

Reykjavík, 19. febrúar 2015

Siðmennt styður framlagt frumvarp til laga um almenn hegningarlög (guðlast).

Í brefi sem Siðmennt sendi þingmönnum 16. október 2014 segir meðal annars orðrétt:

"9. Lagt er til að 125 gr. í lögum nr. 19/1940 verði afnumin en sú grein fjallar um guðlast. Lögin eru óþörf og óviðeigandi. Þau hefta tjáningar- og skoðunarfrelsi fólks. Í könnun sem Pew Research Centre gerði árið 2012 kemur fram að lög gegn guðlasti eru í tæpum fjórðungi ríkja heims og sérstök lög sem banna fólk að skipta um trú (apostasy) eru í 11% ríkja.

Mannréttindastofnun Sameinuðu þjóðanna gaf út árið 2012 „Rabat aðgerðaráætlunina“ (Rabat plan of Action) um bann við hatursorðræðu á grundvelli þjóðernis, kynþátta eða trúarlegs haturs sem hvetur til mismununar, óvildar eða ofbeldis. Þar er hvatt til þess að lög eða lagaákvæði um guðlast verði afnumin.

Oft eru ríki þar sem skortur er á lýðræði og frelsi gagnrýnd fyrir að refsa fólk fyrir guðlast og þá jafnvel með dauðadómi. Þegar þessi ríki eru gagnrýnd benda talsmenn þeirra oft, réttilega, á að sambærileg lög séu einnig í gildi í „vestrænum“ lýðræðisríkjum. Því eru það mikilvægt skilaboð til umheimsins að afnema lög um guðlast á Íslandi. Ríki sem beita slíkum lögum með alvarlegum afleiðingum eiga ekki að geta bent til að mynda á Ísland og sagt að svona sé þetta nú líka þar.“

Afnám 125. greinar laga nr. 19/1940 er því í fullu samræmi við stefnu Siðmenntar í trúfrelismálum.

Virðingarfyllst,
Hope Knútsson
Formaður Siðmenntar.

Charter of the International Coalition Against Blasphemy Laws

1. We are an international coalition of organizations committed to removing blasphemy laws wherever they exist.
2. We will:
 - (a) Provide public education regarding blasphemy laws around the world.
 - (b) Advocate on behalf of victims of blasphemy laws.
 - (c) Lobby governments to act on expert legal opinions, which consistently recommend that these laws be repealed or abolished.
3. We defend people's right to discuss, criticize and ridicule ideas and beliefs, even when this offends other people. Humans have rights beliefs do not.
4. With regard to freedom of speech laws which are aimed at protecting people rather than ideas, members of the coalition may have different approaches or policies.
5. We argue that blasphemy laws are harmful:
 - (a) They violate freedom of expression and deny equality.
 - (b) Actively enforced blasphemy laws infringe on and violate human rights around the world.
 - (c) Passive blasphemy laws reinforce active blasphemy laws.
 - (d) They have been repudiated by international law and governance bodies.
 - (e) Blasphemy laws are sometimes hidden under other language.

 <p>Association humaniste du Québec Le seul club athée et sans religion au Québec</p>	 <p>ATHEIST ALLIANCE INTERNATIONAL <small>FOR A SECULAR WORLD</small></p>	 <p>Atheist Ireland Promoting atheism, reason and an ethical, secular state</p>
 <p>BRITISH HUMANIST ASSOCIATION for the one life we have</p>	 <p>cfi</p>	 <p>CENTRE FOR INQUIRY Canada</p>
 <p>European Humanist Federation</p>	 <p>Humanist Canada <small>Humanist International, a CFI International Service Project</small></p>	 <p>Humanist Society of New Zealand (Inc.) <small>Human Rights, Ethics, Science, Rational Thought, and a Secular Society</small></p>
 <p>IHEU International Humanist and Ethical Union</p>		

