



CENTER FOR SECURITY POLICY

Working Session No. 12
Specifically Selected Topic:
Freedom of Thought, Conscience, Religion & Belief
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Thank you Madam Moderator, ladies and gentlemen,

There can be no more fundamental human right than the freedom to believe, to not believe, or to change belief according to one's conscience in safety and security, knowing that your person, property and livelihood will not be endangered as a consequence.

The United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights states unequivocally that "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..."

And yet, we know that under Islamic Law, the decision to leave Islam is considered treason and carries the death penalty. Sahih Bukhari records that Muhammad said, "Whoever changed his Islamic religion, then kill him." So, how do we reconcile such doctrine with the ideals of the United Nations and this Organization for Security & Cooperation in Europe?

What should be our response when heroes of our time - a Magdi Allam, a Rifka Bari, a Nonie Darwish, an Ayan Hirsi Ali – are pronounced apostates and live with death threats for their courage?

If we are true to the ideals and principles that come to us through natural law, we stand with Muslims, former Muslims, and all people who yearn to live free.

I urge us all to unite in defense of the right of all people everywhere to live in security no matter their decisions in matters of belief and faith.

Thank You.