

1) Conference on “The Impact of Emergency Rules on Religious Freedom, with Special Regard to Religious Minorities”, Department of Law & Ph.D in Legal Studies, University of Messina, July 24-25, 2024

Abstract: The conference will analyze the status of the religious minorities in different geographical and legal contexts and the impact of the emergency generated by the Covid-19 pandemic and the war on the legal treatment of the minority groups. Emergencies have a negative impact on the collective dimension of the freedom of religion, exacerbating the already fragile balance between majorities and religious minorities. The practices and the rituals of minorities have less chance of being safeguarded for several reasons: a) they could not/were able to avail of alternative way of worship; b) some media – such as television – have not been made available equally to all religious groups; c) some religious communities enjoy from the outset a legal status of minor protection (e.g., in Italy religions without agreement with the State). In some non-European contexts, where the minorities are already victims of discrimination linked to specific social, historical, economic and political contexts, and the religious factor is the subject of increasing politicization, the pandemic emergency has further exacerbated intra-confessional divisions and the contagion containment standards have also been used to justify forms of repression, persecution and discrimination against traditionally marginalized groups, some of whom are also accused of contributing to the spread of Covid-19 as well of war fighters support. With an inter-sectional approach, the unit of Messina will analyze the different ways of managing the religious pluralism and the complex relationships between minorities and traditional religions in various legal systems, investigating the role played by the religious factor in the process of integration of different cultural and religious identities. The complexity and the multidimensional character of the religious phenomenon, and its intimate connection with social, economic and political factors, will be studied in an interdisciplinary approach and a multi-level analysis. The conference will investigate if and how the impact on the initial legal framework of the extraordinary measures aimed to contain the spread of Covid-19, have accentuated inequalities and conflicts, probably emphasizing dangerous anti-democratic and anti-pluralistic tendencies. The goal is to provide an overview of the different models of management of religious diversity, to identify policies that can encourage the implementation of the principles of equality and non- discrimination. The speakers will focus on both legislative and jurisprudential choices and on documents that allow to identify the strategies pursued in different legal contexts in terms of social cohesion and constructive dialogue among different systems of values. Concrete operational regulatory and administrative solutions will be proposed with a view to the adoption of inclusive anti-discrimination public policies, which can balance the specific needs of minority groups with public health protection needs, security and stability.

Scientific and Organizing Committee: Adelaide Madera, Pierluigi Consorti, Angelo Licastro, Marta Tigano, Elena D’Agostino, Marcella Distefano

List of Speakers:

Pierluigi CONSORTI

(Full Professor of Law and Religion, University of Pisa, and Principal Investigator of the Project of Relevant National Interest)

“An Overview of the Project of National Relevance “Religion and

Emergency Rules”, its Scope and its Aims”

Rossella BOTTONI

(Associate Professor of Law and Religion, University of Trento) *Religious Minorities in States of Emergency: the UN Perspective*

Fernand DE VARNENNES

(UN Former Special Rapporteur on Minorities) *Religious Minorities in Times of Crisis: the Growing Threats of Discrimination, Securitisation, and Nationalism*

Marietta VAN DER TOL

(Post-doctorate Fellow, Lecturer at St. Peter’s College, Oxford University) *“Legitimate Aims”: Security, Identity, and Religion in Europe*

Judd BIRDSALL

(Senior Fellow Department of Theology and Religious Studies Georgetown University, Washington)
The International Debate over Religious Freedom

in Ukraine

Elizabeth CLARK

(Associate Director of the International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Brigham Young University, UT)
Non-Derogability of Freedom of Religion and

Necessity of Limitations: the Case of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church

Dmytro VOVK

(Visiting Professor, Cardozo University, NY; Former Director of the Center for the Rule of Law and Religion at the Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University, Ukraine)
Religious Freedom and National Security Through the Lens of the Russia-Ukraine War

Pasquale ANNICCHINO

(Assistant Professor of Law and Religion, University of Foggia) *The “Russian World”, National Security and the Protection of the Rights of Religious Minorities*

Maksym VASIN

(Director for International Advocacy and Research at the Institute for Religious Freedom, Ukraine, Ph.D in Law)
The Impact of the Russian Invasion on Religious Minorities in Ukraine

Kyriaki TOPIDI

(European Centre for Minority Issues, Flensburg)
Serving God and the Country? Religious Minority Self-Identification in Ukraine after February 2022

Javier MARTÍNEZ-TORRÓN

(Full Professor of Church-State Relations at the Complutense University, Madrid, and ICLARS President)
Religious Freedom under Emergency Rules: Some Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic

Roberta MEDDA WINDISCHER

(Senior Researcher EURAC, Bolzano)
Religious Minorities and Health Emergencies: Global Approaches and Lessons Learnt from the Covid-19 Pandemic

Brett SCHARFFS

(Rex E. Lee Chair and Professor of Law, J. Reuben Clark Law School, BYU University, UT and Director of the International Center for Law and Religion)