ORGANIZATION SIGNATORIES

Alliance of Humanists, Atheists and Agnostics – Luxembourg	Humanist Union of Greece (HUG)
American Atheists	Humanisterna (Swedish Humanist Association)
American Atheists	Humanistic Association Netherlands (Humanistisch Verbond Nederland)
American Humanist Association	Humanistic Historic Center (previous name : Het Humanistisch Archief)
Andha Shraddha Nirmulan Samiti	Humanistisch Historisch Centrum
Asian Rationalist Association Britain	Humanistisch Instituut voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (HIVOS)
Asociación Humanista Etica Argentina “Deodoro Roca” (Argentine Ethical Humanist Association)	Humanistisch Verbond
Asociatia Secular-Umanista din Romania (Romanian Secular Humanist Association)	Humanistisch Vormings Onderwijs (HVO)
Asociatia Umanista Romana (Romanian Humanist Association)	Humanistischer Verband Deutschlands (German Humanist Association)
Association for Secular Humanism (ASH)	Humanistisch-Vrijzinnige Vereniging – HVV
Association Francaise pour l'Information Scientifique	Humanistisk Samfund
Association Humaniste du Quebec (Humanist Association of Quebec)	HUUMANISTS – Friends of Religious Humanism
Associazione del Libero Pensiero “Giordano Bruno”	Icelandic Ethical Humanist Association, Siðmennt
Ateistisk Selskab	Indian Humanist Union
Atheist Association of Czech Republic	Indian Radical Humanist Association

Atheist Centre (India)	Indonesian Atheists
Atheist Coalition Poland	
Atheist Union of Greece	Institute for Humanist Studies
	Initiative Liberaler Muslime Osterreich (ILMO)
Belfast Humanist Group	International Humanist and Ethical Youth Organisation (IHEYO)
British Columbia Humanist Association	
British Humanist Association	Kasese United Humanist Association
Buddhiwadi Samaj	Kenyan Humanist Association (KHA)
Bund Freireligiöser Gemeinden Deutschlands	Kerala Yukhtivada Sanghom
Burundi Humanist Charity	Lagos Humanists and Skeptics
Canadian Humanist Publications	Ligue de l'Enseignement (Education League)
Capital District Humanist Society	Malta Humanist Association
CAVA Vrijzinnig Studie-, Archief- en Documentatiecentrum "Karel Cuypers" (VSAD Centrum "Karel Cuypers")	Manavatavadi Vishwa Sansthan (The International School of Humanitarian Thoughts and Practice)
Center Fro Democracy and Human Rights in Saudi Arabia	
Center for Civil Courage	Manavbadi Samaj (Society for Humanism Nepal) (SOCH)
Central London Humanist Group	Military Association of Atheists & Freethinkers (MAAF)
Centre d'Action Laïque	Minnesota Atheists
Cercle Gaston Crémieux	Mouvement Europe et Laïcité (ex CAEDEL)
	Muslim Canadian Congress
Colombia Atheist Organisation – ORCA	National Secular Society (UK)

Conway Hall Ethical Society	Netradana Protsahaka Sangham (Society for Promotion of Eye Donation)
Coordinamento Nazionale delle Consulte per la Laicità delle Istituzioni	New Zealand Association of Rationalists and Humanists
Council for Secular Humanism	Nigerian Humanist Movement
	North American Tarksheel (Rationalist) Society
Council of Australian Humanist Societies	North East Humanists
Coventry & Warwickshire Humanists	North London Humanist Group
Dachverband Freier Weltanschauungs gemainschaften e.V.	Norwegian Humanist Association / Buskerud County
Danish Humanist Society	Ontario Humanist Society
De Vrije Gedachte	Open Community Initiative
Delphi Society	Peruvian Association of Atheists
deMens.nu	Philippine Atheists and Agnostics Society (PATAS)
Devon Humanists	Pink Triangle Trust
Dorset Humanists	Polish Humanist Association
EGALE	Prometheus Books
ETHOS Ethics, Tolerance, Humanism, Citizenship	Prometheus Society of Slovakia (Spolocnosť Prometheus)
Europa Laica	Quinte Secular Humanist Association
European Humanist Professionals (EHP)	RIBZ (Raad voor Inspectie en Begeleiding niet-confessionele Zedenleer)
Federation of Indian Rationalist Associations (FIRA)	Russian Humanist Society
Fondation humaniste du Quebec (Quebec Humanist Foundation)	Satya Shodak Sabha (Truth Seeker Society)
Free Society Institute	Secular Humanist League of Brazil

