

130 YEARS OF **ADVOCACY** Freedom of Religion or Belief: A WHOLISTIC UNDERSTANDING OF A PIVOTAL HUMAN RIGHT **AUGUST 21-23, 2023** SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND, USA



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The International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA) is an organization that advocates for religious freedom and human rights around the world. It is committed to promoting the principles of religious freedom, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence, and works to protect the rights of individuals to practice their beliefs without fear of persecution or discrimination. The IRLA is a non-sectarian organization and welcomes members from a diverse range of beliefs.



#### **OUR HISTORY**

The IRLA was founded in 1893 by a group of Seventh-day Adventists who were concerned about religious persecution and discrimination. Originally called NARLA, the organization was created to advocate for the religious freedom of all people, regardless of their faith or background. Today, the IRLA continues to advocate for religious freedom and human rights through education and collaboration with individuals and organizations around the world.

#### **OUR LEGACY**

IRLA's commitment is to advocate for religious freedom as a fundamental human right for all people. The IRLA seeks to achieve this goal through various activities, including world congresses, meetings of experts, and partnerships with various governmental and non-governmental organizations worldwide. IRLA addresses religious freedom issues and provides support and resources to individuals and communities facing persecution. Finally, IRLA fosters dialogue and cooperation among people of various faiths and philosophical persuasions.



# "To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity."

- NELSON MANDELA

reedom of thought, belief, and conscience is a sign, a symbol, and a seal of our humanity.

Humans are not simply biological beings, material entities which can be disposed of at will. **Humans have a mysterious, unquantifiable component** which is best described as a spiritual quality. To be human is not simply to have a consciousness of being.

Humans are conscience bearers, which qualifies humans as moral beings. Human conscience, and the God-given freedom to exercise it, is pivotal to what it means to be human. To protect this gift of conscience, freedom of religion or belief is therefore an essential component of human identity.

On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Universal

Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), a core purpose of the 9th International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA) World Congress is to mobilize governments, civil society, and religious organizations to embrace every person's full humanity, dignity, and rights.

The Congress will emphasize the responsibility to **respect every human person** by underlining the **sacredness of each human person**.

To accomplish this lofty goal, a rebirth—a New Renaissance—is required in the way each of us understands the importance of every human person. As participants relate, reconcile, and renegotiate their engagements, they will rediscover the infinite value of every human person.

Celebrating IRLA's 130 years of international advocacy for religious freedom, researchers, historians, legal scholars, philosophers, theologians, sociologists, and experts in related disciplines will bring their bricks to constructing a wholistic understanding of religious freedom.

It will take this collective mobilization of all participants of goodwill to foster healing, wholeness, and health in human relations. Today, our world needs it most.

Ganoune Diop, Ph.D. IRLA Secretary-General



## **Greetings**

e welcome each one of you to the 9th International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA) World Congress. As the world's oldest religious liberty association, the IRLA is commemorating 130 years of advocacy for a cause based on the fundamentals of human dignity: freedom of thought, conscience, religion, and ensuring that all have the right to worship God (or not) as they choose.

Each one of us here for this conference is a vital participant in the effort to advance the cause of religious liberty. Each one of us has a role to play as we work to strengthen human rights and the right to freedom of conscience.

We desire that this conference be a multidimensional effort. As we meet together, we ask that you help by suggesting steps that can contribute to a concrete plan of action for advancing religious liberty. We look forward to meeting and talking with each of you.

#### **Ambassador John Nay**

IRLA President



istinguished ladies and gentlemen, dignitaries from various parts of our world, we are honored to welcome you at this 9th edition of the International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA) World Congress. This year, we celebrate 130 years of advocacy for freedom, specifically a compound freedom: freedom of thought, conscience, choice, religion, or belief.

Re-envisioning, re-equipping ourselves, and renewing our resolve to promote this most essential goal of freedom deserves our mobilization to be here together at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists world headquarters.

Building a better world together is part of our vocation of being human and humane.

