



IRCRA Religious Diplomacy Program

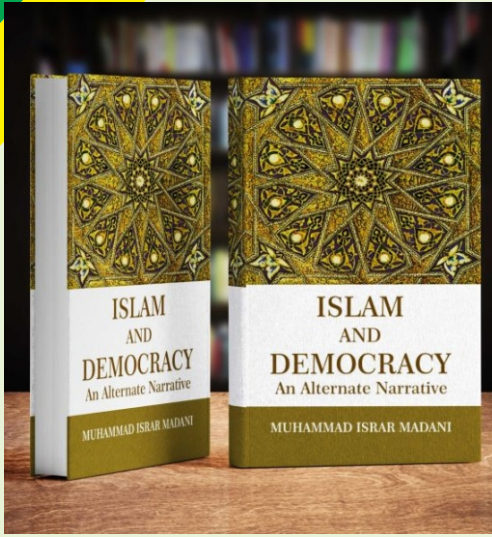
Enhancing Understanding of Democracy and Religious Freedom in Muslim World

Pakistani intellectuals, religious and
Political leaders' visit to Indonesia

November 26 - December 04, 2023



International Research Council for Religious Affairs



Message from the President

International Religious Council for Religious Affairs (IRCRA) strives to build the Muslim case for democracy, pluralism, religious freedom, gender inclusivity and the role of religious institutions in promoting human dignity and justice under its *Religious Diplomacy Program*. IRCRA is interested in understanding the models of democracy as practiced in Muslim countries like Indonesia, Tunisia, Malaysia, as well as overall in South Asia, Middle East, European Union, UK and other regional countries as practical examples.

The program is aimed at understanding transformation of Muslim Democrats around the world. The current international exchange program to Indonesia will strengthen the relationship between Pakistani and Indonesian institutions and experts. Both country delegates will have fruitful exchange of best democratic practices in the Muslim world besides other issues of interest like education and social cohesion. It is hoped that the concerns, if any, regarding democracy and democratic system will be addressed enabling and equipping the participants to further promote democratic ideologies and values in their communities.

The Pakistani delegates of the exchange program to Indonesia include prominent Pakistani intellectuals, scholars, media persons and religious and political leaders representing different mainstream political and religious parties, religious institutions and other civil society/development sector organizations.

The models of democracy practiced in many Muslim countries particularly in Indonesia should be objectively discussed to pave the way for a larger dialogue among the Muslim nations about the democratic practices, values, requirements and imperatives for political stability and bright future of Muslim masses. It is inevitable for countries like Pakistan to put itself on the right track of democracy. Lessons should be learned what happened hitherto and need to plan for the future for the prosperity of our country.

IRCRA is grateful to **Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs** for facilitating this exchange program in Indonesia and arranging visits and meetings of Pakistani delegates to prominent Indonesian Institutions, ministries, government officials, intellectuals, including political, social, academic and religious leaders. IRCRA also expresses its gratitude to **National Endowment for Democracy (NED)** and other worthy partners and participating institutions from Pakistan, Indonesia and beyond for overall supporting IRCRA for its Religious Diplomacy Program for promotion of democratic values in the Muslim societies.

Muhammad Israr

President

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Why Indonesia:

Indonesia is the largest Muslim-majority country in the world. Home to approximately 230 million people of which more than 85% follow Islam. Indonesia is also the world's third largest democracy after India and United States of America. Islam and democracy are said to be in a relationship fraught with problems as the former, allegedly, does not allow secular law to be put above divine law or accept the legitimacy of worldly authorities over the divine revelations. This relationship is less problematic in Indonesia, a democratic Muslim-majority country, the argument goes, due to the syncretic forms of Islam practiced in the archipelago state that are less dogmatic, and hence more conducive to democratic principles. While this is a valuable point, various factors extraneous to 'moderate Indonesian Islam,' such as a fragmented Islamic authority in civil society, a weakly institutionalized party system as well as dynamics triggered by recent institutional reforms all play a role in the continuing insignificance of political Islam in the country.

