

**THE TANDEM PROJECT**

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**UNITED NATIONS, HUMAN RIGHTS,  
FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF**

*The Tandem Project is a UN NGO in Special Consultative Status with the  
Economic and Social Council of the United Nations*

*Separation of Religion or Belief and State*

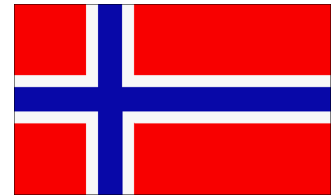
**NORWAY – UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW FOLLOW-UP CONTACTS**

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/PAGES/NOsession6.aspx>

**Universal Periodic Review - Norway**

***Only contributions submitted in one of the United Nations official languages are admissible and posted on this webpage***

**Date of consideration: Wednesday 2 December 2009 - 9.00 a.m. - 12.00 a.m.**



**Norwegian Centre for Human Rights:**

[http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session6/NO/NCHR\\_NOR\\_UPR\\_S06\\_2009\\_Norwegian\\_CentreForHumanRights.pdf](http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session6/NO/NCHR_NOR_UPR_S06_2009_Norwegian_CentreForHumanRights.pdf)

The Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (NCHR) is Norway's national institution for human rights, accredited with A-status according to standards of the International Coordinating Committee of the global network of national institutions of human rights (ICC).

**Government of Norway:**

<http://www.regjeringen.no/en.html?id=4>

The Constitution and constitutional practice determine which matters must be formally decided in the Council of State presided over by the King, and which may be decided by the competent minister. In both cases the government conference is the main forum for discussing important policy matters before formal decisions are taken. As of February 2007, there are 17 ministries, plus the office of the Prime Minister, while the Government consists of the prime minister and 18 ministers. The Tandem Project for purposes

of an exchange of information on *follow-up* to the Norway Universal Periodic Review will seek advice from the Norway Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs.

**Norway Ministry of Foreign Affairs:**

<http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/selected-topics/human-rights.html?id=1160>

The Minister of Foreign Affairs for Norway is Jonas Gahr Store. The Norwegian Foreign Ministry is responsible for: Development cooperation; High North; Human Rights; Humanitarian Efforts; International Law; Peace and Reconciliation efforts; Public Diplomacy and Cultural Cooperation; Security Policy; Trade Policy; United Nations. Bente Angell-Hansen, Norway's Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva delivered Norway's opening statement at a member of the UN Human Rights Council on 2 December 2009. The Tandem Project will request an exchange of information with the Norway Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a *follow-up* to the Norway Universal Periodic Review.

**Norway Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs:**

<http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/kkd.html?id=545>

The Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs is responsible for cultural policy, church affairs, regulations and other matters regarding the media and sports. The Tandem Project will contact them for advice on *follow-up* efforts for education on human rights and freedom of religion or belief after the Norway Universal Periodic Review.

**University of Oslo: CULCOM research program;**

<http://www.culcom.uio.no/english/news/2009/borsum.html>

The University of Oslo is Norway's largest and oldest institution of higher education. It was founded in 1811 when Norway was still under Danish rule. Today the University of Oslo has approximately 27,700 students and 5,900 employees. CULCOM, Cultural Complexity in the new Norway is a strategic university program, University of Oslo 2004-spring 2010. This website article is on a Master's thesis "Cooperation rather than religious dialogue" by Kjersti Borsum, pointing out "there is a great distance between the elite participating in dialogue and the grassroots level. The Tandem Project will approach a variety of departments in the University of Oslo including CULCOM, the School of Theology, School of Law and department of Sociology for an exchange of information as a *follow-up* to the Norway Universal Periodic Review.