We deeply thank you for believing in our common humanity and for working to affirm the dignity of all human beings, based on a conviction that every person is an inviolable sanctuary of human conscience.

We welcome you from the depth of our hearts. We wish us all a rich and rejuvenating IRLA World Congress.

# Ganoune Diop, Ph.D. IRLA Secretary-General



## Ambassador Sam Brownback, J.D.

Co-President of International Religious Freedom Summit; former U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom; former U.S. senator and congressman; former governor of Kansas.

Throughout his distinguished career as a statesman and diplomat, Ambassador Brownback has demonstrated a deep commitment to defending the fundamental right of every individual to practice his or her faith without fear of persecution or discrimination. As the U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, he was a consistent advocate for oppressed religious communities worldwide, working to promote interfaith dialogue, respect, and understanding.



Ambassador Brownback's leadership and vision have been instrumental in crafting and implementing policies that prioritize the protection of religious minorities, seeking to ensure their safety, and advocating for their rights in the face of adversity. His strategic engagement with governments, religious leaders, and civil society organizations has proven instrumental in fostering meaningful change and inspiring hope in countless lives.

## Azza Karam, Ph.D.

Former Secretary-General of Religions for Peace; Member, U.N. Secretary-General's High Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism.

pr. Karam's vision for a harmonious world is exemplified through her significant contributions to various interfaith initiatives. As the driving force behind numerous dialogues and forums, she has brought together religious leaders, scholars, and practitioners from around the globe to engage in constructive conversations, transcending boundaries that once seemed insurmountable. Her deep knowledge and expertise in theology, combined with her ability to connect with individuals



from diverse religious traditions, have allowed her to navigate complex discussions with compassion and diplomacy. Dr. Karam's commitment to inclusivity ensures that all voices are heard and respected, creating an environment conducive to fostering genuine understanding and appreciation for each other's beliefs and values.

Her influential role in various intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations has earned her widespread recognition as a trailblazer in the realm of interfaith dialogue and peace advocacy. She has actively engaged with grassroots organizations, humanitarian agencies, and policymakers to incorporate interfaith perspectives into conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes. Her involvement in practical peace initiatives has made a significant impact on alleviating tensions and promoting cooperation in regions afflicted by interreligious strife.

## Bettina Krause, J.D.

Editor of Liberty magazine; former Director of Government Affairs, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

A trained attorney, diplomat, and editor, Dr. Krause has consistently articulated a clear vision for protecting freedom of conscience and religious liberty. As a former Director of Government Affairs for the world Seventh-day Adventist Church, she was instrumental in building strong, collaborative relationships between the church's world headquarters and government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and groups advocating for religious freedom.



Editor of the prestigious journal of international religious freedom, *Liberty* magazine, since 2021, she regularly recruits and publishes incisive commentary and carefully researched articles about protecting freedom of conscience, both in the United States and around the globe. Her commentaries have appeared in many denominational publications and public online platforms, encouraging careful thought about the intersection of personal faith and government legislation.

## DAY 1

## MONDAY AUGUST 21, 2023

#### 6 PM - 9 PM

### Opening Ceremony and Dinner

Welcome and Introductory Remarks: Pastor Ted N.C. Wilson, Ph.D.

"Seventh-Day Adventists Commitment to Religious Freedom for All"

IRLA President's Message: Ambassador John Nay, M.A. "Do We Really Support Religious Liberty?"

IRLA Secretary-General's Message: Ganoune Diop, Ph.D.

"On a Faith-based Foundation for Religious Liberty"

**Keynote Speaker:** 

His Excellency Adama Dieng, J.D.

"A Wholistic Understanding of Religious Freedom in a Polarized World"

Dinner



## DAY 2

TUESDAY AUGUST 22, 2023

#### 8:45 AM

| Opening Remarks

#### 9 AM - 10 AM

Speaker 1: David Trim, Ph.D.

"IRLA: A Passion for Freedom"

Speaker 2: Brian Grim, Ph.D.

