 81, 18031, м. Черкаси, Україна*

У статті знаходить своє обґрунтування положення про універсальний характер релігійної свободи, базований на відповідних міжнародних документах і угодах, наголошується на важливості в здійснюваній міжнародними інститутами та окремими країнами політиці розглядати свободу релігії або переконань як фундаментальне право людини у тісному взаємозв'язку з іншими свободами і правами особистості. Відстоюється думка, що свобода релігії або переконань допомагає захистити і забезпечити право на світоглядне самовизначення індивіда, сприяє реалізації можливості вираження різних поглядів у приватному та публічному просторі. Підкреслюється, що релігійна

свобода позитивно й суттєво корелює з демократією, гарантує повагу до світоглядної й ціннісної різноманітності, сприяє верховенству права, розвитку, миру й стабільності, тоді як обмеження релігійної свободи є тісно пов'язаними з політичною нестабільністю, можуть стати причиною нетерпимості, конфліктів та насильства. Здійснено аналіз мотивів і реальних практик діяльності державних інституцій з обмеження релігійної свободи, а також розроблених міжнародними інститутами та окремими державами механізмів для моніторингу країн на предмет рівня забезпечення ними свободи релігії або переконань, оцінки їхніх дій та заохочення чи покарання за здійснювану політику в цій царині. Наголошується на тому, що в сучасному світі релігія активно позиціонує себе в публічній сфері і питання релігійної свободи перестають бути питаннями, що стосуються лише релігійної чи ціннісно-світоглядної сфери, а набувають яскравого політичного забарвлення, і від їх вирішення залежать не лише взаємини між релігійними громадами чи між державою та релігійними організаціями, а й розстановка сил на політичній арені як на рівні окремих держав, так і на міжнародному, глобальному рівні.

Ключові слова: релігійна свобода, свобода релігії або переконань, обмеження релігійної свободи, права людини, держава, влада, глобальна політика.