OBJECTIVES

- I. To strengthen bilateral relation and cross national cooperation between Pakistan and Indonesia through religious diplomacy.
- II. To develop the cross national channels of communications that focus on understanding Muslim democrats (example: *Nahdatul Ulema*, *Muhammadiyah*) and their role in religious and social inclusion.
- III. To capacitate Academia, Religious leaders & Media to promote democratic practices in Pakistan and Indonesia.
- IV. To initiate an exchange program between Pakistan and Indonesia religious-political parties, practitioners and scholars for sharing the best practices and mutual learning to strengthen democracy and democratic Ideologies, cross-national cooperation in the field of democratic dialogues, religious freedom, gender inclusion and best practices across regions.

Proposed Activities in Indonesia:

- I. Meeting and conversations with Indonesian parliamentarians for an increased understanding of Indonesia's democratic system and key institutions.
- II. Meeting with leadership of (*Nahdatul Ulema*, *Muhammadiyah* and any other relevant authorities as recommended by Indonesian officials).
- III. Visit of the selected Madrasa institutions (*pesantren*) and collaborate with ministry of education.
- IV. Meeting with Ministry of Religious Affairs and Ministry of Education.
- V. City tour, visit to cultural places and beautiful locations.

International Research Council for Religious Affairs

(IRCRA) is a non-governmental and non-profit organization founded in 2013 in Pakistan. IRCRA's mission is to prevent, mitigate, transform inter, and intra-religious, ethnic and social conflicts through education, research and community engagements. IRCRA promotes democratic pluralism, democratic values, tolerance, and peace through capacity-building and civic engagement programs. The organization engages government officials, religious leaders/scholars, media and political leaders and civil society actors to play a critical role in conflict resolutions and community cohesion.



Through its capacity-building and community engagement programs, IRCRA has trained & engaged more than 10,000 local religious actors, community leaders, editors of religious magazines, madrasah teachers, mosque imams, and inter & intra-faith leaders, youth, civil society activist, media persons and member of religious and political parties. These editors and writers of religious media, newspapers in turn wrote/published more than 500 articles contributing on topics like countering hate speech, promoting democratic values, Democratic transition in Muslim world, Religious Freedom, inter- religion dialogues, interfaith harmony, supporting the polio eradication campaigns, peace education campaigns, rule of law, democratic pluralism and civic engagements programs across the country. IRCRA developed Human Rights, Civic Education courses, and training manuals for male and female teachers, & trained more than hundred teachers in South Punjab & other areas of Pakistan.




IRCRA workshop alumni have initiated numerous interventions within their communities to counter extremist narratives, developed tolerance building programs, supported gender-based initiatives like post US withdrawal from Afghanistan as the Afghan women faced more hardships during migration and numerous groups of Afghan people migrated to Pakistan. IRCRA Alumni developed a forum titled Afghanistan-Pakistan Women Association (APWA) to support Afghan young girl's education, migration status and POR cards etc.




IRCRA launched a digital media hub titled Tahqiqaat.pk for understanding the Muslim case of democracy, freedom, human rights issues. These write-ups provide an academic perspective to the practitioners and scholars. (www.tahqiqaat.pk)




IRCRA developed a Religious Diplomacy Forum to promote the bilateral relations with regional and Muslim countries through religious diplomacy. For more details, please visit our website: www.ircra.org




List of Delegates



26 November – 4 December 2023

	Names	Designation / Brief Profile
1	 Mr. Khurshid Ahmad Nadeem	Chairman, <i>Rahmatulil Aalamin Authority</i> , Islamabad. According to the ordinance issued by the President of Pakistan Arif Alvi, the <i>National Rahmatul Lil Aalameen Authority</i> will conduct research on the prophetic biography and hadiths to build the character of the youth. In addition, the authority will consult with relevant experts to make the biography of Muhammad a part of the curriculum. Mr. Khurshid Ahmed Nadeem is also a known Pakistani Urdu columnist, TV host, and author. He has served as the editor of the academic journal <i>Fikr-o-Nazar</i> , which is published quarterly by the International Islamic University, Islamabad. khurshidnadeem@hotmail.com
2	 Maulana Muhammad Tayyib Tahiri	Head, Jamat e Ishaat wa Tauheed. Chancellor, Dar Ul Quran Panjpir; Principal, Dar ul Quran, Swabi, KP; Head, Wahdat ul Madaris. Wahdatul-Madaris has been established in Pakistan in 1957 as a madrasah board with more than 2000 madrasahs across Pakistan. Each year around 50,000 students of Islamic religious curriculum appear in examination through this madrasah board. Mr. Tayyib is famous religious leader with a large number of followers in Pakistan. https://wmi.edu.pk/muhammadtayyibtahiri@gmail.com
3	 Barrister Zafarullah Khan	A Pakistani Politician, Barrister-at-Law and Writer/Author. He is the central leader of Pakistan Muslim League Noon (PML-N). He has served as Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Law/Federal Minister, Government of Pakistan (2016-2018); Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Human Rights, Minister of State, Government of Pakistan (2014–15); Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Economic Affairs/ Minister of State Government of Pakistan (2014–15); Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Cabinet Division/ Minister of State Government of Pakistan (2014–15); Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Parliamentary Affairs/Minister of State Government of Pakistan (2014). Mail@zafarullahkhan.com

