

## Press Release

### Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies (AISS); to Host Academic Conference

#### “Religious Freedom in a Changing World: Faith, Pluralism, and Civic Life”

Washington, D.C. - June, 06, 2026 - The Afghan Institute for Strategic Studies (AISS) is pleased to announce the Third Annual Washington Darbar Conference, titled “**Religious Freedom in a Changing World: Faith, Pluralism, and Civic Life.**” The conference will take place on Tuesday, September 29, 2026, in Washington, D.C.

This timely and interdisciplinary event will bring together scholars, researchers, religious studies experts, legal and philosophical thinkers, cultural figures, civil society representatives, students, and public audiences to address religious freedom as one of the defining questions of contemporary civic life. Discussions will cover diverse areas, including freedom of conscience, religious pluralism, the relationship between religion and state authority, interfaith coexistence, digital media, and the role of technology in shaping religious discourse.

The conference builds on the previous two editions of the Washington Darbar initiative. The first conference addressed **Post-Islamism** and transformations in Muslim political thought, while the second, held in 2025 at Georgetown University, focused on **Jews and the Persianate World**. The 2026 conference will continue this platform by turning to religious freedom through the lenses of history, ethics, law, comparative religion, culture, and public life.

The conference will be followed by a cultural evening titled “**Rumi Night in Washington, D.C.**” to be held at the Museum of the Bible. This program will offer a cultural and humanistic reflection on Rumi’s message of love, freedom, spiritual imagination, and human harmony. The evening will feature:

- A book launch spotlighting new scholarship,
- Musical performances inspired by Rumi’s poetry,
- Reflections on Rumi’s legacy and interfaith understanding,
- Cultural presentations on Persianate literary and spiritual heritage.

Together, these events aim to deepen public understanding of religious freedom, pluralism, and coexistence, while creating a space where scholarship, culture, and public conversation can contribute to a more thoughtful understanding of religion and civic life.

Note: Prior registration is required for both the academic conference and the cultural evening.

For additional information, registration, or media inquiries, please contact the Conference Team at: WhatsApp: +1 (613) 983-0028

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