Freethought Society	Social Development Foundation
Freidenker Vereinigung der Schweiz	Solidaritatea pentru libertatea de conștiință (Solidarity for Freedom of Conscience)
Freidenkerbund Österreichs	Spoločnosť Prometheus (Prometheus Society of Slovakia)
Freidenkerbund Österreichs (Freethinkers Organisation of Austria)	Stichting HSHB
Freidenker-Vereinigung der Schweiz FVS/ASLP	Suomen Humanistiliitto (Humanist Union of Finland)
Fundatia Centrul Pentru Conștiința Critică (CCC)	Sutton Humanist Group
Gay and Lesbian Humanist Association (GALHA)	Tarksheel Society Punjab (Rationalist Society Punjab) (TSP)
Ghana Atheist Alliance	
Giordano Bruno Stiftung	The Women and the Free World Organization (Uganda)
Good Sense Foundation	Uganda Humanist Association
Guatemalan Secular Humanist Association	Uganda Humanist Schools Trust
Harambee Ya Uutu Mnajili Wa Jahwar Amber	Unie Vrijzinnige Verenigingen
Human Etiska Föreningen (Human Ethical Association)	Union des Familles Laïques (UFAL)
Human-Etisk Forbund	Union Radical-Humaniste Luxembourgeoise
Human-Etisk Forbund (Norwegian Humanist Association)	Union Rationaliste (Rationalist Union)
Humanismo Secular Portugal	Union Rationaliste de France
Humanist Association For Leadership Equity and Accountability	Unione Degli Atei e Degli Agnostici Razionalisti (UAAR) (Italy)
	Universalist Muslims

Humanist Association of Ghana	Universiteit voor Humanistiek
Humanist Association of Ireland	Vapaa-ajattelijain Liitto ry – the Union of Freethinkers
Humanist Association of Northern Ireland	Vapaa-ajattelijain liitto ry (the Union of Freethinkers of Finland)
Humanist Canada	Viveka Vidyalayam
Humanist Empowerment of Livelihoods in Uganda	Youth Movement for Freedom of Thought in Haiti
Humanist Fellowship of San Diego	
Humanist Institute (formerly North American Committee for Humanism)	
Humanist Society (Singapore)	
Humanist Society of New Zealand	
Humanist Society of Scotland	

Elaboration on why blasphemy laws are harmful

5(a) Blasphemy laws violate freedom of expression and deny equality.

Blasphemy laws have a ‘chilling effect’ on freedom of expression. Blasphemy laws are often class and gender discriminatory, whereby less powerful individuals face the highest risks. Blasphemy laws are a species of libel with no real rules of evidence or proof, and for which the *mens rea* assumptions of guilt are difficult to establish. The legal criteria for recognition as a religious group are problematic in many jurisdictions.

5(b) Blasphemy laws are used to infringe on human rights around the world.

Alleged blasphemy frequently leads to arbitrary arrest, detention, poor treatment in custody including torture, dubious legal procedures and poor application of justice; in several states, lawyers will refuse to defend an accused person through fear of prosecution themselves. Governments and religious leaders use blasphemy laws to silence political opponents, individuals fabricate charges against others, religious extremists use blasphemy laws to attack opponents, and religious authorities can impose religious orthodoxy with the sanction of the state.

5(c) Blasphemy laws have been repudiated by international law and governance bodies.

In 2009, The Venice Commission advising the Council of Europe said that insult to religious feelings should not be a crime, and that the offence of blasphemy should be abolished and not be reintroduced. Since 2011 the United Nations Human Rights Committee has considered laws against blasphemy and defamation of religion to violate international law. The 2012 Rabat Plan of Action launched by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights in February 2013 says blasphemy laws have a stifling impact on the enjoyment of freedom of religion or belief and should be repealed.

5 (d) Passive blasphemy laws have the effect of reinforcing active, brutally enforced blasphemy laws.

Self-described Islamic states under the OIC banner, have been using the existence of western blasphemy laws (and particularly the Irish law of 2009) at the UN to defend and promote their own blasphemy laws. This is significant both in itself and also as a lobbying issue. Perhaps the main obstacle to getting archaic passive blasphemy laws removed in western democracies is the idea that they don’t matter.

5 (e) Blasphemy laws are sometimes hidden under other language.

 Humanist Canada <small>Secular & Ethical. Humanistic values.</small>	 Atheist Ireland Promoting atheism, reason and an ethical, secular state	 CENTRE FOR INQUIRY Canada
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