The US Approach to Regulation during the

COVID-19 Pandemic

Geoffrey C. UPTON

(Assistant Professor of Political Science, Seton Hall University, NJ) *Church and State in Time of Crisis: Religious Minority Group Rights and Protections and States of Emergency After the COVID Cases*

Jonathan FOX - Moira DEITCH (Yehuda Avner Professor of Religion and Politics, Department of Political Science, Bar-Ilan University, Israel)

COVID-Based Restrictions on Religious Freedom in Sub-Saharan Africa

Tornike METREVELI

(Associate Senior Lecturer in European Studies, Associate Professor in Sociology of Religions Lund University)

Sacred Spaces and Social Distancing:

The Impact of COVID-19 on Orthodox Christianity

Adelaide MADERA

(Full Professor of Law and Religion, University of Messina,

and Associate Investigator of the Project of Relevant National Interest, Unit of Research of Messina)

Closing Remarks: Religious Minorities in Times of Crisis

Sponsorship: Diresom, ICLARS, ICLRS, Alumnime, Accademia Peloritana dei Pericolanti, ELSA Messina, ADEC, Resilience, FSCIRE.

2) Conference on “Religious Freedom of Minority Groups in Times of Ongoing Crisis.” May 22-23, 2025, Department of Law Ph.D in Legal Studies, University of Messina.

Abstract: Part of a PRIN project, the event aims to examine the interaction between emergency law and religious freedom, focusing specifically on the impact of the emergency generated by the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian-Ukrainian conflict on the legal treatment of minority groups. Emergencies negatively impact the collective dimension of religious freedom, exacerbating the already fragile balance between religious majorities and minorities. The purpose of the conference is to examine whether, and to what extent, emergency regulations have a discriminatory effect on religious minority groups. Indeed, these groups often complain that seemingly neutral regulations enacted during emergencies have a disproportionate impact on their practices and rituals and have been conduits of contagion. Furthermore, in some geographical contexts, where minorities are already victims of discrimination linked to specific social, historical, economic, and political contexts, and where religion is increasingly politicized, the conference aims to explore how the pandemic emergency has further exacerbated intra-confessional divisions. The key question is whether contagion containment measures have also been used to justify forms of repression, persecution, and discrimination against traditionally marginalized groups, some of whom are also accused of contributing to the spread of Covid-19. In turn, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict has generated new challenges for various religious communities, resulting in human rights violations. Although violations of religious freedom have been observed in Ukraine since 2014 (in Crimea

and other occupied territories), Russian aggression against Ukraine since 2022 has exacerbated this phenomenon, in terms of the destruction or expropriation of places of worship, persecution of religious minorities, and crimes against ministers of worship, culminating in controversial regulatory responses. Bringing together leading scholars from diverse geographical areas, the conference aims to analyze the different approaches to managing religious pluralism and the complex relationships between minorities and traditional religions in different legal systems, exploring the role played by religion in the process of integrating diverse cultures, cultural, and religious identities. The complexity and multidimensional nature of the religious phenomenon, and its intimate connection with social, economic, and political factors, will be analyzed from an interdisciplinary perspective. The various presentations will explore whether and how the impact of emergency measures on the initial legal framework has accentuated inequalities and conflicts, likely emphasizing dangerous anti-democratic and anti-pluralistic tendencies. The conference aims to provide an overview of the different models for managing religious diversity, in order to identify policies that can encourage the implementation of the principles of equality and non-discrimination. The investigation will extend to the various legislative and case law choices with a view to comparing the strategies pursued in different legal contexts in terms of social cohesion and constructive dialogue between different value systems. It will also identify concrete operational solutions, both regulatory and administrative, for the adoption of inclusive and anti-discriminatory public policies capable of balancing the specific needs of minority groups with the requirements of public health, security, and stability.

Scientific and Organizing Committee: Adelaide Madera, Pierluigi Consorti, Angelo Licastro, Marta Tigano, Elena D'Agostino, Marcella Distefano

List of speakers:

Maria D'Arienzo

(Full Professor of Law and Religion and Canon Law, Federico II University, Naples, and President of ADEC)

“Introductory Remarks”

Javier MARTÍNEZ TORRÓN

(Full Professor of Church-State Relations, Complutense University, Madrid, and President of ICLARS)

“Relations between State and religion: some lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic”

Jeffrey HAYNES

(Emeritus Professor of Politics, London Metropolitan University)

“Religious Freedom, Religious Minorities and International Relations”

Thiago ALVES PINTO

(Departmental Lecturer in [Legal Studies and Diplomatic Studies](#))

Director of Studies in [Religion and Theology](#), University of Oxford)

“Rethinking Limitations to Freedom of Religion or Belief”

Mark L. MOVSESIAN

(Frederick A. Whitney Professor of Contract Law, Director, Mattone Center for Law and Religion, St. John's University, New York)

“COVID and the rise of the Nones in the US”

Peter PETKOFF

(Associate Professor, Tutorial Law Fellow and Director of the Centre for Law and Religion, Regent's Park College, University of Oxford)

“Emergency Rules and Weaponisation of Religious Cultural Heritage”

Alexis ARTAUD DE LA FERRIERE

(Lecturer in Sociology, Royal Holloway, University of London)

“Meaning making in times of crisis management: moral interpretations of emergency rules”

Adina PORTARU

(Senior Counsel, ADF International)

“Figel v. Slovakia: a precedent-setting case at the European Court of Human Rights?”

