



## ODIHR Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief (2022 – 2025)



**Thiago Alves Pinto (Finland)** is the Director of Studies in Theology and Religious Studies and a Departmental Lecturer in Legal Studies and International Human Rights Law at the Department for Continuing Education, University of Oxford. He is also an Academic Affiliate at the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights and an Ordinary Fellow at Kellogg College at the University of Oxford, as well as a Project Coordinator for the Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion or Belief. Thiago has been actively involved with NGOs, think tanks, academia, as well as national and international organisations, such as the IPPFoRB, SMC, CEDIRE (Brazil), IOM, UNESCO, OHCHR, the UK Parliament, and Chatham House.



**Pasquale Annicchino (Italy)** is a Senior Assistant Professor of law at the University of Foggia (Rtd-B), Italy. In 2020/2021 he taught global law and religion at Central European University (Vienna) and FGV-Direito Rio (Rio de Janeiro). He has also been an adjunct professor of law at Brigham Young University J. Reuben Clark Law School and at St. John's University School of Law. He is a member of the Italian Council for the Relationships with Muslim Communities upon appointment of the Italian Minister of Interior. He is the author of *Law and International Religious Freedom: The Rise and Decline of the American Model* (2017). He has published widely in journals such as: *Oxford Journal of Law and Religion*, *First Amendment Law Review*, *George Washington International Law Review*, *European Public Law*, *Review of Faith and International Affairs*.



**Danil Buglov (Kazakhstan).** Graduated in law and religious studies. Employee of the Association of Religious Associations of Kazakhstan (AROK). The main areas of the organization's work since 1999 have been the protection of the right to freedom of religion or belief, building state-confessional and inter-confessional dialogue, and countering violent extremism and terrorism. As part of its activities, the Association monitors violations of the right to freedom of religion, provides legal assistance to religious organizations and individuals who need to protect their rights and freedoms, conducts religious studies, conducts explanatory work on compliance with legislation in the field of religion, and promotes international standards on freedom of religion and belief in Kazakhstan. He is a young

professional who has already gained some experience, seeking new knowledge and contacts.



**Elizabeth A. Clark (United States)** is Associate Director of the International Center for Law and Religion Studies at Brigham Young University. Professor Clark specializes in religious freedom in Eastern Europe and comparative law and religion. She has written over 40 chapters and articles and authored and/or edited several books, including *Religion and Law in the United States*, *Religion during the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict* with Dmytro Vovk, and *Law and Religion in Post-Communist Europe* with Silvio Ferrari and Cole Durham. In her work with the Center, Professor Clark has spoken at U.N. and OSCE forums at and over 100 academic conferences throughout the world. She has also testified before the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom on

religious freedom issues, has taken part in drafting analyses of pending legislation affecting religious freedom in over a dozen countries, and has written amicus briefs on religious freedom issues for the U.S. Supreme Court.



**Montserrat Gas-Aixendri (Spain)** is a full Professor of Law at the Universitat Internacional de Catalunya School of Law (Barcelona). European JD in Law from Universidad Complutense de Madrid School of Law and a JD in Canon Law from the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross School of Canon Law (Rome). Director of the Institute of Advanced Family Studies. She runs the IsFamily Santander Chair, on family solidarity studies and the Childcare & Family Policies Chair funded by Joaquim Molins Figueras Foundation. Since 2019 is member of the Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief at OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). Research Fellow at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs at Georgetown University in 2014 and at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Law School in 2017. Visiting scholar at the University of Illinois (USA), Universidad de Los Andes (Chile), Universidad Católica de Valparaíso (Chile) and Universidad Austral (Argentina). Her writings include seven books as author, co-author or editor, and more than eighty essays in chapters and journal

articles. Recent publications include: *Advancing Gender Equality without Forfeiting Religious Autonomy: Squaring the Circle?*, *Review of Faith & International Affairs* (forthcoming 2022); *Teaching Catholicism in Public Schools in Spain: the Declaration of Suitability at the Intersection of Religious Autonomy and State Neutrality*, *British Journal of Religious Education* 43/2 (2022); *La aplicación del principio de igualdad de género a las entidades asociativas de la Iglesia católica. Conflictos reales y falsos conflictos*, *Ius Canonicum* (2022); *Religious Diversity in Europe: Legal Implications of Religious Affiliation and Change of Religion* (Routledge 2021); *El derecho negativo a manifestar la religión o creencias en Estrasburgo*, *Revista General de Derecho Canónico y Derecho Eclesiástico del Estado* 54 (2020). Her research is mainly focused on FoRB and Gender Equality; FoRB and accommodation of cultural and religious diversity under State law; the position of religious institutions within the public sphere.



**Mariam Gvatzadze (Georgia)** is a human rights lawyer. She is a co-founder and head of the strategic litigation program at the non-governmental organization, Tolerance and Diversity Institute (TDI), based in Tbilisi, Georgia. Her work focuses on religious freedom, non-discrimination and minority rights. Mariam is a member of the OSCE/ODIHR Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief; and the national consultant for the Council of Europe's anti-discrimination projects. She also contributes to the Forum 18 News Service on the freedom of religion situation in Georgia. Mariam holds a BA degree in law and LLM in international law.



