

Working session 10: Freedom of thoughts, conscience, religion or belief October 1, 2012

The Importance of Freedom of Speech and the Application of Article 18 and 19

Freedom of thought, opinion, religion and expression are essential for life and progress, for democracy and accountability.

In its presence diversity and equality flourish. There is no room for domination or tyranny. Without free speech, without critical thinking and without a debate ignorance spreads and corruption prevails. It nourishes narrow-mindedness and petrifies thoughts and suffocate creativity and innovation.

Without free speech our thoughts are suppressed and we cannot express ourselves freely and we are bound by fear.

"Freedom from fear could be said to sum up the whole philosophy of human rights".

Dag Hammarskjold

Even God gave us freedom because He wants us to love Him, because love cannot be forced. God Himself will not accept our believe or love unless it comes from our heart. Freedom of speech, with all the negative criticism against it, does not endanger my life but it is a place of freedom for me to live, think, speak, question and create. A place where we can have a different view and believe and make people accountable to one another without fear or intimidation. Freedom of speech put us all on a platform where we are equal without one superior over the other.

I do not want to be where there is no freedom of speech where I can not speak my mind or question. Where I cannot think different or be different. Where I am criminalized for not conforming to the state quote of thought and punished when my words oppose the existing narrative.

Worldwide we are trying to abolish capital punishment but there are 10 Islamic countries, members of the UN, who have in their legal system death penalty for Blasphemy and Apostasy law in Islam. One of the countries 'joined this club' as late as this year. Around 1.3 Billion Muslims have no freedom to change their believe. It is illegal to leave Islam and practice their new faith. They do not have the right to exist as former Muslims in their home countries. They do not have the right to apply article 18 and 19 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights in their home-countries.

Together we need to stand up for Article 18 and 19 worldwide and give everyone the freedom of thought, conscience and religion as Dr Martin Luther King said, "Justice denied anywhere diminishes justice everywhere".

We need to stand together against any restrictions of freedom of speech. Restriction of freedom of speech is used by dictators and tyrant to take over absolute power.

"If the freedom of speech is taken away then dumb and silenced we might be led to the slaughter", George Washington.

Kamal Fahmi
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Set My People Free