"Building Religious Freedom Through Faithfriendly Workplaces Worldwide"

Speaker 3: Eric Patterson, Ph.D.

"Commemorating Victims by Advancing Religious Freedom Today: An Agenda for Action"

Speaker 4: Bettina Krause, J.D.

"Religious Freedom for Me and—Sometimes for Thee: Minorities, Majorities and an Age-old Conundrum"

#### 10 AM - 10:15 AM

**Break** 

#### 10:15 AM - 11 AM

Speaker 5: Ambassador Sam Brownback, J.D.

"The Global Movement for Religious Freedom"

Question and Answer Session With Ambassador Brownback



#### 11 AM - 12:30 PM

# Breakout Groups Regional Consultations on Religious Freedom

North America: Orlan Johnson
Inter-America: Elie Henry
South America: Erton Kohler
Northern Asia: SunHuan Kim

Southern Asia:

Africa:

Western Europe: Paolo Macedo
Eastern Europe: Nelu Burcea
South Pacific: Nick Kross

#### 12:30 PM - 2 PM

**Lunch Break** 

#### 2 PM - 2:30 PM

### **Reports from Regional Consultations**

#### 2:30 PM - 3:30 PM

### Speaker 6: Karnik Doukmetzian, J.D.

"Can We All Get Along? How Do We Balance the Fundamental Right of Religious Freedom and Ensure the Rights of All God's Children?"

### Speaker 7: Rev. Elijah Brown, Ph.D.

"Insights From a Baptist Historical Experience With Religious Liberty"

## Speaker 8: John Graz, Ph.D.

"Crossing a Red Line: A Reflection on Augustine's Shifting Position on Religious Freedom"

### Question and Answer Session With Presenters

### 3:30 PM - 3:45 PM

**Break** 

#### 3:45 PM - 5 PM

## Speaker 9: Rabbi Craig Axler, M.A.

"For the Sake of Peaceful Relations—The Jewish Tradition on Advocacy and Compromise in Religious Freedoms"

### Speaker 10: Audrey Andersson, M.A.

"A Seventh-day Adventist Pioneer's View of the Imperative of Freedom of Conscience"

### Speaker 11: César García, M.A.

"Christian Nation? A Mennonite Perspective"

#### **Question and Answer Session With Presenters**



## **Schedule**

## DAY 3

## WEDNESDAY AUGUST 23, 2023

#### 8:45 AM

### **Opening Remarks**

#### 9 AM - 9:30 AM

#### Speaker 12: David Little, Ph.D.

"Religious Nationalism as Threat to Religious Freedom"

### Speaker 13: Azza Karam, Ph.D.

"The Multilateral Imperative: Going from 'FoRB' to Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Belief"

#### 9:30 - 9:45 AM

**Break** 

#### 9:45 AM - 10:30 AM

### Speaker 14: Knox Thames, J.D.

"Recommitting to a Foundational Ideal"

### Speaker 15: Jónatas Machado, Ph.D.

"Religious Freedom and Current Major Threats"

# Speaker 16: Rosa María Martínez de Codes, Ph.D.

"IRLA Meeting of Experts: A Scholarly Journey of Experts Exploring the Various Dimensions of Freedom of Religion or Belief"

## 10:30 AM - 11 AM

Question and Answer Session With Presenters



### 11 AM - 11:15 AM

**Break** 

#### 11:15 AM - 12 PM

#### IRLA Secretary-General Ganoune Diop, Ph.D.

"Recapitulations of Findings on a Wholistic Vision of Religious Freedom"

#### 12 PM - 1 PM

**Lunch Break** 

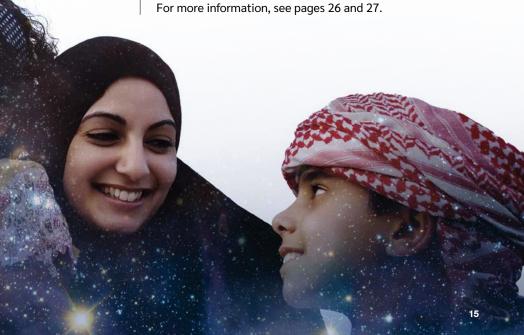
#### 1 PM - 5:30 PM

Visit to National Archives Museum and Washington, D.C.