**Dr Jagbir Jhutti-Johal (United Kingdom)** is a Reader in Sikh Studies in the Department of Theology and Religion, University of Birmingham. She has over 20 years' experience in teaching and research, and provides extensive knowledge and experience in Sikh theology and inter-faith dialogue. Her research also focuses on contemporary societal issues in the Sikh community in Britain and beyond such as representation, racialization, mistaken identity, freedom of religion and belief with reference to articles of faith and persecution in certain countries and women's equality. Jagbir began her funded research career as a researcher on several Ministry of Justice funded projects at the University of Oxford looking at the Children Act 1989 proceedings with a particular focus on race and ethnicity in the family justice system. She retains an interest in law, justice and equality issues with a particular focus on freedom of religion or belief and acts as an expert witness for the courts on matter pertaining to Sikh culture, religion and articles of faith. Dr Jhutti-Johal was a Commissioner on The Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life (CORAB), convened in 2013 by The Woolf Institute, and a member of the Government's Sikh Roundtable on Covid 19. She is currently a steering group member on the UK Freedom of Religion or Belief Forum and as presented to the UK Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief Fiona Bruce and United

States Commission on International Religious Freedom on the Sikh and Hindu religious minorities in Afghanistan. Dr Jhutti-Johal is a presenter on the Thought for the Day segment on BBC Radio 4's Today programme. Dr Jhutti-Johal is a board member and trustee on a number of organisations, such as Faiths for the Climate, Race Equality Foundation and a lay member for the Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Women's Network, and is very involved in voluntary work within the community, especially around women and children issues.



**David Griffiths (The Netherlands)** is a human rights strategist and advocate. Among several current projects, he is writing a report on the future of human rights for a flagship initiative at Chatham House. He was previously Director of the Office of the Secretary General at Amnesty International, with a broad range of strategic and operational responsibilities including high-level advocacy. Before this, he was Deputy Director for Asia, involved in establishing a regional office in Sri Lanka. Prior to joining Amnesty, he spent several years carrying out field research and advocacy on freedom of religion or belief and the rights of minorities in South and South-East Asia. He holds degrees from Oxford University and SOAS.



**Marie Juul Petersen (Denmark)** is a senior researcher at the Danish Institute for Human Rights. Her research focuses on the intersections between religion and human rights, including the international promotion of the right to freedom of religion or belief; the role of faith-based NGOs in development cooperation; and Islam and women's rights. She has published extensively on these issues, including the books *For Humanity or for the Umma?* (Hurst, 2016), *The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and Human Rights* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019) as well as various book chapters and journal articles, most recently *The International Promotion of Freedom of Religion or Belief: Key Debates and Divides*, in the *Edvard Elgar Handbook on Religion and International Relations* (2021). She has also published

numerous reports and policy briefs on religion and human rights, including *The International Promotion of Freedom of Religion or Belief: Sketching the Contours of a Common Framework* (co-authored with Katherine Marshall, Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2019) and *Promoting Freedom of Religion or Belief and Gender Equality in the Context of the Sustainable Development Goals* (Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2020). Petersen has carried out consultancies for various government and intergovernmental institutions, including the Danish Foreign Ministry and EU INTPA, and she is a member of the Academic Advisory Board of the Transatlantic Policy Dialogue on Religion and Diplomacy.



**John Kinahan (Ireland)** works for Forum 18, which provides truthful, original, detailed, and accurate monitoring and analysis of violations of the freedom of thought, conscience and belief of all people - whatever their belief or non-belief. It publishes on Central Asia, the South Caucasus, Russia, Belarus, and Russian-occupied Ukrainian territory. The name 'Forum 18' comes from Article 18 of both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights. John has worked on freedom of thought, conscience and religion issues since 1997.



**Genti Kruja (Albania)** is a lecturer of Sociology of Religion, Intercultural and Interfaith Communication, and Interreligious Dialogue at Beder University. He holds the administrative position of the Vice Dean of Humanities and Law Faculty and Head of the Islamic Science Department at Bedër University, as well as the position of the Secretary General of the Albania Inter-Religious Council and Vice President of ENIB "Religions for Peace" Europe centered in Berlin. He is participant in "The Study of the United States Institutes (SUSIs) for Religious Pluralism in America" at Seattle University, Washington, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) and he is member of Particip GmbH (EEAS), "Global Exchange on Religion in Society" (GERIS) in the European Union.



