

4Th All Africa Religious Liberty Congress



ALL AFRICA RELIGIOUS LIBERTY ASSOCIATION

17-19 SEPT
2024
ARUSHA, TANZANIA



Liberty of Conscience for All



WELCOME NOTE

Secretary General Remarks

The first of all freedoms is Liberty of conscience. Liberty of conscience means the right to arrive at one's private beliefs without being coerced into an artificial unity by those who wield power over us.

It is a natural right given to man by the divine. The most primary of all human duties is the right to say Yes or No to the gift of existence and all that it entails. All other liberties originate from this primordial right. When this right is denied, it immediately places man in conflict

AARLA recognizes any form of denial of this right by families, communities, governments or faiths as the number one reason for conflicts of all forms in Africa. For Africans to coexist in peace, the value of liberty of conscience cannot be overemphasized. AARLA upholds prevention of conflicts to resolving conflicts as key to peaceful coexistence

The theme of the 4th All Africa Liberty of Conscience Congress is:

"Peaceful coexistence in Africa: The Undeniable Value of Liberty of Conscience"

This congress has attracted speakers of experience on matters of peace and conflict resolution, at the global, Continental, regional, community and family levels

It offers short presentations from invited speakers both at the plenary and break-out sessions and accords participants sufficient time for questions and answers and enriching comments in a very interactive atmosphere

The right to freedom of conscience is recognized by several international conventions, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Banjul Charter).

Welcome to the 4th All Africa Religious Liberty Congress, lawyer's symposium and Religious Liberty Festival. Welcome to the city of Arusha at the foot of mt Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa and its small sister mt. Meru. Welcome to the United republic of Tanzania a nation which has co-existed peacefully since independence.

This year, AARLA is hosting 250 delegates which includes top leaders of faith-based organizations, government officials, top academicians, legal experts, human rights organizations and NGOs at the 4th quinquennial All Africa Religious Liberty Congress and the lawyer's symposium. The festival of religious freedom on the 21st will host over 10,000 people to celebrate freedom of Religion in Tanzania and many countries in Africa

Through this Continental Congress, symposium and festival, we hope to generate further regional meetings, National and Local meetings among various communities in Africa to enhance tolerance and peaceful co-existence in line with African Union Vision 2063: ***"An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Continent"; Aspiration 3: "An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and rule of law"***

AARLA believes these engagements will lead to peaceful co-existence in societies. It will reduce unnecessary conflicts and will build bridges for peaceful resolutions whenever conflicts happen because those involved have already known and interacted with each other during times of peace.

We commit our vision and mission in the hands of the almighty God through whom alone this dream is possible

Dr Joel Okindoh
Secretary General

Board Chairman's Remarks

The guest of honor madam Veronica Nduva, Secretary General East African Community, Religious leaders of various religions, The African Union representative, Government leaders, Ambassadors, legal experts, Academicians, human rights organizations ladies and gentlemen

Welcome to the 4th All Africa Religious Liberty Congress here in the city of Arusha, in the united republic of Tanzania. Welcome to the Arusha International conference Center. Arusha is close to the foot of Mt Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa.

AARLA is an independent association historically associated with International religious liberty association which is the oldest religious liberty association in the world. For 130 years the International Religious Liberty Association has worked to promote freedom of conscience for every person, no matter who they are or where they live in the world. Currently, we are actively or partially present in all countries in Africa.

We promote the freedom to believe, or not to believe, as defined by Article 18 of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

"Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."

And Article 8 of the African charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Banjul Charter).

"Freedom of Conscience, the profession and free practice of religion shall be guaranteed. No one may, subject to law and order, be submitted to measures

restricting the exercise of these freedoms”.

We believe religious freedom is a foundational human right, which is intimately connected with all other human rights.

We believe that the freedom to believe, or not to believe, is not a favor that governments can bestow. It is a universal, God-given freedom that flows from the innate dignity of every human being.

We hold symposiums, conferences, and events around the continent focused on the scholarly community, the religious freedom advocacy community, religious leaders of many different faiths, and those who hold public office.

