

Home
(<http://www.declarationproject.org/>)

Declaration Project

About
(http://www.declarationproject.org/?page_id=285)

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Declaration Collection
(http://www.declarationproject.org/?page_id=5)



MyDeclaration
(http://www.declarationproject.org/?page_id=146)

Spirit of '76
(http://www.declarationproject.org/?page_id=7)

Declaration Project (<http://www.declarationproject.org/>) > Declaration Collection (<http://www.declarationproject.org/?cat=21>) > 21st century (<http://www.declarationproject.org/?cat=5>) > Faith Leaders' Universal Declaration Against Slavery (2014)

Take Action!
(http://www.declarationproject.org/?page_id=739)

For Educators
(http://www.declarationproject.org/?page_id=1901)

FAQ's
(http://www.declarationproject.org/?page_id=128)

Blog
(http://www.declarationproject.org/?page_id=362)



Editor's Note: This declaration, issued on December 2, 2014, and signed at the Vatican by eleven leaders of many of the world's major religions, aims to put an end to all modern manifestations of slavery, was galvanized by the Global Freedom Network. Pope Francis, in signing the document, noted that, Despite the great efforts of many, modern slavery continues to be an atrocious scourge that is present throughout the world on a broad scale, even as tourism." Pope Francis goes on to say, "This crime of 'lèse-humanity' masquerades behind seemingly acceptable customs, but in reality claims its victims through prostitution, human trafficking, forced labour, slave labour, mutilation, the sale of organs, the consumption of drugs and child labour. It hides behind closed doors, in particular places, in the streets, automobiles, factories, the countryside, in fishing boats and many other places. And this happens both in towns and villages, in the reception centres of the wealthiest nations as well as in those of the poorest. And the worst thing is that this situation, unfortunately, grows more serious every day." Consequently, the pope considers the declaration a "call to action all people of faith, leaders, governments, businesses, all men and women of good will, to give their strong support and join in the action against modern slavery in all its forms. Sustained by the ideals of our confessions of faith and by our shared human values, we all can and must raise the standard of spiritual values, common effort and the vision of freedom to eradicate slavery from our planet." For the story of how this declaration came to be signed by many of the world's global faith leaders, go to this article. (<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/02/religious-leaders-pope-vatican-slavery-declaration>)

Universal Declaration Against Slavery

We, the undersigned, are gathered here today for a historic initiative to inspire spiritual and practical action by all global faiths and people of good will everywhere to eradicate modern slavery across the world by 2020 and for all time. In the eyes of God*, each human being is a free person, whether girl, boy, woman or man, and is destined to exist for the good of all in equality and fraternity. Modern slavery, in terms of



human trafficking, forced labour and prostitution, organ trafficking, and any relationship that fails to respect the fundamental conviction that all people are equal and have the same freedom and dignity, is a crime against humanity. We pledge ourselves here today to do all in our power, within our faith communities and beyond, to work together for the freedom of all those who are enslaved and trafficked so that their future may be restored. Today we have the opportunity, awareness, wisdom, innovation and technology to achieve this human and moral imperative.

*The Grand Imam of Al Azhar uses the word "religions".

Pope Francis

Her Holiness Mata Amritanandamayi (Amma)

Venerable Bhikkhuni Thich Nu Chan Khong (representing Zen Master Thích Nhất Hạnh)

The Most Ven. Datuk K Sri Dhammaratana, Chief High Priest of Malaysia

Rabbi Dr. Abraham Skorka

Rabbi Dr. David Rosen

Dr. Abbas Abdalla Abbas Soliman, Undersecretary of State of Al Azhar Alsharif (representing Mohamed Ahmed El-Tayeb, Grand Imam of Al-Azhar)

Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi al-Modarresi

Sheikh Naziyah Razzaq Jaafar, Special advisor of Grand Ayatollah (representing Grand Ayatollah Sheikh Basheer Hussain al Najafi)

