

## FREEDOM OF RELIGION IN MODERN SOCIETY

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### Abstract:

Freedom of religious belief is a human right, a cultural right; Religion is an expression of culture. Freedom of belief and religion has a long, lively and complex process of arising and development, always arising problems associated with each historical period and situation, including the relationship between society and society. with beliefs, religions and the state with religious beliefs. In modern society, countries have the responsibility to respect, protect and ensure human rights, including the right to freedom of belief and religion. This study proposes a number of issues related to attitudes, policies and laws that respect and guarantee the right to freedom of belief and religion in modern society.

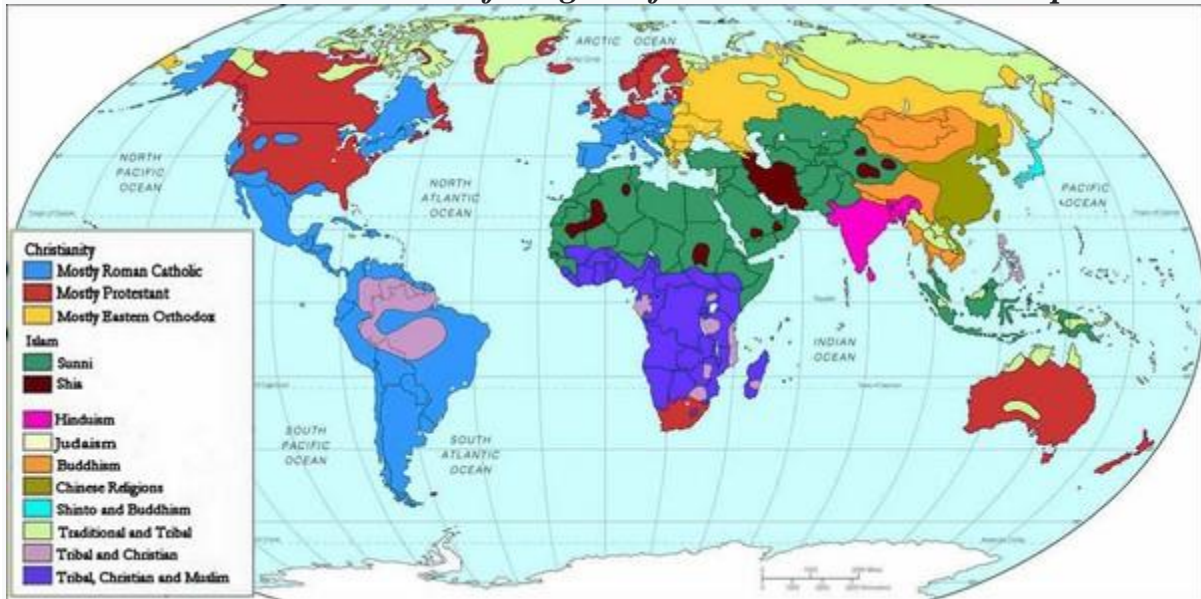
As an expression of culture, reflecting the spiritual life of society and people, religion and religious freedom also have profound changes according to the evolution of world reality, posing new problems. , new challenges, which require the human community and countries to focus on solving. In modern society, although the state is still the leading subject of international law, with the strong impact of globalization and the development of science, engineering, technology, the boundary between countries seem to be gradually erased more and more. Instead, it is the interference and integration of all aspects of politics, economy, culture - society and interdependence, including domestic, foreign and sovereign rights among countries on a global scale. . Freedom of belief and religion is often considered a principle in favor of the recognized freedom of the individual, including the freedom to believe, follow or not believe, not to follow a religion; Freedom to change religion.

