

1. Terms of Reference Item 3:

The relationship between the freedom of religion or belief and other human rights, and the implications of constraints on the freedom of religion or belief for the enjoyment of other universal human rights;

a. From International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Article 18 clause 3:

Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

And

From International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Article 6 clause 1:

Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life.

The beliefs of various people through the ages have defined that some human beings are not 'persons' and therefore do not have a right to life. This has been on the basis of skin colour, race, mental or physical ability etc. Currently, it is on the basis of age. People argue that the baby is not a person until some arbitrary point in the development of the baby. This can be time of conception, time of first heartbeat (about 16 to 22 days from conception), time when the baby can be removed from the womb and live, probably with lots of help, which is about 24 weeks from the last period the mother had, when the baby takes the first breath after birth, 2 years after birth, and other more arbitrary times like when the baby first has self-awareness which can be shown to be very early in the pregnancy but denied by those using this belief.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Article 6 clause 1 specifically does not mention person, but human being. A human being starts at conception with unique DNA. The only time that a human being should be killed is when there is a credible threat to the life of another human being, and there is no other remedy to the situation. Other remedies should be researched to allow more lives to be saved.

But beliefs that take away the right to life should not be able to prevail under any circumstance.

I believe the solution is a commonwealth law that makes it an offence to threaten to kill, or incite someone to kill a human being, from conception, unless in defence of a human life and no other option is applicable.

2. Terms of Reference Item 4:

Australian efforts, including those of Federal, State and Territory governments and non-government organisations, to protect and promote the freedom of religion or belief in Australia and around the world, including in the Indo-Pacific region.

- a. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Article 18 Clause 2. No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice.

It needs to be a commonwealth offence to threaten to kill, or incite someone to kill unless in defence of a human life and no other option is applicable.

It also needs to be a commonwealth offence to threaten to rape or incite someone to rape someone.

Laws about murder, rape and extortion should already be at force in each state.

- b. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Article 18 clause1. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.

Freedom to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching, includes the right to tell others about his/her beliefs and requires freedom of speech. This contrasts to the current situation where some people with a specific set of beliefs designate what is allowed to be said or taught. Some words and names are derogatory and should not be used, whereas other words which are quite offensive to other people are not prevented from being used eg blasphemy of Jesus name. Freedom to manifest a set of beliefs will offend others who hold different beliefs. The current situation is that one set of beliefs are portrayed as facts and laws are being made to prevent people expressing different beliefs. Very few people (except some TV presenters and some politicians) want to condone bullying, but laws against offending people end up vilifying good people eg the blasphemy laws in Pakistan.

If there are beliefs that are dangerous, preventing people expressing those beliefs is dangerous, because not expressing them, does not mean that they do not hold dangerous beliefs. They are just not known about.

- c. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Article 18 clause 4. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

The implementation of the so-called ‘Safe Schools’ program, especially in Queensland and Victoria, clearly goes against this clause.

Every parent needs to give approval prior to any teaching against natural adult monogamous heterosexual relationships.

3. Terms of Reference Item 4:

The enjoyment of freedom of religion or belief globally, the nature and extent of violations and abuses of this right and the causes of those violations or abuses;

- a. The number of deaths by all causes globally, according to the World Health Organisation, in 2015 was 56.4 Million people.

(<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs310/en/>)

The trouble is that another more than 56 Million human beings were killed by abortion each year on average from 2010-2014.

(<http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/news/abortion-rates/en/>)

Some beliefs would think that it is better for the babies to be killed than to live in the situation that they will be brought into. The baby does not get a say and it is against the fundamental right to life of the human being.