

IARF Statement of Purpose

Context:

Historically, the International Association for Religious Freedom (I.A.R.F.) was founded in 1900 as an organisation to bring together people “striving to unite Pure Religion and Perfect Liberty”.

Today a wide range of religions and beliefs exist which have a positive and constructive contribution to make to human society. Article 18 of the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights includes the freedom to hold, practise and respectfully bear witness to such religions or beliefs, whether inherited or chosen.

Purpose:

The purpose of IARF is to work for freedom of religion and belief because it is a precious human right that potentially enables the best within our religious lives, or our search for truth or enlightenment, to flourish. It requires:

- *Freedom from oppressive interference or discrimination by the State, Government or society’s institutions on the grounds of religion or belief;*
- *Mutual understanding, respect and the promotion of harmony, or at least “tolerance”, between communities or individuals of different religions or beliefs; and*
- *An essential accountability by religious communities to ensure that their own practices uphold the fundamental dignity and human rights of their members and others.*

Thus IARF works with and for:

- *groups from different religious traditions or beliefs (normally those which share its values), and*
- *communities suffering from religious persecution or discrimination.*

Adopted by the IARF International Council.
Oxford. 24-25th. March 2001