	Names	Designation / Brief Profile
4	 Mufti Nouman Naeem	Head/ Chancellor, Jamia Binnoria, Karachi. International students from around 60 countries, including from Indonesia study in his madrasah. It's one of Pakistan's biggest madrasahs with foreign students and significant influence over followers of Sunni School of Thought in Pakistan. In June 2020, Mr. Noman was appointed the chancellor of Jamia Binoria following the death of his father Mufti Muhammad Naeem. He also serves as the vice-president of Majma-ul-Uloom Al-Islamia, an educational board formed in May 2021, to reconcile between the religious and secular education. https://binoria.org/nomannaeem01@gmail.com
5	 Maulana Rashid ul Haq Sami	Deputy Vice Chancellor, Darul Uloom Haqqania, Akora Khattak. He is also a central leader of Jamiat Ulema Islam (S). Madrasa Haqannia was founded by Maulana Abdul Haq in the tradition of the Darul Uloom Deoband seminary in India, where he had earlier taught. A number of leading members of the Afghan Taliban, studied in Darul Uloom Haqqania. The madrasah has a large numbers of graduates in Central Asia, Middle East and Afghanistan. https://academicinfluence.com/schools/darul-uloom-haqqania_editor_alhaq@yahoo.com
6	 Barrister Muhammad Ali Khan Saif	Barrister Muhammad Ali Khan Saif is an Advocate, at Supreme Court of Pakistan. Member of Senate of Pakistan, from March 2015 to March 2021. He served as Federal Minister for tourism and Youth Affairs from November 2007 to March 2008 in the caretaker federal cabinet of Prime Minister Muhammad Mian Soomro. He was elected to the Senate of Pakistan as a candidate of Muttahida Qaumi Movement in 2015 Pakistani Senate election. He retired on 11 March 2021 as a member of the senate of Pakistan upon his completion of 6-year term. He has been Provincial Information Minister for KPK and PTI spokesperson for the province in the last PTI government of Prime Minister Imran Khan (2018-2022). maksaf@gmail.com

	Names	Designation / Brief Profile
7	 <p>Ms. Beenish Irfan Khan</p>	<p>Beenish Irfan Khan currently serves as the Director of Plannings at the Pakistan Development Foundation. She is a dedicated educationist and social activist, focusing predominantly on advocacy and initiatives pertaining to gender inclusion and women's rights in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province of Pakistan. Her efforts encompass a range of activities aimed at promoting education, gender equality, empowering women, and addressing the distinct challenges and issues faced by women in the region. Her role involves raising awareness, mobilizing communities, and fostering collaboration with diverse stakeholders to advance the principles of gender equality and women's rights, thereby contributing to positive social change in the respective regions.</p> <p>beenishirfan5958@gmail.com</p>
8	 <p>Mr. Malik Habib Orakzai</p>	<p>Chairman, Pakistan International Human Rights Organization (PIHRO); Chairman, Pakistan Red Crescent Society, KP. He is the founder and leader of a tribal party namely Mutaihadaa Qabail Party. PIHRO is a non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights in Pakistan and beyond. Its mission is to create a society where every individual's rights are respected, protected, and fulfilled. They advocate for the rights of vulnerable groups, provide legal aid, conduct research and advocacy, and raise awareness on human rights issues. Their goal is to build a more just and inclusive society where human rights are at the core of every decision.</p> <p>Orakzai7171@gmail.com</p>
9	 <p>Mr. Mujtaba Muhammad Rathore</p>	<p>Mr. Rathore is a freelance journalist, writer and editor of Urdu Monthly Journal Tajziat. He is the author of three books beside many reports, articles and research papers. He has wide-ranging expertise in the areas of conflict and peace studies, peacebuilding, countering violent extremism, rule of law, international law, governance, human rights, education, interfaith harmony and media studies. He religiously belongs to Sufi school of thought and professionally he has experience in media and development sector.</p> <p>rathoremujtaba@gmail.com</p>

