

Charter of the Alliance of Rabbis in Islamic States (ARIS)

Establishment of ARIS

In Kislev 5780, we, a group of rabbis that live in countries under Muslim rule, met to discuss a number of topical issues. It became clear to us that there is a great need for a rabbinical organization to serve as the general voice for the rabbis living in Muslim countries. We resolved to establish, with G-d's help, an organization that will unite the rabbis of the various countries in order to provide mutual support and assistance, and named it the **Alliance of Rabbis in Islamic States (ARIS)**.

The organization was established with the purpose of uniting all of the rabbis living in Muslim countries. Such an Alliance has never existed in these countries and is not intended to take the place of any existing organization. The Alliance will unite all of the rabbis that wish to join; both Sefardim and Ashkenazim, Chabad *shluchim* as well as community rabbis – all G-d fearing ordained Orthodox rabbis that live in Muslim countries and serve in a rabbinic position.

The Goals of ARIS

1. To organize rabbinic conferences in order to discuss topical issues. This is especially important because many of the issues we face are very similar.
2. To support and strengthen the position of the rabbis as in relation to community leaders and members regarding matters of religious standards.
3. To participate in talks with leaders from other faiths with the goal of influencing them to use their positions in their respective communities to advance a message of peace, tolerance, and co-existence – as there historically has been for thousands of years – and reduce the level of antisemitism.
4. To publicize contemporary Jewish life in the Muslim countries around the world. Much is said and published about the glorious history of Jews in Muslim countries but not enough is known about the Jewish life that exists there currently. This publicity will help reduce antisemitism in our countries and generate an appreciation for tolerance and solidarity.
5. To encourage the governments, may they thrive gloriously, to support and help strengthen the Jewish communities and rabbis.
6. To endeavor to obtain funding for the rabbis' activities, religious articles, and educational programs.
7. To provide humanitarian assistance to the communities.

At the same time, the Alliance will, G-d willing, distance itself completely from any conflicts and strive to increase the fraternity, love, and peace between the rabbis.

Bylaws of Alliance of Rabbis in Islamic States (ARIS)

Alliance of Rabbis in Islamic States (ARIS) wish to strengthen their voice and mission of transmitting the ancestral traditions and Jewish culture to the next generation of Jews in Muslim countries.

Alliance of Rabbis in Islamic States (ARIS) is an apolitical Alliance whose goal is advancing Torah and Divine honor, and assisting its members that reside in Muslim countries. The Alliance invites all rabbinic organizations around the world to work together to advance Torah with Jewish love and unity.

“Muslim countries” are defined based on membership in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

Membership in the Alliance of Rabbis in Islamic States (ARIS)

The Alliance will, G-d willing, organize an annual rabbinic conference for all members of the **Alliance of Rabbis in Islamic States (ARIS)**. The conference will take place in one of the countries, as determined by the executive committee.

Membership in the Alliance is contingent on the following:

1. Possession of rabbinic ordination from an Orthodox Jewish rabbi or Orthodox Jewish institution.
2. Belief in the Thirteen Principles of Faith, based on the Shulchan Aruch.
3. Commitment to traditional halachah and Jewish customs.
4. Officially and practically residing in one of the Muslim countries for at least six months a year and serving in a rabbinic position, either part-time or full-time.
5. The synagogue where members serve must conduct the services in accordance with halachah.
6. Members may not have a criminal record.

After an applicant completes the questionnaire and sends a resume and a copy of his ordination certificate the president of the Alliance will present the application to the executive committee for their approval.

Executive Committee

The Alliance is headed by an executive committee. The executive establishes the bylaws of the Alliance and changes to the bylaws must pass a vote of the executive with a two-thirds majority, with every country represented assigned one vote.

The members of the executive committee are elected by the general membership of the Alliance for a period of five years.

The members will endeavor to choose an executive with representation for all of the main streams among the rabbis: Sefardim, Ashkenazim, Chabad *shluchim*, non-Chabad rabbis etc. This will ensure that the executive represents all of its members faithfully.

The executive committee will meet every three months, either in person or virtually, at the invitation of the president of the Alliance.

Membership applications will be approved at the executive meeting.

Alliance

The executive committee will include representatives from the various regions:

1. Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan)
2. Western Asia (Turkey, Azerbaijan)
3. European Muslim countries (Albania, Kosovo, North Cyprus)
4. North Africa (Morocco, Tunisia)
5. Arabian Gulf (UAE, Bahrain)
6. Africa (Nigeria, Uganda, Senegal)
7. Iran
8. The Alliance's representative to interfaith conferences
9. The President of the Alliance

The members of the executive committee will endeavor to secure the funding for the Alliance's activities (flights, visits, conferences, secretary, publications, public relations, religious articles, and administrative expenses).

President of the Alliance and Chairman of the Executive Committee

The executive committee will appoint one of its members, by a majority vote, to serve as President and Executive Committee Chairman. A second member will be appointed to serve as a deputy. The president and deputy will serve five year terms.

