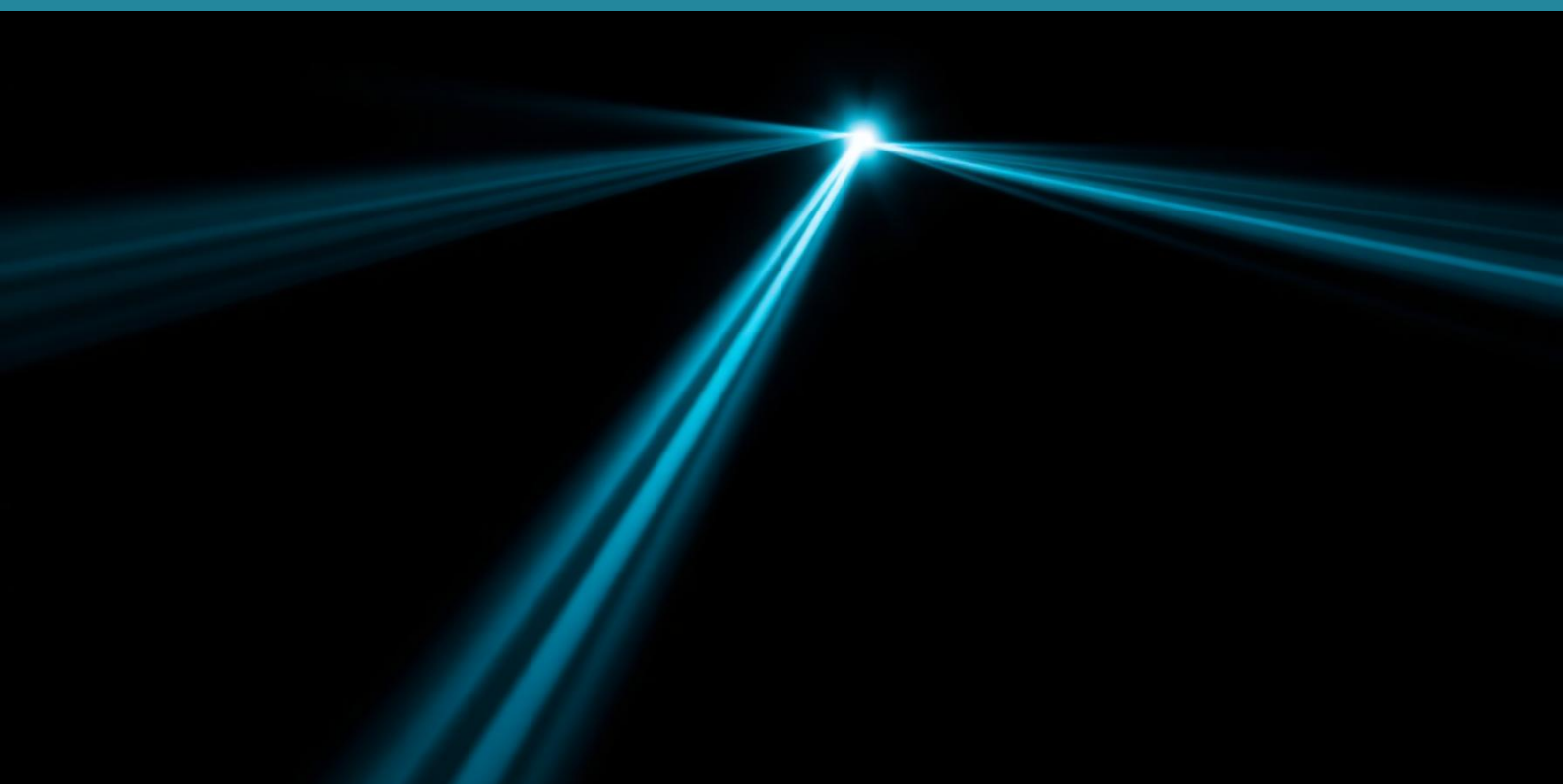
HUMANISTS MALAYSIA

2026–2030

THE ASIAN HUMANIST STATEMENT

Reason, Rights, and Resilience in a Changing Continent

Date of Adoption: 20 November 2026



REASON, RIGHTS, AND RESILIENCE

PREAMBLE

We, the humanists, freethinkers, secularists, and non-religious individuals & organizations of Asia, issue this Statement at a critical juncture in our continent's history. Asia is a region of profound beauty, staggering diversity, and rapid transformation. Yet, beneath the surface of our economic and technological modernization lies a growing shadow: the rise of authoritarianism, religious majoritarianism, and the systemic erosion of universal human rights.

For too long, the global narrative has treated our continent as a monolith of tradition, silencing the millions who question, doubt, and seek truth through reason rather than revelation. We refuse to be silenced. We refuse to be marginalized.

Humanism in Asia is not a foreign import; it is the natural expression of our shared humanity. It is the courage to ask "why," the compassion to care for one another without the promise of divine reward, and the resilience to stand for human dignity in the face of state and social oppression.

Through this Statement, we establish a unified, coordinated, and unapologetic Asian Humanist voice. We present our priorities to our governments, to the United Nations, to our fellow civil society actors, and to every isolated individual seeking a community of reason.

OUR CORE PRINCIPLES

REASON: We champion the scientific method, critical inquiry, and evidence-based policy. We reject dogma, pseudoscience, and the weaponization of superstition to control populations.

RIGHTS: We assert that human rights are universal, indivisible, and secular. Freedom of conscience is the foundation of all liberty; it must include the absolute right to believe, to disbelieve, and to change one's beliefs without fear of state or social persecution.