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10	 <p>Mr. Muhammad Ismail Khan</p>	<p>Muhammad Ismail Khan is a political analyst and policy expert. He previously worked with Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT), International Crisis Group on issues around counter extremism, counter terrorism, social inclusion, and democracy. He has also taught in visiting capacity at Bahria University.</p> <p>ismkhan84@gmail.com</p>
11	 <p>Dr. Farkhanda Mansoor Zia</p>	<p>Dr. Farkhanda Zia has held various high level positions including Dean Faculty of Shariah and Law, Vice-President (Female Campus) and was serving as a Director General of the Shariah Academy, International Islamic University, Islamabad. She has also served as a member of Council of Islamic Ideology (CII). She has over 33 years of experience in Academia and legal profession (at national and international level). In addition, her research expertise have supported her in publishing several high level books which are part of curriculum globally as well as policy making in Pakistan. Her most recent book titled "Dukhtaran-e-Pakistan" a national narrative on the role of women in curbing violent extremism in the society was launched at the Presidency of Pakistan and endorsed by the President of Pakistan.</p> <p>Dr.farkhanda@iiu.edu.pk</p>
12	 <p>Mr. Ejaz-ur-Rehman</p>	<p>With more than twenty years' experience in social and development sector of Pakistan; using communication, social mobilization and social networking in education & health: the two power indicators of social development as the main tools of reform and sustainable development. He has been successful in streamlining the gender, training & education management initiatives for the school and higher education communities in Pakistan through collaborations with the Aga Khan Development Network, European Commission, USAID, USEFP, UNICEF and Higher Education Commission.</p> <p>ejazurrehman37@yahoo.com</p>

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13	 <p>Mr. Syed Rashad A. S. Bukhari</p>	<p>Rashad Bukhari is Director Communication and Development, International Research Council for Religious Affairs (IRCRA). With over 25 years of experience as a development practitioner, Rashad has worked on responsible and senior positions and continues to have consistent and passionate interest in educational and professional development of the Muslim youth in the contexts of Muslim-Western relations, political/religious violence and extremism, and various aspects of the political Islam in the Muslim societies. He has written and edited books and chapters, papers and newspaper articles on social and political issues. (www.ircra.org)</p> <p>rashad@ircra.org</p>
14	 <p>Mr. Muhammad Israr</p>	<p>Founder & President of International Research Council for Religious Affairs (IRCRA). IRCRA under his leadership has developed and initiated different projects in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Indonesia & Tunisia on issues like democratic transition in Muslim world, religious freedom, democratic ideologies, violent extremist ideologies in South Asia and alternate narrative of inclusion and peace. He has hosted TV shows, edited & authored more than 08 books & a number of training manuals that delve into diverse topics including democratic ideologies, peacebuilding, conflict transformation, religious freedom, political matters, gender equality, religious inclusion, citizen protection, and international humanitarian laws, all tailored to the specific contexts of Pakistan and Afghanistan. He serves as the editor for the digital magazine www.tahqiqaat.pk a platform dedicated to the dissemination of online articles. (www.ircra.org)</p> <p>president@ircra.org</p>

Partnering institutions:



National Rahmatul-Hil-Alameen Wa Khatam an-Nabiyyin Authority



Council of Islamic Ideology



Paigham-e-Pakistan



Pakistan Muslim League (N)



Pakistan Tehreek Insaf



Jamiat Ulama Islam (S)



Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia



Pakistan International Human Rights Organization (PIHRO)



Pakistan Red Crescent Society



Darul Uloom Haqqania



Jamia Binnoria



Wahdatul-Madaris



Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Indonesia



Embassy of Indonesia, Islamabad



National Endowment for Democracy



International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development (INFID)







Organized BY

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