Freedom of belief, traditional religion is considered a basic human right and freedom. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights defines freedom of religion as follows: "*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.*" (1) Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states that: "*Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.*"(2)

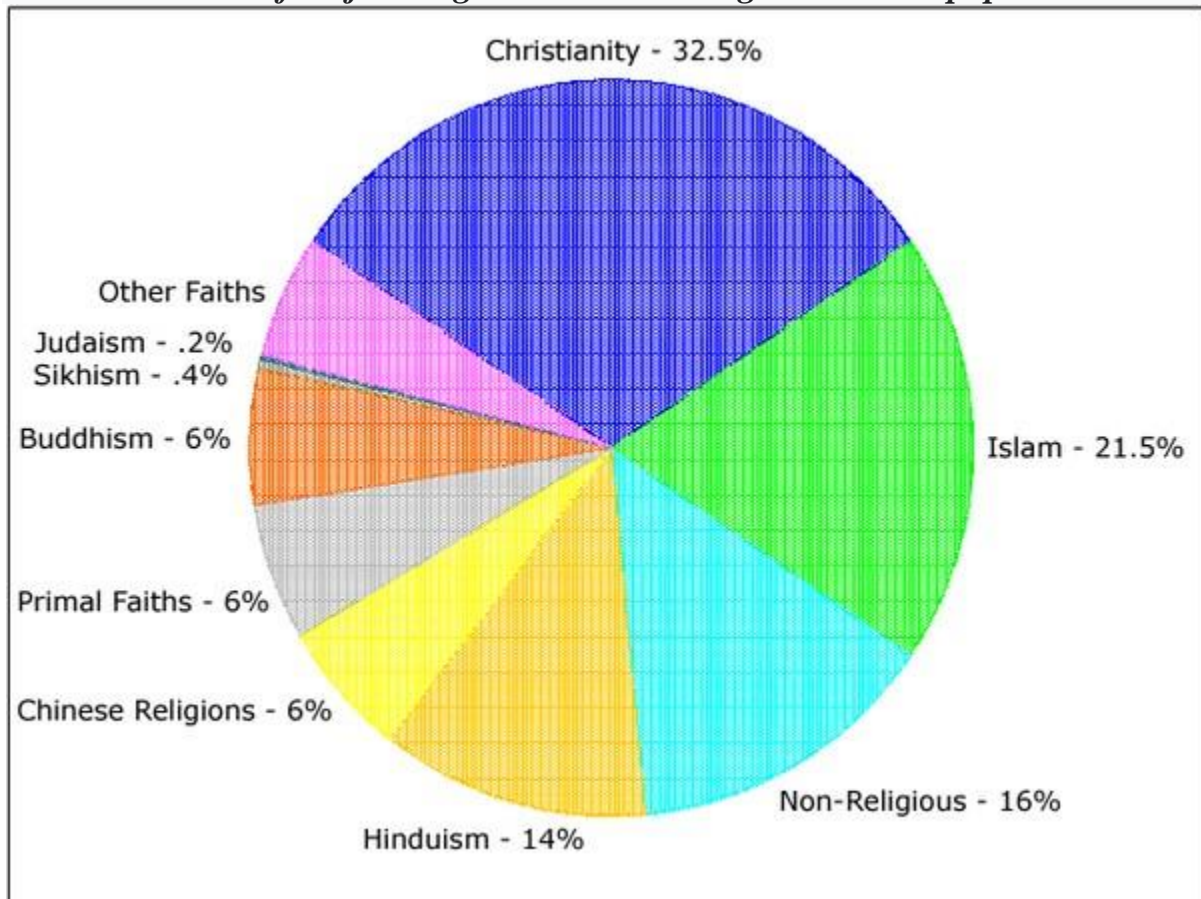
The modern world has become more "religious" as the number of non-religious atheists is shrinking compared to the global population. These graphs

below refer to the religious distribution and percentage of the world's population with regard to belief and non-belief, religion (3):

**Chart 1: *Distribution of religious followers on the world map:***



**Chart 2: *Ratio of major religions and non-religious in total population:***



**Regarding the specific number of followers of religions:**

Christianity: 2,100,000,000 - downward trend in percentages globally.