Every five years AARLA organizes a continental Congress on Religious Freedom to bring together academics, practitioners and activists in the religious liberty cause from all over the continent. This is the 4th edition of the All Africa Congress on Religious Liberty

We also sponsor large-scale popular events around the continent , such as Religious Freedom Festivals and other rallies. Through these, we aim to raise public awareness of religious freedom issues.

Our team is invited every year to give lectures at universities and churches, to write articles, and to give interviews on radio and television.

The AARLA does not identify with any political party, nor does it endorse any candidates for political office. The IRLA is overseen by a Board of Directors.

It has no paid staff; officers and directors serve voluntarily. Funding for IRLA operations comes from organizations supportive of the association’s purpose.

The IRLA is incorporated as not-for-profit organization in the Republic of Kenya. Originally organized by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the AARLA’s purpose is the continental and non-sectarian promotion of religious

freedom for all people, everywhere. Membership is open to all religions and organizations, individuals of similar vision and mission

Welcome to engage in the congress theme:

Peaceful Coexistence in Africa: The Undeniable Value of Liberty of Conscience.

At AARLA, we believe in prevention of conflicts through respect for liberty of Conscience of persons, communities, faiths and nations. Resolving conflicts through peace keeping forces and conflict resolution mechanisms is very expensive and time consuming. It also affects development plans. Conflicts can be reduced considerably if we encouraged the practice of community engagement at all levels of society during times of peace leading to a better understanding of existing worldviews and bridge building initiatives among all existing groups in the society

It is our hope that the impact of this congress will be cascaded to all levels of the society across the entire continent with similar engagements

I encourage each of you to value every attendee's liberty of conscience

In order for us to coexist peacefully throughout the period of the congress and beyond

Dr Blasious Ruguri
Chairman



AGENDA



17th SEPTEMBER 2024

TIME	SESSION	SPEAKERS
	Opening Exercise	

08:00 - 08:10
 08:10 - 08:20
 08:20 - 09:00

Secretary General Remarks
 Chairman's Remarks
 Guest of Honor

PLENARY PRESENTATIONS

9:10 - 10:30

Session 1

Introduction of Presenters Presentations

1. Liberty of Conscience: *The primordial human right*
2. Peaceful co-existence in Africa: *The African Union perspective*

Dr Ganoune Diop

Commissioner AU
political Affairs, peace &
Security Dept (PAPS)

10:35 - 12:00

Session 2

Introduction of Presenters Presentations

1. Current conflicts and issues of transitional justice in Africa
2. Religious Liberty for me and - sometimes for you - Minorities, majorities and an age-old challenge

Judge Palan Mulonda

Dr Nicta Luballe

Responses

12:05 - 13:25

Session 3

Introduction of presenters

Presentations

1. Liberty of conscience and current major threats
2. Freedom of Religion and its role in enhancing human dignity and peaceful coexistence in Africa

Dr Francis Kuria

Amb Tom Amollo EBS

Responses

TIME	SESSION	SPEAKERS
13:25 – 14:40	LUNCH	
14:40 – 15:10	PRAYERS FOR PEACIFUL CO-EXISTENCE	Islam
15:10 – 16:20	BREAK OUT SESSIONS Introduction of Presenter Presentations: <i>Peaceful Coexistence in Africa</i> 1. Liberty of conscience: The voice of an African Woman 2. A Youth perspective of the value of liberty of conscience: The experience of Southern Africa Region 3. Relating to human trafficking, Refugees and internally displaced people Responses	Flora Fiona Akoth LLM Othusitse Mbeha Ms Emma Nyerere
16:20 – 17:00	Closing Presentation	

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TIME	SESSION	SPEAKERS
13:00 – 14:20	LUNCH	
14:20 - 14:50	PRAYERS FOR PEACE	Hindus
14:50 – 15:30	AARLA LAUNCH	
	Relationship between the SDA Church and All Africa Religious Liberty Association	Audrey Andersen
	Relationship between IRLA and AARLA	John Nay
15:30 – 16:20	PRESENTATION OF AFRICA RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AWARDS	
16:20 – 17:00	CLOSING EXERCISE	



KEY NOTE SPEAKERS & RESOURCE PERSONS

Thomas Boniface Amolo

Political and Diplomatic Secretary
Kenya



Ambassador Thomas Amolo holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science and Post-Graduate Diploma – Diplomacy and International Relations from the University of Nairobi. He also holds a Diploma in International Economics/Diplomacy from Deutsche Stiftung fur Internacional Entwicklung, Berlin. He possesses a Master's degree from the School of International and Public Affairs at the Columbia University New York.

