



- INVITATION -

The Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations

cordially invites you to attend a lunch panel

**moderated by Ambassador Andrew Bennett,
Canada's Ambassador for Religious Freedom**

on:

**INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS
TO PROMOTE AND PROTECT FREEDOM OF RELIGION:
WHERE CAN THE UNITED NATIONS PLAY AN EFFECTIVE ROLE?**

**On MONDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1:00PM - 3:00PM
Conference Building, CR 1, United Nations Headquarters**

Panellists:

- Dr. Heiner Bielefeldt, Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Religion or Belief
- Ms. Rita Izsak, Independent Expert for Minority Issues
- Dr. Ahmed Shaheed, Chairman of the Universal Rights Group

Lunch will be served at 1:00pm before the panel starts.

RSVP to prmnysvp@international.gc.ca or +1-212-848-1188

Canada



CONCEPT NOTE

INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO PROMOTE AND PROTECT FREEDOM OF RELIGION:

WHERE CAN THE UNITED NATIONS PLAY AN EFFECTIVE ROLE?

This lunch panel moderated by Ambassador Andrew Bennett, Canada's Ambassador for Religious Freedom will examine the role of the United Nations in promoting and protecting freedom of religion. Drawing from the expertise of Dr. Heiner Bielefeldt, Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Religion or Belief; Ms. Rita Izsak, Independent Expert for Minority Issues, and; Dr. Ahmed Shaheed, Executive Director of Universal Rights, this panel will identify challenges and opportunities for the United Nations and its member states in promoting and protecting this fundamental human right.

The Discussion will elaborate upon the scope and implementation of Article 18 of the Universal Declaration Human Rights which protects freedom of thought, conscience and religion; including the freedom to change one's religious belief and manifest one's belief in teaching, practise, worship, and observance. the current situation of religious communities, many of which continue to experience, in increasing intensity, threats, violence, and persecution.

It is hoped that this will be an insightful discussion with experts in parallel to current Third Committee negotiations on both the EU resolution on Freedom of Religion or Belief and the OIC-led resolution on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief. It is also a timely prelude to the 2013 UN forum on Minority issues, which will focus on the protection of the rights of religious minorities.