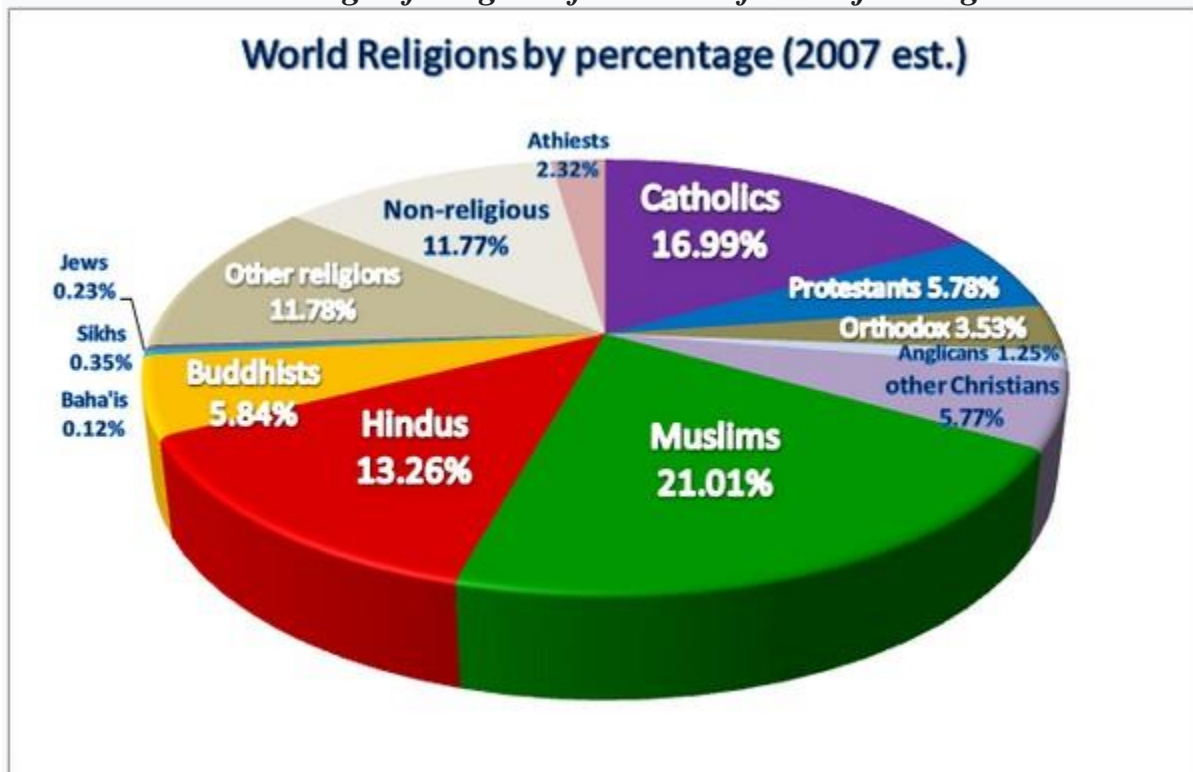
Islam: 1,500,000,000 - tends to increase in percentage globally.

Hindu: 900,000,000 - stable in percentage globally.

Chinese folk religion: 400,000,000. Theravada Religion: 400,000,000. Buddhism: 375,000,000 - stable in percentage globally.

Sikh: 24,000,000. Jewish: 14,500,000. Baha'i: 7,400,000. Jainism: 4,300,000. No religious beliefs: 1,100,000,000 - downward trend in percentage globally

**Chart 3: Percentage of religious followers of 10 major religions:**



*(Source: Report of the US Pew PRC Research Center in 2010)*

Legally, in the modern world, the right to religious freedom is expressed in the attitude that religious belief is the right of every person, each citizen accepts that others have the right to keep and practice the virtues. own beliefs, that belief may not be the same, each person does not require others to consider the religious beliefs of others as correct as his own. For countries with many religions, the state respects all religions and treats them equally. For a country that is a state religion, freedom of religious belief is generally understood as the government allowing the practice of activities of religions other than the state religion, and not persecuting adherents of other religions. However, that is the spirit of the law, the legal principle, and the

actual picture of world religions is much more complicated. Religious persecution or unequal treatment among religions is still at risk of outbreaks in some countries on earth. The Israel-Palestinian conflict is considered by many researchers to be essentially a religious conflict that has persisted for decades and never ceases, some people think that it may be a trigger for the war. third world. On August 15, the radical Islamic Taliban, known as a global terrorist force, won a complete victory in Apganistan and announced the formation of a new government from June 19, 2021. The question arises: What will they do next in Apganistan? Are freedom of belief, religion and the rule of law respected? ...only time will prove the truth. It is likely that an "Emirate of Apganistan" will emerge from the Islamic extremist Taliban. It is a clear fact that the process of separating church and state, or forming a secular state (laïcité) will be extremely difficult or just utopian.

