

HUMANIST ORGANISATIONS AROUND THE WORLD

THERE ARE MANY HUMANIST ORGANISATIONS AROUND THE WORLD AND THEY SHARE MANY SIMILAR AMBITIONS AND GOALS.

Campaigning by humanist organisations typically focuses on promoting secularism and human rights. They seek to remove religious privilege where it exists, challenge discrimination against the non-religious, and work to ensure the separation of powers of religion and state. This often includes campaigning for the human right to freedom of religion and belief, and against the existence of blasphemy and apostasy laws.

Humanist organisations also engage in a wide number of projects aimed at improving equality, opportunity, and human welfare. These might include humanitarian work, providing education services, supporting the rights of women and LGBT people, and campaigning against harmful traditional practices.



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One effective way to look at the global humanist movement is to imagine it as a spectrum.

At the top of the spectrum are humanist organisations that have managed to be recognised by the state, for example, organisations in Norway, Belgium, and the Netherlands. In those countries, non-religious organisations have been recognised on the same level as religious groups. They are also financed by the state, following a principle of equal treatment. These organisations are able to openly and freely promote humanism as a life stance, as a way to live that is totally independent from religion. They will often offer humanist ceremonies and other services in education or pastoral support in prisons and hospitals.

In the middle of the spectrum are organisations who are working for secularism in countries where the lines between church and state are blurred. Their campaigns will include attempts to remove religious privilege, particularly in

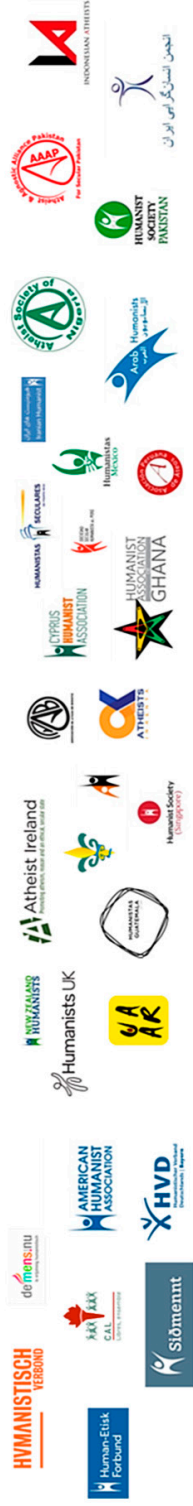
the education system, and to have humanism recognised as a legitimate part of society. In Italy, Spain, and Portugal, for example, one can openly be atheist (despite a certain degree of moral stigmatisation). Nonetheless the separation of church and state still has to be achieved, and that is what humanist organisations in those countries are campaigning for.

If we look towards the bottom of the spectrum we will find humanist organisations that are illegal and are simply battling for the right to exist. The Humanist Association of Nigeria, for example, took 17 years to be recognised by the state as a legitimate organisation, and humanists in Kenya are unable to get state recognition.

At the very bottom of the spectrum are those countries in which we find individual humanists who are simply struggling to survive because admitting that they are not religious would put their liberty and lives at risk.



A SPECTRUM OF HUMANIST ORGANISATIONS



Humanists International is the global representative body of the humanist movement, uniting a diversity of non-religious organisations and individuals. It is made up of over 120 member organisations from over 60 countries.

- The largest humanist organisation in the world is the Norwegian Humanist Association (Human-Etisk Forbund).
- The countries with the highest number of Humanist International member organisations are the UK, India, and the US.
- As of July 2021, the newest member organisations of Humanists International are from Barbados, Estonia, Malawi, Myanmar, and Zimbabwe.

Locations of Humanists International member organisations

