

IRF ROUNDTABLE NIGERIA

Purpose and Overview

The IRF Roundtable Nigeria is an informal group of leaders that represents diverse communities, religious, ethnic and geographical backgrounds who share ideas and information and propose joint advocacy actions to address issues and challenges regarding the protection and promotion of fundamental rights and freedoms particularly the freedom of religion.

The goal of the IRF Roundtable is to reverse the rising tide of restrictions on religious freedom, religious intolerance and discrimination.

The IRF Roundtable gather regularly to discuss IRF issues on a non-attribution basis. It is simply a safe space where participants gather, speak freely in sharing ideas and information, and propose joint advocacy actions to address specific IRF issues and problems. In response to various participant-led initiatives regarding the protection and promotion of freedom of religion, conscience, and belief in Nigeria, all participants have the opportunity to self-select into coalitions of the willing.

The Roundtable meets regularly with attendance from civil society and governmental institutions, including senior staff members from MDAs, the Inter-religious Council of Nigeria, Nigerian Human Rights Commission, the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary as well as the International Community.

Mission Statement

The mission statement of the IRF Roundtable Nigeria is to promote mutual trust and respect, peaceful co-existence and justice.

Section 10 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) provides that “The Government of the Federation or of a State shall not adopt any religion as State Religion.”

In furtherance of this, the IRF Roundtable shall advocate for the protection of fundamental rights and freedom particularly the protection of religious freedom and minority rights as enshrined in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 8 of the African Charter and Section 38 of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution as amended which state that “Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom (either alone or in community with others, and in public or in private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.”

IRF also seeks to emphasize compliance with Section 42 (1) of the Constitution which provides that “A citizen of Nigeria of a particular community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion or political opinion shall not, by reason only that he is such a person: -

(a) be subjected either expressly by, or in the practical application of, any law in force in Nigeria or any executive or administrative action of the government, to disabilities or restrictions to which citizens of Nigeria of other communities, ethnic groups, places of origin, sex, religious or political opinions are not made subject.”