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Interreligious dialogue and respectful societies need the Parliaments of the World

Schirmacher publishes his speech at the Second Parliamentary Conference on Interreligious Dialogue of the IPU

(Bonn, 22.10.2025) The President of the International Institute for Religious Freedom (IIRF) and the International Society for Human Rights (ISHR), Archbishop Prof. Dr. Thomas Schirmacher, has now published his speech at the Second Parliamentary Conference on Interreligious Dialogue of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in Rome in June 2025.

The Second Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue, “Strengthening trust and embracing hope for our common future”, was organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Parliament of Italy, with the support of Religions for Peace. The Conference attracted over 600 delegates from almost 100 countries, including 58 national parliaments, hundreds of MPs, Speakers, as well as religious leaders, UN officials, civil society representatives and international experts. It marked the Jubilee Year declared by the late Pope Francis. Therefore, delegates therefore at the end had an audience with Pope Leo XIV.

Amid escalating wars and global unrest, Rome was the epicentre of parliamentary diplomacy and interfaith dialogue at the time, with the IPU and the Italian Parliament creating a unique space to unite parliamentary and religious leaders from around the world to find new and badly needed avenues for peace. In their final declaration, the Rome Communiqué, the parliamentarians and religious leaders unequivocally condemned the misuse of religion



Group photo of religious leaders with members of the Italian Parliament © Martin Warnecke © BQ/Martin Warnecke

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International Secretariat of the International Society for Human Rights (ISHR) ishr.org

Islam and Christianity journal.islaminstitut.net

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or belief to incite hatred or violence. The Communiqué emphasizes that interfaith dialogue—grounded in human dignity, inclusivity and respect for the rule of law—can prevent division, foster healing and build trust between communities. It highlights the shared roles and joint responsibility of parliamentarians and religious leaders in advancing justice, dignity and human development, working together for peaceful coexistence.

Alongside many Speakers and Deputy Speakers of Parliaments, notable delegates included Cardinal George Koovakad, President of the Dicastery of Interreligious Dialogue in the Vatican; Rabbi David Saperstein, former US Ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom; Imam Yahya Pallavicini, Chairman of the European Muslim Leaders' Majlis; Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos, High Representative of the UN Alliance of Civilizations; Dr. Nazila Ghanea, UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief; and Archbishop Angealos, Archbishop of London of the Coptic Orthodox Church.



Pro Prefect Archbishop Salvatore Fisichella, Dicastery for Evangelization, Coptic Archbishop Angealos, Thomas Schirmacher © BQ/Martin Warnecke

In the lead-up to the Rome Conference, the IPU released the second part of its Parliamentary Report on Religion and Belief, "Engagement with religion and belief by parliamentarians", which underscores the vital role of MPs in fostering peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

The IPU is the global organization of national parliaments. It was founded in 1889 as the first multilateral political organization in the world, encouraging cooperation and dialogue between all nations. Today, the IPU comprises 181 national Member Parliaments and 14 regional parliamentary bodies.

Downloads and Links:

- **Photo 1:** Group photo of religious leaders with members of the Italian Parliament © Martin Warnecke © BQ/Martin Warnecke
- **Photo 2:** Session in Italian Parliament speaking President of IPU, Dr. Tulia Ackson © BQ/Martin Warnecke

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- **Photo 3:** Pro Prefect Archbishop Salvatore Fisichella, Dicastery for Evangelization, Coptic Archbishop Angaelos, Thomas Schirmmacher © BQ/Martin Warnecke
- Speech by Thomas Schirmmacher: <https://bonner-querschnitte.de/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/TS-IPU-Parliaments-and-inter-religious-dialogue-2025.pdf>
- Photo gallery of the conference: <https://thomasschirmmacher.net/?p=24398>
- 'Parliamentary Report on Religion and Belief-Working Towards More Peaceful and Inclusive Societies': <https://ipu.org/resources/publications/reports/2025-06/parliamentary-report-religion-and-belief-working-towards-more-peaceful-and-inclusive-societies>
- Rome Communiqué: <https://ipu.org/file/21869/download>

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