



WARSAW HUMAN DIMENSION CONFERENCE 2026

Plenary Session 3: Fundamental Freedoms I, including:

- Freedom of peaceful assembly and association**
- Human rights defenders**
- National human rights institutions**
- Freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief**

CAP-LC draws the attention to a development within the United States that raises significant concerns. Recent applications of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act have extended the notion of coercion into areas involving spiritual instruction and communal life. In the federal OneTaste case, two individuals received severe prison sentences although no physical compulsion, threats, or restraint were alleged.

The proceedings relied on psychological influence and on theories of coercive persuasion that academic experts and courts have long rejected. Testimonies from participants reporting no harm were not admitted.

This approach creates a precedent that may expose religious, therapeutic, and self-development communities to civil or criminal liability based on subjective reinterpretations of belief and belonging. CAP-LC urges the United States Congress, currently reauthorizing the TVPA, to adopt safeguards ensuring that trafficking legislation remains directed at genuine exploitation.

A careful review of the sentences imposed would also reflect humanitarian considerations and reinforce OSCE-recommended commitments to human rights and fundamental freedoms.