The process of globalization is taking place strongly, affecting religious freedom in all countries in the world both positively and negatively. Economic development has clearly led to powerful resources to improve and enhance the level of enjoyment and improve people's lives, but globalization also poses new risks of disparities. the growing rich and poor, the problems of climate change, environmental pollution, the disappearance and loss of traditional cultural values, the deterioration of moral values, the issue of justice, social justice has also become much more complicated... in which religion and religious freedom are also subject to strong impacts. In the face of poverty, injustice, war, terrorism...and the negative impacts of globalization, people look to religious belief as a spiritual solution, so that belief and religion can conditions to be nurtured and developed. The charts above show that about 85% of the world's population follows traditional religions. Types of beliefs and religions are recovering and developing in many countries and continents. The remaining 15% of the population mostly have certain beliefs or follow new religions appearing in different localities and territories.

Traveling, exchanging, seminars, conferences, through books and newspapers, through the media and especially the Internet, people can easily access new religions. The development of globalization and international integration, the strong development of science and technology... not only did not break, but also consolidated or formed new religious beliefs and appeared new concepts such as: evangelizing the internet, living religion online.... The development of social networking sites not only helps people connect with each other anytime, anywhere, filling all distances, but also makes the world become flatter and more virtual, including spiritual life. religion. Information technology and the internet have become the most effective means for religions to introduce, disseminate and promote their images and enter the spiritual life of people.

Religion will last for a long time because religion is the spiritual life of the people and culture. The need for belief and religion reflects the legitimate freedom

of man towards the values of truth - goodness - beauty, contributing to animating and diversifying social, cultural and spiritual life. Many inventions, creations and works of music, painting, architecture... have been associated with religious and spiritual life in human history. In fact, many religions have accompanied human civilization, participated in social construction and development, and community development. Religious activities in the modern world have not departed from reality and supported integrated into the secular world through many charitable, humanitarian, social security, and social protection activities, contributing to the development of the world. modern society. However, the negative impact of globalization and the market economy, the tendency to politicize religious life, the extreme development of some traditional religions and even some new religions have set There are many challenges for the international community, the development of each country and for the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of belief and religion. Some of the challenges are listed below:

*Firstly*, the increase in religious propagation activities thanks to the development of scientific technology and the connection and exchange between countries and ethnic groups creates a diverse religious environment. However, the rapidly growing religious diversity also poses many risks of conflicts between religions or hides many complicated problems in the development of traditional religions, extreme religious phenomena, forming terrorist groups, armed religious... directly threatening social stability, peace and human right to life.

*Secondly*, the introduction of beliefs, religions and cultural values in the process of globalization and integration, on the one hand, contributes to enriching the cultural traditions, religions and spiritual life of each country. family; on the other hand, also leads to the risk of eroding or destroying the specific spiritual cultural identity before the encroachment and negative influence of inappropriate spiritual and cultural values.

*Third*, the emergence of new and unexperienced phenomena of belief, religion, and religion, among which there are religions operating illegally, called "Heresy", even some extreme religious activities contrary to fine customs and traditions, negatively impacting social life, and going against human rights to life and basic freedoms. For example, there are religions that believe in death, or promote selfish lifestyles, destroy people, infringe on the rights and basic freedoms of others and community culture...

*Fourth*, the strong exchange and connection between domestic and foreign religious followers, the strong penetration of religious thought streams, including negative and anti-social ones. Some subjects seek to politicize religious activities, through religious activities to exercise political power, seeing religion as a way to gather followers to strengthen a dominant position in a country. , or vice versa, seek to subvert the sovereignty of a country through the close connection between the

number of internal and external objects to incite riots and overthrow the government. The politicization of religion should be seen as a dangerous trend in modern society.

Fifth, the people's religious and belief needs are increasing strongly in the context of globalization, conflicts, epidemics, etc., posing challenges for each subject of international legal relations, especially in the context of international law. Along with the transformation of beliefs, religious practice also has many changes under the impact of globalization and the development of new technology. The countries subject to international legal relations in the modern world are all faced with the problem of resolving the relationship between the state and religion; properly handle relations of registration and organization and practice of religious activities; ensuring a legal corridor for religious activities and a healthy environment for religious activities; fulfill the responsibility to respect, protect and ensure the people's right to freedom of religion and belief in modern society; and at the same time fight against manifestations of infringing upon freedom of belief and religion, destroying culture, civilization and beauty of belief and religion.

