

Theme:  
Freedom of  
Religion and  
the Limits  
of Law

# Call for Papers for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Conference on Religious Freedom

in South Africa, 29-30 January 2026  
Bloemfontein, South Africa

The *Conference on Religious Freedom in South Africa: Freedom of Religion and the Limits of Law* aims at addressing the role of law in the protection of religious interests, including an examination of the tensions and intersections between religious freedom and the law.

Through critical dialogue, the conference aims to foster deeper insights into the advancement of pluralism, the promotion of social cohesion, and the protection of religious freedoms. In the South African context, characterised by deep religious diversity, a strong constitutional commitment to human rights, and a history of inequality, this theme is both timely and necessary. The importance of the conference theme is bolstered by recent calls for the regulation of religion by the civil authorities. Consequently, the conference aims at bringing together academics, legal practitioners, policy-makers, faith leaders and other representatives from civil society to share their views on the relationship between freedom of religion and law.

Bearing in mind the main theme of the conference, papers may address topics related to freedom of religion, including but not limited to, the following:

- State regulation of religious associations;
- The autonomy of religious organisations;
- Religion and public education;
- Federalism, constitutionalism and the rule of law;
- Religion, diversity and tolerance;
- Human dignity and religion;
- Religion and freedom of expression;
- Religious freedom in digital spaces and social media; and
- The intersection between religion and culture

The organisers of this conference are pleased to announce an interdisciplinary call for proposals for papers, hereby welcoming local and international submissions that will make a scholarly contribution to the protection and advancement of religious freedom in South Africa.

Papers will exclusively be presented in person (no online presentations) and approximately 20-25 minutes will be allocated per paper. A detailed schedule will be distributed in due course. If you are interested in participating, send a 300-400 word paper proposal to: [defreitas@ufs.ac.za](mailto:defreitas@ufs.ac.za) and [h.vancoller@ru.ac.za](mailto:h.vancoller@ru.ac.za) by no later than 30 September 2025. Each individual author may submit only one proposal. Accepted proposals for papers will be confirmed by 31 October 2025. A selection of conference papers will be considered for publication.

The conference will be held in Bloemfontein, South Africa, and hosted by the University of the Free State, in proud partnership with the International Institute for Religious Freedom (Cape Town), the University of Johannesburg and Rhodes University.

All participants are expected to pay for their own costs. The registration fee for the conference is R1200-00.

For enquiries: [defreitas@ufs.ac.za](mailto:defreitas@ufs.ac.za)

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