A career diplomat, Ambassador Amolo has served, among other capacities, as Kenya's High Commissioner to South Africa and Nigeria.



Othusitse Mbeha

Managing Partner
Othusitse Mbeha Lawyers

Othusitse Mbeha is a passionate reader, diving deep into the world of literature. As a devout Seventh-day Adventist Christian, he not only finds solace in his faith but has also embraced his role as a religious author, crafting a captivating book titled "Before God Says Yes." Beyond his literary prowess, Othusitse is a rising star on the public speaking circuit, captivating audiences with his profound insights. Juggling multiple hats, he thrives as both a seasoned legal practitioner and a visionary entrepreneur, serving as the Managing Partner of Othusitse Mbeha Lawyers. With unwavering conviction, he firmly believes that the road to both heavenly and earthly success is paved with dedication, hard work, and integrity.

Abraham Bakari
Director of Public Affairs and
Religious Liberty for the SDA
West and Central Africa Region



Abraham Bakari currently serves as the Director of Public Affairs and Religious Liberty for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the West and Central Africa region. He holds a Master's degree in Communication and has completed several advanced courses in Semiotics and Strategies. His commitment to advocating for religious freedom began in the early 2000s, and since then, he has made significant contributions to promoting religious liberty and regional integration through his involvement with various NGOs.

Bakari has been frequently consulted by the government of Cameroon on matters concerning religious freedom. One of his notable achievements was his key role in organizing the 3rd African Congress on Religious Freedom in 2013, held in Yaoundé, Cameroon. The event, which attracted over 1,500 participants from across the continent, was held under the patronage of the President of the Republic of Cameroon, further highlighting its importance in advancing the cause of religious liberty in Africa.

Major General George Aggrey Owinow, CBS

Major General George Aggrey Owinow, CBS, psc, ndc (K)

Major General George Aggrey Owinow is a highly experienced military leader with over 39 years of distinguished service in the Kenya Defense Forces. His career spans a wide range of roles, including command, operations, logistics, and international diplomacy. He has held top positions such as Deputy Force Commander for AMISOM-Somalia, Commandant of the Kenya

Military Academy, and Director of the Centre for Security and Strategic Studies at the National Defence University in Kenya.

Expert in leadership, security, and logistical planning. Skilled in diplomatic relations and international affairs. Adept in community development, sustainable governance, and social entrepreneurship. Served as a UN Military Observer in Liberia and as a military adviser to the Kenya Mission to the UN. Appointed Kenya's High Commissioner to Uganda in 2024. Held senior roles in various peacekeeping and international missions, including the African Union Mission in Somalia.

Authored papers and articles on peace and security mechanisms, conflict resolution, and international relations.



LAWYER'S SYMPOSIUM PROGRAM

Justice and Faith in Contemporary Africa: *Integrating Biblical Values in Legal Practice*

20th SEPTEMBER 2024

TIME	SESSION	SPEAKERS
08:00 - 08:30	Welcome and Opening Remarks-	Joel Okindo Hopeson Bonya Abraham Bakari Adejoke Oyewunmi Japeth Rachuonyo Karnik Doukmetzian
08:30 - 09:00	Devotional Thoughts:	Pr. Blasious. Ruguri
09:00 - 09:45	OPENING PLENARY- Uganda Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs- Introduced by Joel Okindo	
09:45 - 10:00	Break	
10:00 - 10:45	Judicial Panel- Interviews	Justices Mulonda, Maraga, LTC Eruba
10:45 - 11:00	Discussion and Questions	
11:00 - 11:45	Contemporary Religious Liberty Issues affecting the Church	Todd McFarland
11:45 - 12:00	Discussion and Questions	
12:00 - 01:00	LUNCH	

