



ISLAM & LIBERTY NETWORK

ILN Statement

About ILN

The mission of Islam and Liberty Network (ILN), a Labuan foundation registered in Malaysia, is to advance the understanding of religious, political, and economic freedom for peace and prosperity in Muslim majority countries and beyond. Our annual program includes an annual conference, training workshop, and publication of books, articles and podcasts.

We were founded in 2011 to bring together researchers, academics, and public intellectuals to demonstrate the consistency of the universal values of religious, political, and economic freedom with Islam. Our research outputs show that Islam is not just consistent with freedom; indeed, Islam requires freedom.

Philosophy and rationale

Islam is both a religion and a comprehensive code of conduct. Its interpretation has significant implications for the attitudes of Muslims and for the attitudes of the governments which rule them. In Muslim majority countries, societies which endorse, and practice religious, economic, and political freedom are far and few between. Furthermore, Islam is perceived by many in the West as antagonistic to the institutions of a free society.

The problem of the perceived antagonism between Islam and freedom has dire consequences for both Muslim majority societies and for the world at large. Not only do we observe high levels of authoritarianism, poverty, and religious bigotry in Muslim majority societies, but we also witness waves of radicalization and violence elsewhere in the world associated with Islam. While this problem is not unique to Islam, with followers of other religions also exhibiting extremist and violent tendencies, what makes the Islamic connection a unique phenomenon is its global scale, political appeal, and geo-strategic implications.

ILN believes that freedom is not an alien concept for Islam, and that open societies, (with a strong commitment to individual liberty, the rule of law, the protection of private property, free markets, equality before law, free speech, and limited government) are possible in Muslim majority countries - and are entirely consistent with Islam.

Why this statement now

In the wake of current war and humanitarian crisis in Israel/Gaza, we have felt it important to prepare this statement with the approval of our Council, which governs its affairs.

ILN has taken no position on international matters as an organization since its founding however the intensity of the current crisis and possible implications for our work demanded that we reconsider this policy.

Until now, ILN has not imposed any restrictions or issued any guidelines for its Council members, staff, advisors and fellows on taking any specific public positions. By issuing this statement, we are issuing our positions for them to consider before making any public statements on any media.

ILN Positions

1. We endorse peaceful, democratic and non-violent means of expression and political struggle of all communities without any discrimination.
2. We respect human dignity, protection of human rights and property rights and consider them inviolable.
3. We respect international law, conventions and resolutions of the United Nations which govern the conduct of states in the matters of war and peace.
4. We condemn killings, violence and aggression against non-combatant civilians by any state or non-state actors.
5. We urge both parties to agree to ceasefire, release of hostages, and adopt all possible measures for minimization of human loss and to ensure access to urgent humanitarian aid.

Issued on 29th October 2023