**Church of Norway:** <http://www.kirken.no/english/engelsk.cfm?artid=5730>

The State Church of Norway has represented the main, almost the only, expression of religious belief in Norway for a thousand years. Around 86 percent of the population or 3, 868,943 Norwegians are members of the Church of Norway. The Constitution of 1814 states that the Evangelical-Lutheran faith shall be the religion of the Kingdom of Norway and embodied the principle democratic ideals and a process of church reform still continuing to this day. The Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations has a long history of dialogue with other faiths including on the formation of the Declaration on Religious Freedom signed with the Islamic Council of Norway in 2007. Separation of Church and State issues remain such as the requirement that the King be a Lutheran and an issue of Christian education in the Norwegian public school system in which the European Court of Human

Rights found them in violation of Council of Europe human rights principles. The Tandem Project worked with the Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations in organization of the 1998 Oslo Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief, and will ask for an exchange of information with them as a *follow-up* to the Norway Universal Periodic Review.

**The Council for Religious and Life Stance Communities:**

<http://www.trooglivssyn.no>

The Council for Religious and Life Stance Communities in Norway was established in May 1996. Membership includes thirteen religious and non-religious Norwegian communities. The goals of the Council are to promote mutual understanding and respect between different religious and life stance communities through dialogue; to work towards equality between various religious and life stance communities in Norway based on United Nations covenants on Human Rights and on the European Convention on Human Rights; to work internally and externally with social and ethical issues from the perspective of religions and life stances. The Tandem Project will seek out all community members of the Council for an exchange of information on how they promote Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the 1981 UN Declaration on Freedom of Religion or Belief in integration, dialogue and education, as a *follow-up* to the Norway Universal Periodic Review.

**Diakonhjemmet University College ; <http://www.diakonhjemmeths.no/web/english/>**

Diakonhjemmet University College was established in 1890. The University College is a diaconal foundation within the Norwegian Lutheran church and consists from the date of 1 Jan 2006 of two campuses: Oslo and Rogaland. Campus Oslo is located to the same site as much of the rest of the activities within The Foundation of "Det Norske Diakonhjem". Campus Rogaland draws its history back to 1969 when the primary owner founded the school of social educators in connection to the regional institution at Nærland for mentally retarded people. Campus Rogaland has its main campus in the town called Sandnes, but with a branch campus in Haugesund.

Diakonhjemmet University College aims to practice a holistic philosophy, viewing the human being as a unity of spirit, soul and body, created in the image of God, interwoven with others in social and economic structures on local, national and global basis. The College stresses the importance of interdisciplinary expertise, and makes the efforts to combine professional and academic aspirations with their practical application

**Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion or Belief: [www.oslocoalition.org](http://www.oslocoalition.org)**

The Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion or Belief was established by participants of the Oslo Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief which was held in August 1998 in the context of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The activities of the Oslo Coalition are based on the Oslo Declaration on Freedom of Religion or Belief which was adopted by the Conference of over 200 participants and was signed by leaders of all major Norwegian faith communities in 2001. Projects of the Oslo Coalition include New Directions in Islamic Thought and Practice; Facilitating Freedom of Religion or Belief; Missionary Activities and Human Rights; Teaching for Tolerance and Freedom of Religion or Belief; China Project; Indonesia Project; Caucasus Project and Central Asia Project. The Tandem Project as the founder idea and then co-sponsor of the Oslo Conference on Freedom of Religion

or Belief will seek an exchange of information with the Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion or Belief as a *follow-up* to the Norway Universal Periodic Review.

**Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights:** <http://www.oslocenter.no/>

The Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights was established as an independent foundation in August 2006. The Oslo Center's work is structured around three main programs: Dialogue for Peace, Promoting Democracy and Human Rights. The Oslo Center works through contact and dialogue with policy makers, organizations and key actors in Norway and internationally. Several members of the staff of nine are former diplomats and experts from the Government of Norway. The Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights president and founder is Kjell Magne Bondevik, Prime Minister of Norway from 1997-2000 and 2001-2005. Mr. Bondevik was ordained as a priest in the Lutheran Church of Norway in 1979. He is a member of several key international associations the United Nations endorsed Alliance of Civilizations and the Club de Madrid made up of former presidents and foreign ministers from countries throughout the world. Mr. Bondevik is in a unique position having been a Norwegian Foreign Minister and an active priest in the State Church of Norway. The Tandem Project will call on the Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights to exchange information on ways they intend to *follow-up* on the Norway Universal Periodic Review.