#### 6 PM - 9 PM

### **Closing Banquet and Award Ceremony**

Marriott Marquis
901 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, D.C.
For more information, see pages 26 and 27



## **Speakers**



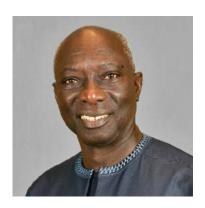
Pastor Ted N.C. Wilson, Ph.D. President of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists



**Ambassador John Nay, M.A.**President of IRLA; former U.S.
Ambassador to Suriname.



**Ganoune Diop, Ph.D.**Secretary-General of IRLA



His Excellency Adama Dieng, J.D. Former U.N. Under-Secretary-General; Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide.



**David Trim, Ph.D.**Director of Archives, Statistics and Research at General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists



**Brian Grim, Ph.D.**President of the Religious Freedom & Business Foundation; global chair, Dare to Overcome.



**Eric Patterson, Ph.D.**President of the Religious Freedom
Institute



**Bettina Krause, J.D.**Editor, *Liberty* magazine; former
Director of Government Affairs,
General Conference of Seventh-day
Adventists.

## **Speakers**



Ambassador Sam Brownback, J.D.

Co-President of International Religious Freedom Summit; former U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom; former U.S. senator and congressman; former governor of Kansas.



Karnik Doukmetzian, J.D.

General Counsel for the General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists



**Rev. Elijah Brown, Ph.D.** General Secretary of Baptist World Alliance (BWA)



John Graz, Ph.D.

Director of the International Center of Public Affairs and Religious Freedom; former IRLA Secretary-General.



David Little, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus of the Practice
in Religion, Ethnicity and
International Conflict, Harvard
Divinity School; Research Fellow,
Georgetown University's Berkley
Center.



Rabbi Craig Axler, M.A. Rabbi of Temple Isaiah, Fulton, Maryland, USA



**Audrey Andersson, M.A.**General Vice-President of the
General Conference of Seventh-day
Adventists; Chair of Ellen G. White
Estate Board of Trustees.



César García, M.A. General Secretary of the Mennonite World Conference (MWC)

## **Speakers**



Azza Karam, Ph.D.
Former Secretary-General of
Religions for Peace; Member,
U.N. Secretary-General's High
Level Advisory Board on Effective
Multilateralism.



Knox Thames, J.D.
Former U.S. Special Adviser for
Religious Minorities at the U.S.
State Department; senior fellow
with Caruso School of Law and
School of Public Policy, Pepperdine
University (D.C. campus).



Jónatas Machado, Ph.D. Professor, Faculty of Law of the University of Coimbra, Portugal; Former Executive Director of the lus Gentium Conimbrigae-Center for Human Rights.



Codes, Ph.D.
Vice-President of IRLA; Professor of
American History at the University
Complutense, Madrid, Spain.

Rosa María Martínez de



"Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."

—ANTI-SLAVERY ACTIVIST WENDELL PHILLIPS, 1852

**Fides et Libertas** is an academic journal produced jointly by the International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA) and the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The finest thinking and writing about issues of human dignity, freedom of conscience, threats to free expression, and the principles that undergird the values of religious liberty appear in the pages of *Fides et Libertas*. Authors include some of the world's foremost experts on these critical matters.

Subscribe to *Fides et Libertas* at: irla.org/fides-et-libertas

Published every two years, the *Religious Freedom World Report* is a joint publication of the IRLA and the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Department. Drawing on best reporting from monitors around the globe, the report details the annual status of religious freedom in every country as presented by experts and independent analysts.

# YESTERDAY'S NEWS IS ALREADY HISTORY

n a fast-changing world, threats to human dignity, freedom of conscience, and the God-given right to religious liberty don't find their way into headlines. Explanations about what is really happening to essential freedoms can't be contained in a six-word phrase.