**Anne Kubai (Sweden)** is associate professor of World Christianity and Interreligious Studies. Currently, Kubai is based at the school for Historical and Contemporary Studies in Södertörn University, Sweden. She is also Professor Extraordinarius at the Institute of Gender Studies, University of South Africa (UNISA). Kubai's research interests include religion, peace and conflict, genocide and mass violence, gender-based violence, transitional justice, international migration, development and psychosocial studies. A great deal of her work has focused on peacebuilding and reconciliation after mass violence/grave violations of human rights. She has a keen interest in the way spiritualities/religions (indigenous and others) shape social-political developments, post-conflict social reconstruction and the sustainability discourse in different parts of the

world. Kubai's work on confession, forgiveness and reconciliation has contributed to the debates on

peacebuilding and transitional justice after mass violence/grave violations of human rights. She has served as a visiting professor in several institutions. For four years, she worked as Research Director for Life & Peace Institute, an International Ecumenical Centre for Peace Research and Action in Uppsala, Sweden. Kubai also worked as a Senior Social Scientist at the Division of Global Health (IHCAR), Department of Public Health Sciences at Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden. Until recently she was a researcher at the Centre for Multidisciplinary Research on Racism (CEMFOR) at the Department of Theology, Uppsala University, Sweden. She has served as a resource person for several international training programs for faith/community leaders and psychosocial support in emergencies, peacebuilding, and health care providers for children in conflict situations for different institutions and organizations. Kubai has published numerous academic journal articles, co-edited books, contributions to anthologies, popular science articles and research blogs. She has a long experience of working with international NGOs and Faith-based organizations engaged in the humanitarian, development, peacebuilding work and human rights issues.



**Isabella Sargsyan (Armenia)** is Human Rights and Justice Program Director at Armenia based Eurasia Partnership Foundation. She is human rights and development specialist with more than 20 years of experience. Her specialization includes theory and practice of human rights, FoRB, conflict transformation, qualitative research and analysis. In 2016-2018 she served as a member of the OSCE/ODIHR Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief. In 2017 for the work in the area of human rights she was awarded Freedom Defender Award. Isabella is also a Country Consultant for Armenia with European Endowment for Democracy (EED). Her spheres of professional interest include issues of religion, ethnicity, identity, culture and nation-states; methodology of transformative change and

critical thinking; history and legacy of the 20th Century; civil society, social movements and civic engagement. Isabella holds an MSc degree in Sociology and Human Rights from London School of Economics and Political Science and a BA/Ma in Theology from Yerevan State University.



**Ahmed Shaheed** assumed his mandate as Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief on 1 November 2016. Mr. Shaheed is Deputy Director of the Essex Human Rights Centre. He was the first Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran since the termination of the previous Commission on Human Rights mandate in 2002. A career diplomat, he has twice held the office of Minister of Foreign Affairs of Maldives. He led Maldives' efforts to embrace international human rights standards between 2003 and 2011. In 2015, Mr. Shaheed won the UN Foundation Leo Nevas Human Rights (Global Leadership) Award. In 2010, he was granted a Presidential Medal of Gratitude by Albania and in 2009, he was recognized as the Muslim Democrat of the Year

by the Centre for the Study of Islam and Democracy.



**Dmytro Vovk (Ukraine)** runs the Center for the Rule of Law and Religion Studies at Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University in Ukraine. He teaches law at the same university and Ukrainian Catholic University. He was a Kenan-Fulbright fellow at Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, a visiting researcher at Brigham Young University J. Reuben Clark Law School, and a visitor at Northwestern Buffett Institute for Global Affairs. Vovk is also a member of expert panels of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine and the Ukrainian State Service for Ethic Policies and Freedom of Conscience. As an international religious freedom expert, he was involved in training, interfaith dialogue programs and meetings for state officials, civil society, and religious leaders in Vietnam, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, the

Balkan countries, and Ukraine. Vovk has published extensively on the rule of law in post-Soviet countries, law and religion, and church-state relations. He co-edited with Elizabeth A. Clark the volume “Religion during the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict” (Routledge, 2019), which Journal of Contemporary Religion called “a much-needed English introduction to a thorny set of religious, political, juridical, and related problems concerning the Eastern Ukrainian conflict”. He also co-edits of the ICLRS’s blog “Talk About: Law and Religion”.



**Tamara Vukičević (Croatia)** is a student at the Faculty of Medicine in Zagreb, currently in her final year of studies and expects to graduate in July 2022. She is most interested in field of psychiatry, in which she is also writing her graduation thesis. Since the beginning of her studies, she has been involved in the work of the Association of Medical Students CroMSIC, and since 2020, as a local officer for human rights and peace where she actively advocates for the rights of vulnerable groups in society. She attended the Summer School of Social Democracy (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung) and the School of Social Justice (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung), training in human rights education for LGBTI people in schools (LORI), Training of European Green Activists (Forum for Sustainable Development Green Window). )

and the Regional Academy for Women 's Leadership and Mediation organized by the Relgional Women' s Lobby in South East Europe (RWLSEE) of which she is a member. Since 2021, she has been a member of the international association ACWAY (Common Word Among the Youth), which promotes interreligious and intercultural dialogue. She is a member of the board of the Josip Sruk Secularist Foundation and the Protagoras Association, for the protection of the rights of non-religious persons and the promotion of non-religious understanding of the world, where she actively participates and advocates for the rights of religious minority communities and secularism. She is also a member of the Ocean Knowledge Association and the Green Window Forum for Sustainable Development.