TIME	SESSION	SPEAKERS
01:00 – 01:45	Models of Peaceful Coexistence <i>The Case of Nigeria and Current Developments in the Ecowas Region</i>	Paul Ananaba
01:45 – 02:00	Questions and Discussion	
02:00 – 02:45	The Place of Conscience and Integrity of an Adventist Lawyer	Lilian Orieko
02:45 – 03:00	Questions and Discussion	
03:00 – 03:45	Integrity: An Elusive Trait In the 21st Century Lawyer	Eric Hanziba
03:45 – 04:00	Questions and Discussion	
04:00 – 04:45	“On being a lawyer, It’s all about the Associations	Karnik Doukmetzian
04:45 – 05:00	Closing Remarks	Division legal Counsel
05:00	End of Program	



RELIGIOUS LIBERTY FESTIVAL PROGRAM

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH, TANZANIA RELIGIOUS LIBERTY FESTIVAL 21st SEPTEMBER 2024 Theme: *Religious Freedom for All*

TIME	ACTIVITY	PERSON IN CHARGE
08:00-08:45	Sabbath School	Meshack Mahende (NTUC)
08:45-09:00	Music Concert	Paschal Gissa , (TRVF)
09:00-09:05	Opening Hymn <i>"Umtetee Mungu Duniani,"</i> NZK # 68	Mathias Mavanza (Treasurer, NTUC)
09:05-09:10	Opening Prayer	Jeremiah Izungu (Executive Secretary, STUM)
09:10-09:20	Welcome Remarks and Introduction	Onesto Ilomo (NTUC)/ Joel Okindo (ECD)
09:20-09:40	Religion Liberty Music Concert	Pascal Gissa , (TRVF)
09:40-10:00	Thanksgiving Prayers	MC
10:00-10:30	Offertory <i>while 2 choirs are singing</i>	Yohannes Olana (Treasurer ECD) & Dennis Wairaha (Treasurer, STUM)
10:30-11:20	Religious Liberty Message	Ganoune Diop (General Conference PARL Director)
11:20-12:00	Music Concert	Paschal Gissa , (TRVF)
12:00-12:20	Reception of the Guest of Honor <i>(National Anthem, EAC Anthem)</i>	MC

TIME	ACTIVITY	PERSON IN CHARGE
12:20-12:30	Religious Liberty Parade	Stephen Manema, (NTUC)
12:30-12:45	Short Speeches (5 Minutes Each)	Chief Justice Emeritus Kenya African Union Regional Commissioner (Arusha)
12:45-12:55	Presentation of Peace Award	Joel Okindo (ECD PARL Director)
12:55-01:10	Division Presidents Greetings	Harrington Akombwa (Southern Africa Indian Ocean-SID); & Blasious Ruguri (East-Central Africa-ECD)
01:10-01:15	General Conference (GC) Greetings	Geoffrey Mbwana (GC Vice President)
01:15-01:25	Risala	Devotha Shimbe, (STUM)
01:25-01:30	Presentation of Guest of Honor	Mark Malekana (President, NTUC)
01:30-02:00	Guest of Honor Speech	HON, Dr. PHILIP MPANGO The Vice President of the United Republic of Tanzania
02:00-02:15	Vote of Thanks	Godwin Lekundayo (President, STUM)
02:15-02:20	Closing Hymn "Piga Panda na ya Makekele" NZK #161	Magulilo Mwakalonge (Executive Secretary, NTUC)
02:20-02:25	Closing Prayer	Musa Mitekaro (Executive Secretary, ECD)
02:25-02:30	Closing Session	MC

Organized by **NTUC & STUM** and supported by **AARLA**

Translators: **Shukrani Mutaki** and **Victor Kabangutse**;
MC's: **Michael Kuyenga** and **Karen Kiboko**



AARLA SECRETARIAT

Joel Okindoh
Hopeson Bonya
Abraham Bakari



AWARDS

1. United Republic of Tanzania
2. Dr. Ganoune Diop
3. Hon. David Maraga



ALL AFRICA RELIGIOUS LIBERTY ASSOCIATION

Liberty of Conscience for All