**Islamic Council of Norway:**

[http://www.christiantoday.com/article/norway\\_christians\\_and\\_muslims\\_sign\\_declaration\\_on\\_religious\\_freedom/12636.htm](http://www.christiantoday.com/article/norway_christians_and_muslims_sign_declaration_on_religious_freedom/12636.htm)

The Islamic Council of Norway is an umbrella group of Islamic organizations and mosques in Norway and a Member Community of the Norway Religious and Life Stance Communities. In 26 August 2007 they signed a Declaration on Religious Freedom with the Church of Norway that was a previous to tension in the UN Human Rights Council in 14 December 2007 that led to members of the Council who are also members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) abstaining on a resolution to extend the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief by three years (A/HRC/6/L.15/Rev.1). Muslims in the Islamic Council of Norway as all Muslims worldwide are in the *Ummah* the 1.4 billion family of Islam. But they live outside the Diaspora of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (IOC) a 57 member organization of countries either with Sharia law or where Islam is the majority religion. The Tandem Project will request an exchange of information with the Islamic Council of Norway on ways they plan to promote human rights and freedom of religion or belief in Norway, as a *follow-up* to the Norway Universal Periodic Review.

**Lutheran World Federation;** <http://www.lutheranworld.org>

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is a global communion of Christian churches in the Lutheran tradition with international headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. Founded in 1947 in Lund, Sweden, the LWF now has 140 member churches in 79 countries all over the world representing 68.5 million Christians. Their mission includes humanitarian assistance, mission and development, theology, international affairs & human rights and ecumenical relations. Lutheran churches see the protection of human rights as a basic Christian concern and LWF monitors human rights abuses around the world and, in consultation with its member churches, makes representations in relation to crucial issues. The Church of Norway is a member of the Lutheran World Federation. LWF and the Church of Norway will be

approached by The Tandem Project for an exchange of information on ways they approach integration, dialogue and education at international, national and local levels in Norway and abroad at a *follow-up* to the Norway Universal Periodic Review.

**Norwegian Humanist Association;** <http://www.human.no>

The Norwegian Humanist Association is an organization for people who base their ethics on human values. Humanism is a life stance in which the understanding of reality and ethics is based on reason and experience, rational and critical thinking, feelings and human compassion. The by-laws are non-theistic and reject supernatural views of reality. They have more than 75,000 members in Norway and are a partner association with the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU). They are one of the thirteen member communities in the Norwegian Council for Religious and Life Stance Communities. The Tandem Project was a founding co-sponsor of the Oslo Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief in 1998 with the Religious and Life Stance Communities and will call on the Norwegian Humanist Association for an exchange of information on their programs in Norway for equal protection of *theistic, non-theistic and atheistic beliefs, as well as the right not to profess any religion or belief*, at a follow-up to the Norway Universal Periodic Review.

**Forum 18:** <http://www.forum18.org/Forum18.php>

Forum 18 is a Norwegian-Danish non-profit charitable initiative. The Forum 18 believes that religious freedom is a fundamental right, which is essential for the dignity of humanity and for true freedom. Forum 18 is committed to religious freedom for all on the basis of Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Forum 18 News Service (F18News) is a Christian initiative which is independent of any one church or religious group. Its independence is safeguarded by a board whose members are Protestant, Orthodox and Catholic Christians, and who are responsible for matters of policy and fundraising. F18News is committed to Jesus Christ's command to do to others what you would have them do to you, and so reports on threats and actions against the religious freedom of all people, regardless of their religious affiliation. The Tandem Project believes Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights equally protects against discrimination all *theist, non-theist and atheistic beliefs, as well as the right not to profess any religion or belief*. The Tandem Project will request an exchange of information with Forum 18 on freedom of religion or belief as a *follow-up* after the Norway Universal Periodic Review.