Keep up with the latest news, commentary, and reliable information through the resources offered by the International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA), the world's oldest advocacy group defending freedom of religion or belief for everyone.

**IRLA WEBSITE** 

www.IRLA.org

PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY WEBSITE

www.adventistliberty.org

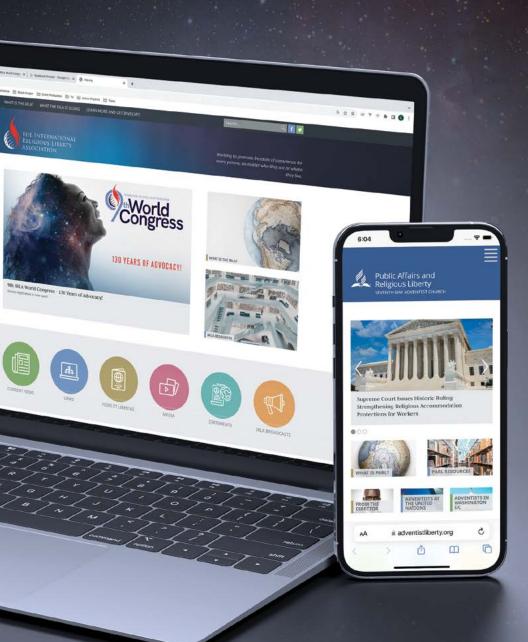
X ACCOUNTS (FORMERLY TWITTER)

- @KeepingFaithDC
- @IRLA USA
- @PARL SDA

**FACEBOOK** 

irla.hq parl.hq





## Ganoune Diop, Ph.D.

anoune Diop is Secretary-General of the International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA). He previously served as the Seventhday Adventists Church's liaison to the United Nations in New York and Geneva, and as its representative within the international community of civic, political, and religious leaders.



Diop has a masters in Exégèses and Theology from Salève Adventist University, a master's degree in Philology from the University of Paris, and a Ph.D. in Old Testament Studies from Andrews University. He holds a diploma in advanced New Testament studies.

He is also an ordained Seventh-day Adventist minister, and has served as a local church pastor. He was previously a professor of Philology, Biblical Languages, Exegesis, Theology, and Comparative Religions and World Philosophies.

Dr. Diop was born in Dakar, Senegal, and he and his wife, Helene, have three adult children. He is a concert flute soloist, who also loves art and literature.

## Nelu Burcea, Ph.D.

Nelu joined the IRLA team as Deputy Secretary-General in October 2015. His task has been to develop relationships with various international institutions on behalf of the IRLA.

Dr. Burcea served previously as director for Communication and Public Affairs and Religious Liberty for the Adventist Church in Romania. He was formerly director of the Romanian Adventist Media Center, which includes the Speranta television network, and Voice of Hope radio network. He has served as a local church ordained pastor and has led numerous initiatives in Europe and the United States.

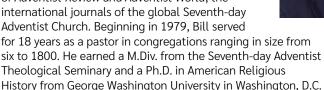
Nelu holds a Ph.D. in Economics specializing in Business Ethics and Human Dignity, and a master's degree in Management of Business Development. He has completed postgraduate study in Mass-Media, Marketing, and Diplomatic Protocol, and postdoctoral research at Harvard University on religious freedom.



## Bill Knott, Ph.D.

ill Knott is a Deputy Secretary-General of the IRLA, and responsible for the organization's interface with the U.S. Congress, the White House, and the international diplomatic corps.

Before joining the IRLA team in January 2023, Dr. Knott was the editor and executive publisher of *Adventist Review* and *Adventist World*, the international journals of the global Seventh-day Adventist Church. Beginning in 1979, Bill served



In his role with Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL), Dr. Knott focuses on building networks with legislators, non-governmental organizations, and embassies who can advance the IRLA's interests in legislation, collaboration, and protecting religious freedom around the globe. He has authored hundreds of articles in 44 years of service.