RESILIENCE: We commit to building sustainable, connected, and empowered communities. We recognize that in many contexts across our continent, simply existing as a non-religious person is an act of profound courage. We will protect, train, and uplift one another.

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THE ASIAN HUMANIST PRIORITIES

To translate our values into actionable advocacy, we commit to advancing the following five priorities. We call upon national human rights commissions, UN treaty bodies, and international observers to hold Asian states accountable to these demands:

1. The Absolute Repeal of Blasphemy, Apostasy, and Anti-Conversion Laws

Laws that criminalize dissent, blasphemy, or apostasy are instruments of state-sponsored oppression. They disproportionately target minorities, women, and the non-religious. We demand the immediate and unconditional repeal of all such laws across the continent. Freedom of belief is meaningless if the penalty for changing or abandoning belief is imprisonment or death. Furthermore, we demand the removal of religious identifiers from state civil records, ensuring that no citizen is forced to declare a faith they do not hold.

2. Secular Education and the Cultivation of a Scientific Temper

The minds of Asia's youth must not be held captive by rote learning, dogmatic assertions, or the introduction of pseudoscience into state curricula. We demand an educational overhaul that embeds formal logic, evidence-based reasoning, and the "scientific temper" into school syllabi from early childhood. Education must empower students to question unverified claims, challenge harmful traditional norms, and develop the critical faculties necessary to navigate a complex world. We also call for the eradication of harmful superstitions and rituals that disproportionately exploit vulnerable groups, particularly women and marginalized castes.

3. Bodily Autonomy, Gender Equality, and LGBTQ+ Rights

Human dignity is non-negotiable and cannot be subordinated to cultural relativism or theocratic governance. We fiercely oppose the aggressive rollback of women's reproductive rights and the systemic discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals. We recognize that patriarchal and religious majoritarian frameworks often intersect to oppress the most vulnerable. We advocate for a society where individuals have absolute sovereignty over their own bodies, identities, and lives.

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THE ASIAN HUMANIST PRIORITIES

4. Protection of the Persecuted and the Right to Asylum

No one should be forced to flee their homeland for the "crime" of disbelief. Across the region, humanists, atheists, apostates, and freethinkers face existential threats, requiring them to seek refuge. We call upon states to recognize persecution on the grounds of non-belief as valid grounds for asylum. Furthermore, we demand that states protect non-religious individuals from vigilante violence, while supporting cross-border networks that provide legal, psychological, and physical sanctuary to the persecuted. We denounce state-sponsored practices like 'red-tagging' that inhibit people's right to freedom of speech.

5. Civil Resilience, Local Identity, and Democratic Defense

Humanism is not merely a philosophy; it is a practice of civic defense. In the face of historical cultural suppression and contemporary geopolitical threats, we advocate for grassroots civil resilience. We support the revitalization of local identities, community-led disaster preparedness, and the defense of democratic existence. As our continent undergoes rapid social change, humanism provides a constructive framework for engaging with modernization; balancing our commitment to reason and universal rights with our cultural contexts, ensuring that tradition evolves to serve human flourishing rather than enforce subjugation.

COMMUNITY AND SOLIDARITY

A CALL TO OUR COMMUNITIES AND ALLIES

To the unorganized and isolated humanists of Asia:

You are not alone. Whether you are navigating the journey of leaving a dominant faith, questioning entrenched dogma in your homeland, hiding your disbelief from state or social surveillance, or building secular communities in hostile environments, this Statement is your beacon. You belong to a vast, unseen community. Use this document as a reference point, a shield, and a foundation to find your people and build your local organizations.

To our partners in civil society, interfaith coalitions, and human rights NGOs:

We are your natural allies. The fight for press freedom, environmental justice, and democratic governance is inextricably linked to the fight for secularism and freedom of conscience. We offer our networks, our grassroots resilience, and our unwavering commitment to evidence-based advocacy. Let us build a united front against majoritarian overreach.

To the global humanist movement:

Asia is not a blank space on the humanist map; it is a vibrant, resilient, and rapidly growing frontier. By strengthening the Asian humanist network, we strengthen the global voice for secularism at the UN Human Rights Council and beyond. We invite you to stand in solidarity with us, not as saviors, but as equal partners in a truly global movement.

CONCLUSION

We do not reject our cultural contexts; rather, we seek to evolve them. We honor the best of our traditions; compassion, community, and inquiry; while courageously discarding those that inflict harm, enforce inequality, or demand intellectual surrender.

We are the architects of a secular, compassionate, and rational Asia. We move forward with reason as our guide, rights as our shield, and resilience as our strength.

20 NOVEMBER 2026

ENDORSEMENT AND ADOPTION

This Statement was collaboratively drafted, consulted upon, and adopted at the closing plenary of the 2026 Virtual Asian Humanist Conference: Reason, Rights, and Resilience.

Founding Signatory Organizations (in chronological order):

(Endorsed by representatives of the following organizations, serving as the founding coalition)

1. Ambedkar Social Institute [India]
2. Ateizm Derneği (Association of Atheism, Türkiye) [Turkey]
3. Ateizm Dernegi International Foundation [Turkey]
4. Burmese Atheists [Myanmar]
5. Federation of Indian Rationalist Associations [India]
6. Filipino Freethinkers [Philippines]
7. Freethought Lebanon [Lebanon]
8. Humanist Alliance Philippines, International [Philippines]
9. Humanists Malaysia [Malaysia]
10. SG Agora [Singapore]
11. Society for Humanism Nepal [Nepal]
12. Taiwanese Humanist Institute [Taiwan]

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