Andrea PIN

(Full Professor Of Public Comparative Law, University of Padua)

“When Is Freedom Dangerous? Religious Freedom between Polarization, Weaponization, and Reconciliation”

Regina ELSNER

(appointed professor for Eastern Churches and Ecumenical Theology, University of Münster)

“Religious freedom in war. The securitization of religion in Russia’s war against Ukraine”

Sponsorship: ICLARS, DIRESOM, ELSA Messina, ADEC, Ordine Avvocati Messina

- 3) **July 2, 2025: webinar on “Religious Freedom in Ukraine”**, where Prof. Madera led a discussion between academics (Prof. Elizabeth A. Clark - BYU University, Dr. Kiriaki Topidi - European Centre for Minority Issues, Flensburg, Prof. Pasquale Annicchino, University of Foggia, and Mr. Viktor Yelenskyi (Head of the State Service of Ukraine for Ethnic Affairs and Freedom of Conscience - DESS), on the securitization of religious freedom in Ukraine, due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the implications in terms of religious freedom arising from the enforcement of the controversial 2024 law, which bans religious organizations with ties to the Russian Orthodox Church. The event was part of the 2025 ICLARS webinar series and was hosted by the University of Messina via Microsoft Teams.

- 4) **EUARE 2025, July 9, 2025, Panel on “Conflicts, Emergency Rules and Religious Minorities”.**

Abstract: Modern democracies are undergoing unparalleled times. The war in Ukraine, October 7th 2023 and the conflict in Gaza, acted as a stress test for democratic societies, giving rise to political and economic uncertainty, and to decline of public trust. Emergency challenges significantly affected the exercise of fundamental rights, whose protection is grounded in constitutional, supranational and international provisions. The panel aims to examine the interaction between emergency law and religious freedom during conflicts in the European landscape (and beyond). The focus will be on the impact of the emergency rules and policies on religious freedom and their implications for minority groups. As research has shown, emergencies negatively impact the collective dimension of religious freedom, exacerbating the complex dynamics between religious majorities and minorities.

Furthermore, this panel aims to investigate the impact of emergency rules as linked to conflicts on rights of religious minorities and rising discriminations and prejudices against religious groups in times of crisis. Finally, it aims to address future scenarios in Europe (and beyond) for managing religious diversity and implementing the principles of equality and non-discrimination, with a view to enhancing inclusive and anti-discriminatory public policies, and reconciling the protection and promotion of minority groups with the public interest to guarantee public health, security and sustainability.

Keywords: Emergency Rules, Conflicts, Religious Freedom, Religious Minorities

Proponents: Adelaide Madera, Roberta Medda-Windischer

Chair: Jocelyne Cesari (Georgetown University), Adelaide Madera (University of Messina), Roberta Medda-Windischer (EURAC, Bolzano)

Speakers:

Dmytro Vovk (Visiting Professor of “War in Context”, Cardozo School of Law, Head of the Center for the Rule of Law and Religion Studies, Yaroslav Muddy National Law University, Ukraine,): “Decolonization Emergency. Ukraine’s legislation banning the Russian Orthodox Church and affiliated religious organizations”

Denys Brylov (Visiting Research Fellow, Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin): “Ukrainian swing: state confessional policy between denominationalism and repressive approach”

Asher Maoz (Founding Dean of the Peres Academic Center Law School, Retired Professor of Constitutional Law, State and Religion, Freedom of Speech, Family Law, and Succession Law, Faculty of Law, Tel-Aviv University). “Old and new Antisemitism”

Adelaide Madera (Full Professor of Law and Religion and Canon Law, Department of Law, University of Messina) Roberta Medda--Windischer (Senior Researcher, EURAC, Bolzano), Alexandra Budabin (Senior Researcher, EURAC, Bolzano), “Religious minorities and the war in Ukraine: between conflicts and prospects for peace”

Merilin Kiviorg (Associate Professor of International Law, University of Tartu) “Freedom of religion or belief and national security; the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war on legal discourse in the Baltic States”

Regina Elsner (appointed professor for Eastern Churches and Ecumenical Theology, University of Münster): “Securitization of Religion: Contexted Orthodoxy in the Baltic States”

Andrew Bunnell (University College, London): “Invoking the Sacred, Enforcing the State: Emergency Powers and the Logic of Religious Exclusion”

Adi Marer (Communication Coordinator of the Rossing Center for Education and Dialogue, degree in the Department of Sociology-Anthropology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem) “Restricted holiness: navigating faith and barriers during Easter 2024 Easter 2024 in Jerusalem”