His wife, Deborah, is a senior systems and technology manager in Human Resources at the Seventh-day Adventists Church's world headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland. The Knotts have two married sons.

## Tabitha Osindo, B.A.

abitha Osindo is a senior editorial assistant with the IRLA. She holds a B.A. degree in Political Studies from Washington Adventist University, and worked at the world headquarters for six years before joining the IRLA team at the end of July. Originally from Kenya, Tabitha is fluent in English and Swahili.



## Geoffrey Fowler, B.S.

eoffrey Fowler is an intern with the IRLA. He graduated in December 2022 from Southern Adventist University with a B.S. in Public Relations and a minor in Political Economy. A native of Georgia, Geoffrey also interned at WTCI, the PBS affiliate in Chattanooga, Tennessee, USA.



## **Concluding Banquet Venue Details**

The Marriott Marquis, Washington, D.C., will host the 9th International Religious Liberty Association banquet on Wednesday evening, August 23, beginning at 6:00 p.m.

The hotel is located within walking distance of many of Washington, D.C.'s, historic attractions, including the White House, the U.S. Capitol, the Smithsonian museums, including the National Museum of African American History and culture, and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

This premier hotel is a frequent site for conventions, conferences, and international events, and will host the International Religious Liberty Association Meeting of Experts that will follow the banquet on Thursday and Friday, August 24 and 25.

IRLA attendees who have registered for the tour of the

National Archives Museum and other key Washington, D.C., sites will be delivered by bus to the Marriott Marquis by 5:45 p.m. on Wednesday, August 23. Registered persons will also be returned by bus to the convention hotels in Silver Spring at approximately 9:30 p.m.

The hotel is located at 901 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, D.C., and is accessible by car, bus, and Metro (for bus and Metro rail schedules, see https://www.wmata.com).

A limited number of valet parking sites are available at the hotel for a fee. There are numerous public parking garages or lots within easy walking distance of the Marriott Marquis. Here are five you may find useful.



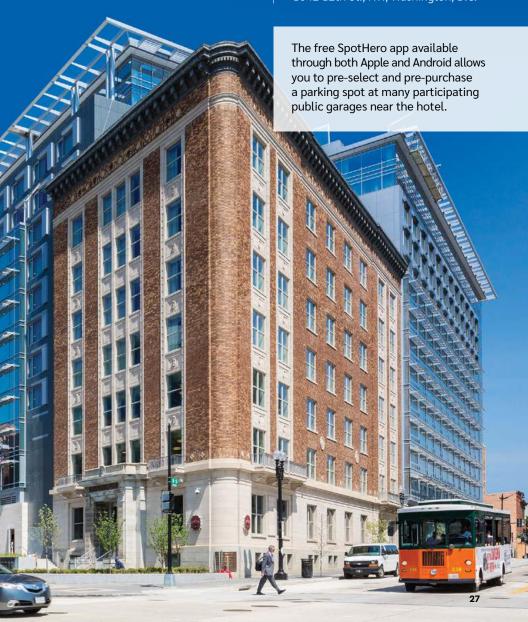
#### Marriot Marquis Valet Parking Marriott Marquis Washington, 901 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, D.C.

**900 New York Ave**. 900 9th St., NW, Washington, D.C.

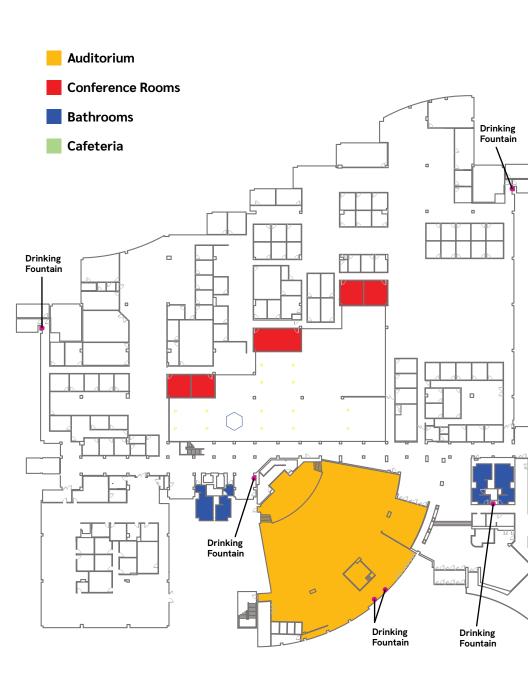
#### Loc-440-CityCenterDC 870 9th St., NW, Washington, D.C.

