

Alliance Defense Fund

Protecting religious freedom around the world

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The Alliance Defense Fund is a servant organization that provides the resources for the legal defense of religious freedom, the sanctity of life, marriage and the family. While founded in the United States of America in 1994 and focusing on that country, it now extends its efforts to legally defending religious freedom around the world.

Alliance Defense Fund and Advocates International have collaborated in a variety of significant cases across the globe.

In *A, B & C v. Ireland*, a major victory was achieved for the most vulnerable at the European Court of Human Rights. Ireland's constitution bans abortion except to save the life of the mother. Abortion advocates launched this case as an effort to create an international and binding right to abortion on demand in all forty-seven European nations subject to the court's jurisdiction. Representing several international pro-life organizations, an intervention action was filed to defend Ireland's law. The international court awarded a significant victory for the right to life in affirming Ireland's abortion restriction.

In *Lautsi v. Italy*, another case at the European Court of Human Rights, a victory was achieved to win the right to display the cross within Italy's public school classrooms. An Italian atheist brought suit for an injunction against the cross on the grounds that it offended him. Representing thirty-three Christian members of the European Parliament, an intervention was filed, helping to win this important victory.

ADF is assisting AI member and prominent UK barrister Paul Diamond in two important cases also at the European Court of Human Rights. The first, *McFarlane v. United Kingdom*, involves a Christian psycho-therapist with a religious belief in opposition to homosexual behavior. The case will test whether his protected right of conscience was violated when he was terminated for being unable, for religious reasons, to counsel a same-sex couple. The second case, *Chaplin v. United Kingdom*, involves a hospital policy banning the wearing of religious cross necklaces by medical personnel, but permitting Muslim hijabs (head coverings). A Christian nurse was terminated for wearing her cross and alleged non-compliance with the policy, which she felt was wrongly discriminatory against Christians. The international court very recently granted review to both cases.

Last year, with the direct participation of AI Indian lawyers, Robin David and Tehmina Aurora, the *India Initiative* was launched. In 2007 and 2008 violent anti-

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Christian fundamentalist Hindu mobs went “on a rampage” in the Indian state of Orissa resulting in the deaths of more than 100 Christians, rapes, and destruction of several thousand Christian homes and churches. More than 60,000 Christians were left homeless. Local law enforcement was widely viewed as complicit in failing to stop the violence. Anti-Christian sentiment has continued with six Indian states enacting “anti-conversion” laws making it a crime, or unduly burdensome, to convert from Hinduism to Christianity.

The initiative was launched to bring criminal and civil actions against the perpetrators of the killings and mayhem, to both punish and stop intimidation against Christians. The very first criminal convictions have been obtained against the perpetrators. More than 100 criminal cases have been brought with 18 convictions to date, including two life-sentences. Over \$100,000 in civil compensation has been recovered for more than 350 victims.

A landmark lawsuit has also been filed challenging the “anti-conversion” laws under the Indian Constitution, which guarantees freedom of religion. An encouraging early ruling has been won but the case will take several years to complete. If successful, it will remove a significant barrier for religious freedom to 300 million Indian Dalits, formerly called “untouchables.”

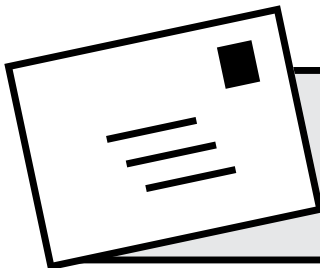
Finally, ADF, AI, and other Christian organizations have collaborated in making two important submissions to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, defending the fundamental right of Christians to evangelize and call others to repentance. The submissions respond to arguments raised at the UN that would make any disputation over truth claims of other religions, such as Islam or Hinduism, “hate speech.” We seek to prevent the UN from interfering with Christian expression.

ADF offers various services including legal representation, attorney and law student training, case funding, and resource materials, including books on Common Law and Natural law for lawyers.

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