**Norway Pen Centre:** <http://www.norskpen.no/en/index.shtml>

The Norway PEN Centre (Poets, Editors, Novelists) has 253 members in Norway made up of writers, publishers, journalists, etc. They co-sponsored a side panel at the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Human Rights Council in September 2010 on freedom of opinion and expression and a draft resolution being prepared on peaceful assembly, with Article 19 and the International PEN Secretariat. Several PEN authors and writers gave testimony by video.

**Fritt Ord – Freedom of Expression Foundation, Oslo:**

[http://www.fritt-ord.no/en/om\\_fritt\\_ord/category/styre\\_og\\_administrasjon/#](http://www.fritt-ord.no/en/om_fritt_ord/category/styre_og_administrasjon/#)

The mission of Fritt Ord reads; “The paramount object of the Freedom of Expression Foundation – Oslo, is to protect and promote freedom of expression and the environment of freedom of expression in

Norway, particularly by encouraging lively debate and the dauntless use of the word.” Fritt Ord has contributed to Norway Pen Centre through its grant program. Professor Francis Seyersted, Chair of Fritt Ord, was Chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee in 1986 and gave an address on the meaning of the Nobel Peace Prize to The Tandem Project 1986 International Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota on *Tolerance for Diversity of Religion or Belief* and ways to implement the 1981 U.N. Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.

**Human Rights House Network (HRHN):** [http://humanrightshouse.org/About\\_HRHN/index.html](http://humanrightshouse.org/About_HRHN/index.html)

The Human Rights House Network is a community of human rights organizations based in Oslo, Norway with a program in Bergen and several countries around the world. There is an affiliated Human Rights House in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Human Rights House Networks support projects, strengthen and support human rights organizations around the world.

**Norwegian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights (NORDEM)**

<http://www.jus.uio.no/smr/english/about/programmes/nordem/>

**NORDEM** was established in 1993 by the Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA). Since then, it has seconded more than 2000 persons to international operations promoting human rights and democratization. The main receiving organizations of NORDEM personnel are the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the United Nations and the European Union. NORDEM is a programme at the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights and is run in cooperation with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), who carries the administrative responsibility for the projects, and is the formal employer of the seconded while they are on an assignment.

The stand-by roster consists of 250-300 members with relevant expertise. Recruitment to the roster usually takes place once a year. All newly recruited members are offered training in human rights field work and election observation. Members are required to be available for assignments for international organizations on a short notice. Members are not compensated for being on stand-by and are not guaranteed offers of assignments.

**Norwegian Nobel Committee:** <http://nobelpeaceprize.org/>

The Norwegian Nobel Committee awards the annual Nobel Peace Prize. The Norwegian Nobel Institute is the Secretariat for the Norwegian Nobel Committee. Several recipients have been cited for their work on behalf of freedom of religion or belief. The Institute will be approached as a resource for follow-up to Universal Periodic Reviews in the country of the recipient.

**Council of Europe:** <http://www.coe.int/>

The Council of Europe is made up of 47 Member States and the Committee of Ministers, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, are a decision making body for the Parliamentary Assembly from member countries. The Council of Europe oversees the European Court of Human Rights, and the Commissioner of Human Rights and Democracy, Thomas Hammarberg. The present Secretary General of the Council of Europe is Thorbjorn Jagland, former Prime Minister of Norway and Chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee.

**The Tandem Project** a non-governmental organization (NGO) founded in 1986 to build understanding, tolerance, and respect for diversity of religion or belief, and to prevent discrimination in matters relating to freedom of religion or belief. The Tandem Project has sponsored multiple conferences, curricula, reference material and programs on Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights- Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion – and the 1981 United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.

In 1968 the United Nations deferred work on a legally-binding treaty on religious intolerance as too complex and sensitive and passed a non-binding declaration in its place. The Tandem Project believes until a core legally-binding human rights *Convention on Freedom of Religion or Belief* is adopted international human rights law will be incomplete. It may be time to begin to consider reinstating the 1968 Working Group to better organize and bring all matters relating to freedom of religion or belief under one banner, a core international human rights legally-binding treaty.

*Global Advocacy for the Universal Values and Principles of Human Rights  
and Freedom of Religion or Belief through Education and Research*