The role of the President includes:

1. Leading the Alliance based on the direction charted by the executive committee.
2. Organizing and chairing the quarterly executive meeting and the yearly general conference.
3. Reporting to the executive every few days about the progress made regarding matters of importance to the Alliance.
4. Representing the Alliance in the media and to governmental authorities, both within the Muslim countries and to the rest of the world.
5. Maintaining ties with other rabbinic and Jewish organizations around the world.
6. Representing the Alliance at rabbinic conferences and other events.
7. Signing agreements with international organizations and institutions.
8. Employing an administrative team and conducting the Alliance's finances.
9. Promoting the Alliance in the media and maintain the Alliance's website.
10. Obtaining legal advice for the Alliance's activities.
11. Presenting a yearly financial report to the executive committee.

12. The president can receive payment from the Alliance for expenses incurred on behalf of the Alliance as well as compensation for his time, subject to the approval of the executive committee.
13. The president may appoint, with the consent of the executive committee, an agent to represent the Alliance's interests to governments in European and the United States and maintain relationships with ambassadors, etc.

Rabbinic Counsel

The executive committee will appoint a halachic authority who will be consulted with concerning all halachic questions related to the Alliance's activities.

Beis Din and Kashrus Committee

The Alliance will endeavor to assist the rabbis in all matters pertaining to Jewish religious life. If the need arises for halachic guidance or to convene a Beis Din, the Alliance will consult its halachic authority and provide all necessary halachic assistance. This includes the establishment and strengthening of local kashrus agencies.

Honorary Presidents Committee

The Alliance will reserve a place of honor for the Chief Rabbis of the ancient Jewish communities throughout the Muslim countries. To this end a committee of honorary presidents has been formed for the **Alliance of Rabbis in Islamic States (ARIS)**.

1. The Chief Rabbis of the prestigious communities of Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, and Iran will be invited to join the honorary committee.
2. The members of the honorary committee will occasionally be invited to the meetings of the executive committee to provide advice and guidance.
3. Members of the honorary committee will receive an annual report of the executive committee's activities.
4. The members of the honorary committee will grace the Alliance with their honorary position but will not bear any administrative or operative responsibilities.

Advisory Committee

As noted, the Alliance isn't taking the place of any existing organization. On the contrary, the Alliance reaches out to all rabbinic organizations and asks for their support and advice.

Through this committee we will seek the advice and blessing of:

The Chief Rabbi of Russia (who also represents the Muslim republics in Russia)

The President of the Conference of European Rabbis

It is customary to seek counsel from the elders. We will invite important rabbis, heads of Jewish organizations, and supporters of the Alliance to serve on the Alliance's advisory committee. The

executive committee will invite figures such as the Chief Rabbis of Israel, Ukraine, Great Britain, France, and others to join the advisory committee.

Supporters Committee

Supporters that participate personally and financially in the Alliance's activities will be invited to sit on a supporters committee. This committee will be chaired by the president of the Alliance.

Interfaith Conferences

The Alliance will participate in interfaith conferences regarding peace, tolerance, and solidarity, in accordance with halachah.

The Alliance will not participate debates or discussions concerning matters of religion with representatives of other faiths, not even for the sake of peace.

When necessary the Alliance will invite international rabbis and experts to participate in the various conferences.

A member of the executive committee will be appointed to head the department for interfaith conferences. Prior to every conference he will confer with the executive committee and president and receive their approval to represent the Alliance at the conference. The consent of the Alliance's halachic authority is also required prior to participation in any interfaith conference.

Elections

Elections for the executive committee will be held every five years with the participation of all of the members of the Alliance.

Founding Members of the Executive Committee

As we have been working on the establishment of the Alliance from Kislev 5780 until now, the following rabbis have been appointed to serve on the executive committee. These members will serve until the elections that will take place, G-d willing, before Rosh Hashanah 5784. These elections will select an executive committee that will serve for five years, as detailed above.

Chief Rabbi Yeshayahu Cohen – Kazakhstan

Chief Rabbi Shne'ur Segal – Azerbaijan

Rabbi Levi Banon – Morocco

Rabbi Menachem Chitrik – Turkey

Rabbi Levi Duchman – UAE

Chief Rabbi Yisrael Uzan – Nigeria

Rabbi Chaim Hillel Azimov – North Cyprus (as observer)

The executive committee's representative for interfaith conferences has not yet been appointed. We await the addition of further rabbis to the Alliance, one of whom will fill this position.

The representative of Iran has not yet been appointed to the executive committee.

In order to fully represent the range of opinions and perspectives of the members of the Alliance the executive committee will add additional members before the next elections.

The executive committee has elected Rabbi Menachem Chitrik of Turkey to serve as President and Rabbi Levi Duchman of the UAE to serve as Vice President until the next elections, scheduled to be held before Rosh Hashanah 5784. At this point the general assembly will elect a new executive committee, and the committee will elect a President and Vice President to serve a five year term, as detailed in the bylaws.

Rules for the Members of the Alliance

All rabbis that are members of the Alliance of Rabbis in Islamic States must abide by the following rules:

1. The rabbis must support each other, publicly and privately. Members will assist each other happily and generously.
2. It is forbidden for any member of the Alliance to criticize a fellow member in the media. When criticism is necessary it must be delivered with respect and in private.
3. The rabbis will care for each other's welfare and well-being and exhibit loyalty to each other.

These bylaws have been approved by the executive committee in Cheshvan 5781 and will serve as the foundation for the work of the Alliance of Rabbis in Muslim Countries. The bylaws will be sent to all rabbis residing in Muslim countries and they will be invited to join the Alliance based on these bylaws. May G-d bless our actions and may we merit to advance Torah and *mitzvos* until the coming of Mashiach.