



International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance

Membership Annex

Final: 10/06/2021

The purpose of this document is to outline the guidelines for participation in the IRFBA. Although IRFBA participation is voluntary, participation is expected to be in accordance with the broad criteria described below.

This document reflects the shared understanding that IRFBA participation is inclusive and provides criteria for strategic cooperation among IRFBA participants.

Participation & Membership

1. Membership in the IRFBA is open to states that are Member or Observer States of the United Nations and that endorse the IRFBA Declaration of Principles. Members should support the objectives of the IRFBA, taking into account the provisions of the ICCPR with respect to freedom of religion or belief. The IRFBA strives to have broad, cross-regional membership.
 - a) Relevant organizations, institutions, individuals or entities that have expertise in advancing the right to freedom of religion or belief globally and that, upon invitation from the Chair, actively participate in events organized by the IRFBA, may participate as Observers.
2. Any state or entity that wishes to participate as a member, friend or observer, as appropriate, in the IRFBA may submit a request in writing to the IRFBA Chair, Secretariat and/or SC.
 - a) The letter to the Chair should include a statement of support of the Declaration of Principles, should designate one or more senior officials who will serve as points of contact for the IRFBA and should demonstrate their commitment to promote respect for the freedom of religion or belief both internally as externally.
3. The Chair, in consultation with the SC, provides a recommendation to the membership on new IRFBA participants. The recommendation of the Chair is submitted to a silence procedure of one month. Such a silence procedure is considered to be broken if at least one third of the membership indicates an objection.

4. If the silence procedure is not broken, the Chair notifies the Members of the IRFBA in the next plenary after which the state or entity applying for membership, friend or observer status is informed that the request has been approved.
5. Members, Friends and Observers are expected to support the Declaration of Principles at all times and without reservation.
6. IRFBA Members are expected to participate in Members' Committee meetings of rotating membership at least once per year and present items discussed in the next IRFBA plenary meeting.

IRFBA Participation: Recruitment Guidelines

1. In encouraging states to apply for Member or Friend status, IRFBA Members, the Chair and the SC should take account of the value of maintaining geographic diversity in the IRFBA.
 - a. Although membership criteria states that commitment to the IRFBA Declaration of Principles, taking into account provisions of the ICCPR with respect to freedom of religion or belief, is the only criterion for membership, the Secretariat may make available to Members additional information considered relevant to the candidature through a transparent and neutral method of analysis. As such, a membership criteria checklist or similarly informative documentation may be developed by the Secretariat.
 - b. Membership analysis performed by the Secretariat is expected to be shared with all IRFBA Members for review and discussion.
 - c. Friends of the IRFBA are expected to demonstrate their support for IRFBA objectives and overall impact in the promotion of respect for the right to freedom of religion or belief.
2. In encouraging entities to apply for IRFBA Observer status, IRFBA Members, the Chair and the ISC should take account of the entity's record in the promotion of respect for the right to freedom of religion or belief and their commitment to advance the objectives of the IRFBA.
 - a. Although there are no formal criteria for participation as an Observer, potential Observers of the IRFBA are expected to support the ICCPR's provisions regarding freedom of religion or belief, demonstrate their relevance to IRFBA objectives and overall impact in the promotion of respect for the right to freedom of religion or belief.
3. In encouraging civil society, representatives of faith groups, and other specified members of the public to join the CoE, IRFBA Members, the Chair and the SC should take account of the candidate's record in the promotion of respect for the right to freedom of religion or belief and their commitment to advance the objectives of the IRFBA.
 - a. Membership to the CoE may be granted by the steering committee.

IRFBA Participation: Withdrawal Criteria

1. If a Member, Friend, or Observer decides unilaterally to withdraw from the IRFBA, they should write to inform the Chair and Secretariat, who are expected to share the decision with the wider IRFBA membership.
2. If a Member demonstrates lack of support for the Declaration of Principles or fails to respond to enquiries from the IRFBA on cases and/or situations of concern, the Chair, with the unanimous consent of the SC, may suspend a Member from the IRFBA. The Chair notifies the full membership in the next plenary IRFBA meeting.
3. The Chair, with the unanimous consent of the SC, may suspend individuals or entities that are “Observers” or “Friends” from the IRFBA at any point. The Chair notifies the full membership in the next plenary IRFBA meeting.
 - a) Suspension criteria:
 - i) Friends may be suspended if they demonstrate a lack of support for the Declaration of Principles or fail to respond to inquiries from the IRFBA.
 - ii) Observers may be suspended if they demonstrate a lack of support in fulfilling the spirit of the Declaration of Principles or fail to respond to inquiries from the IRFBA.
4. The Chair, with the unanimous consent of the SC, may suspend individuals or entities from the COE at any point, if the individual or entity demonstrates lack of support for the Declaration of Principles or fails to respond to inquiries from the IRFBA. The Chair notifies the full membership in the next plenary IRFBA meeting.
5. During suspension, the participant loses the advantages of IRFBA participation, including participation in all relevant meetings and the Ministers’ Forum.
6. Participation may be resumed to the suspended entity upon resolution of entity support for the Declaration of Principles and the unanimous consent of the SC. The Chair notifies the full membership in the next plenary IRFBA meeting.
7. After suspension for a period of one year, the Member or Observer is no longer affiliated with the IRFBA.