Sheikh Omar Abboud

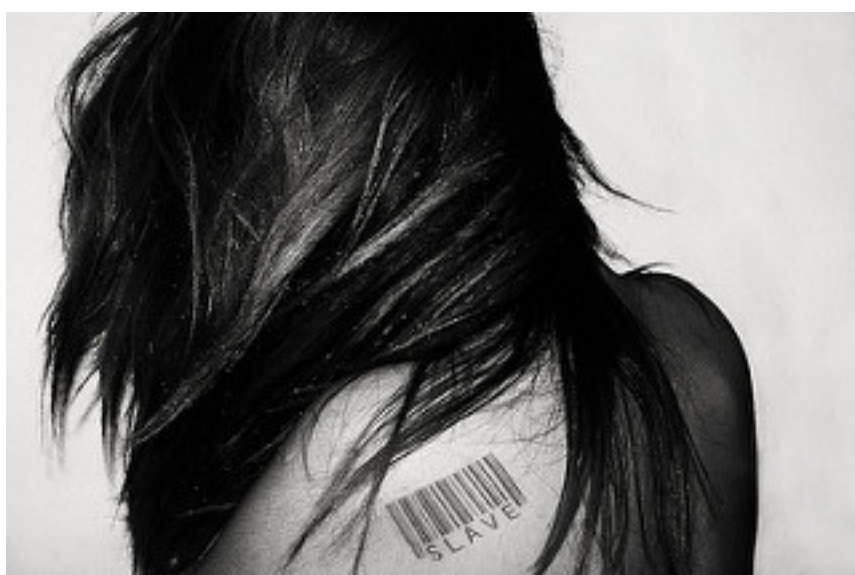
Most Revd and Right Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury

His Eminence Metropolitan Emmanuel of France (representing His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew)

Source:

<http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5454/archbishop-of-canterbury-joins-world-faith-leaders-in-pledge-to-end-slavery>

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Tags: Freedom (<http://www.declarationproject.org/?tag=freedom>), God (<http://www.declarationproject.org/?tag=god>), Religion (<http://www.declarationproject.org/?tag=religion>), Slavery (<http://www.declarationproject.org/?tag=slavery>)

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Declaration of Common Aims of the Independent Mid-European Nations.

After three days conference of the representatives of the Mid-European Nations at which problems of their future relations were discussed, the following Declaration was adopted:

An association assembled at Independence Hall, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States of America on October 26, 1918, representing together more than fifty million people constituting a chain of nations lying between the Baltic, the Black and the Mediterranean Seas, comprising Poland, Slovakia, Czechoslovakia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Greece, Bulgaria, and Armenia, wholly or partly subject to alien domination, deeply appreciating the aid and assistance rendered our people by the government and people of America and of the United States in behalf of our liberties and our freedom at home, do hereby solemnly declare that we place our all people and resources at the disposal of our allies for our common and our mutual safety and in order that the whole world may know what we deem are the essential and fundamental principles which shall be embodied in the constitution to be adopted by the people of our respective independent nations as well as the purposes which shall govern our relations and our relations with all other nations we accept and subscribe to the following as basic principles for all free peoples:

- I. That all governments derive their just power from the consent of the governed
- II. That it is the inalienable right of every people to organize its own government on such principles and in such form as it believes will best promote its welfare, safety and happiness
- III. That the free and natural development of the ideals of every state should be allowed to pursue their normal and unhindered course without such outside hindrance or restriction as threaten the common interest of all
- IV. That there should be no secret diplomacy and no agreements between governments which are not made public upon their adoption and ratification
- V. That we believe our peoples having kindred ideals and purposes should co-ordinate their efforts to insure the liberation of their individual nations for the furtherance of their common welfare provided such a union contributes to the peace and welfare of the world
- VI. That there should be formed a League of the Nations of the world on a common and binding agreement for systematic and practical cooperation to insure justice and therefore peace among nations
- VII. That in the course of our history we have been subject to, and victims of aggression and selfish national and international egotism and held in subjection by force of arms
- VIII. That we have suffered destruction of our cities, violation of our homes and lands, and we have maintained our ideals only by stealth, in spite of the tyranny of our oppressors
- IX. That we have been deprived of proper representation and fair trial - we have been denied the right of free speech and the right fairly to be heard and justice for the address of our grievances - we have been denied free and friendly international relations and our men have been impressed in war against their brethren and friends of kindred aims
- X. That we expect of this declaration, and aspirations of other independent peoples who may subscribe their names hereunto, to be by God the Father of all Nations of the world and that they will nobly strive to the end that these wrongs shall be redressed and that the principles here set forth shall be recognized and put into effect by whatever governments our respective peoples may hereafter establish.

T. S. Herzog
President

Thomas W. Hart
Captain United States Army



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Declaration of Common Aims of the Independent Mid-European Nations (1918) (<http://www.declarationproject.org/?p=1287>)

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