Faced with the challenges of religious development and the issue of ensuring freedom of religious belief in the modern world, it is necessary to have a new perspective and perspective; have appropriate policies, laws and attitudes in order to properly handle the guarantee of freedom of belief and religion; while preventing negative impacts so that religion is really a resource for the human development of the international community, each country, and each member of the human community.

*First of all*, it is necessary to recognize religion as a common resource in the development of co-humanity. Belief and religion are the people's spiritual needs and interests, which will last for a long time with humanity because the need for religion reflects the legitimate rights and freedoms of people towards spiritual cultural values. God. The right to freedom of belief and religion is always understood and should be uniformly understood in the following sense: Everyone has the right to freedom of belief and religion, to follow or not to follow a religion, to have the right to change their spiritual beliefs, have the right to change religion. Religions are equal before national and international law.

*Second*, the right to freedom of religion and belief is a human right, the right of every person. It means, however, that each person must respect the rights of others to hold and practice their own beliefs, without requiring that their religious beliefs be the same as those of others. In countries with many religions, the state should respect all religions and treat them fairly and equally, and fulfill the national responsibility to respect, protect and guarantee freedoms. belief, religion, regardless of religion in promulgating and implementing socio-economic policies. In countries with a state religion, freedom of religious belief is often understood as the

government allowing the practice of activities of religions other than the state religion, and does not oppress adherents of other religions.

*Third*, the connection between religions in the context of globalization has made religious issues cross national borders, becoming a global problem. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen international cooperation on religion to effectively solve religious problems, ensure the right to freedom of religious belief for everyone.

Negative factors in religion, especially radical religion, not only affect a certain country but tend to spread around the world, threatening the security and peace of the region and the world. at the same time, international cooperation on religion must prevent activities that take advantage of religion to fight against nations and against humanity.

*Fourth*, it is time for the human community and nations to have a common voice, to form specific rules of conduct in order to truly respect, protect and guarantee each person's right to religious freedom on the one hand. , respecting cultural activities, civilized beliefs and religions; on the other hand, must minimize the occurrence and negative development of religion in the direction of undermining public peace and security, destroying people, terrorist tendencies, violence and crimes, using or taking advantage of religion as a political tool, causing wars, riots, and subversions; or the politicization of religion destroys cultural traditions and religious humanity.

*Fifth*, "religious organization" and "freedom of religious belief" are different concepts, requiring a distinction. Freedom of religious belief is a human right, the right to have, express and change beliefs, the right to live in a religious organization. In which, it is the responsibility of society, community, each country, and social organizations, including religious organizations, to respect, protect and ensure the exercise of freedom of belief and religion. when performing their functions and duties. Thus, whether a state or a religious organization is an instrument or a means of freedom, it is necessary to realize freedom of religious belief. The purpose of policies and laws is to recognize and guarantee the right to freedom of belief and religion, and to set requirements for the establishment and operation of religious organizations on the principle of respecting the right to freedom of belief. each person's religion. Religious organizations have the responsibility to ensure the exercise of their right to freedom of religious belief and practice, while respecting the activities of other organizations and the right to freedom of religious belief of all people. in social. Thus, the right to freedom of religion is a natural human right, which must be recognized, respected and guaranteed; while religious organizations and activities need to be conditional, always limited and limited by the interests of the community.

The picture of religious practice in the modern world shows many faces and nuances. On the one hand, religious life is very active and almost everyone is

interested in religious beliefs in their life. That further affirms the necessity of religious belief as an indispensable spiritual need in basic human rights and freedoms. But on the other hand, besides maintaining good traditional and humanistic values, the practice trends are somewhat misleading, deviating from the regulations of religion, law, cultural and ethical traditions as well. reflect a current state of religious belief lacking depth, far from the essence of religion, more or less associated with secular values rather than true religious values. The system of philosophies and beliefs that every strives to protect, preserve and promote has been revised, supplemented and adapted, but essentially unchanged. However, the doctrinal practices and expressions of people's beliefs are and will continue to undergo many changes.

**Note:**

- (1) Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948
- (2) Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966
- (3) Report of the US Pew PRC Research Center 2010

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