**USP Parking Inc.** 1208 9th St., NW #7, Washington, D.C.

SP+Parking 1042 12th St., NW, Washington, D.C.



## General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Headquarters Details



#### **Business Services**

To serve those participating in the IRLA World Congress, a Business Office is available to provide information and assistance on the first floor of the building, adjacent to the Atrium. Here are the hours when the Business Office will be open:

#### August 21

4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

#### August 22

8:30 - 9:00 a.m.

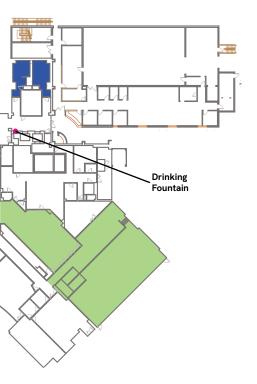
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

5:00 - 6:00 p.m.

#### August 23

8:30 - 9:00 a.m.

11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.



### Transportation to Nearby Hotels

A 14-passenger shuttle bus will also transport IRLA participants who are staying at both the Courtyard by Marriott and Hilton Garden Inn properties across the highway from the Seventh-day Adventist world headquarters. Below are the hours when the shuttle service will operate. Please meet the shuttle under the central portico at the front of the building.

#### August 21

3:30 - 6:30 p.m.

8:30 - 9:30 p.m.

#### August 22

8:30 - 10:00 a.m.

6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

### August 23

8:30 - 10:00 a.m.

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

## The Space We Share

The 9th World Congress of the International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA) is being hosted in the world headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The IRLA is a multi-faith, multi-national organization that for 130 years has advocated for the religious freedom of all peoples, and it has often been joined in that advocacy by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The headquarters building, opened in 1988, is the workspace for more than 600 persons who help to coordinate the mission of the 22 million-member denomination. That mission is expressed in ministries that focus on health promotion; international humanitarian aid and development; care for women, youth, and children; as well as the Church's interface with the hundreds of ethnic groups and

faiths in the nearly 200 countries in which the Church is present. The denomination's extensive educational system, including more than 110 colleges and universities, thousands of secondary and elementary schools, and more than 2 million students worldwide is also coordinated from this building. Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is one of the globe's foremost development organizations, coordinating projects and local development in dozens of nations through nearly 30,000 employees.

As the workspace for hundreds of Seventh-day Adventists, the environment of the world headquarters reflects the spiritual commitments that undergird the mission coordinated by the men and women who work here. Religious art



130 YEARS OF ADVOCACY



traces the biblical narrative from Creation to the prophesied Second Coming, much of it focusing on the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. Though many of the depictions of Jesus reflect Northern European influences, Seventh-day Adventist theology clearly understands Jesus to be the divine Son of God, the representative of all nations, races, and ethnicities. Inspirational quotations from the Christian Bible and other sources are also displayed throughout the building.

Please take the opportunity to greet and introduce yourself to the men and women you meet in the hallways during the World Congress. Together with all of them, we welcome you to a place fully committed to ensuring the religious liberty of all human beings in all places.

Members of the Planning Committee

Ganoune Diop

Nelu Burcea

Bill Knott

Audrey Andersson

Silvia Sicalo

Jennifer Woods

Tabitha Osindo

**Geoffrey Fowler** 

**Lisa Krueger** contract editor

**Clayton Kinney** designer, 316 Creative





## 130 YEARS OF ADVOCACY

**AUGUST 21-23, 2023**SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND, USA

