



# **Atheist Alliance International**

## **Annual Report 2023 - 2024**



**For a Secular World**

This year, Atheist Alliance International (AAI) proudly celebrates an extraordinary milestone: 33 years of unwavering service and dedication as a volunteer-led organization. Since its inception, AAI has been committed to promoting secularism, supporting atheist communities, and defending human rights across the globe. Achieving this longevity is a testament to the passion and resilience of our volunteers, supporters, and partners who share our vision of a world where freedom of thought and belief is a universal human right.

Over the past three decades, AAI has grown from a small network of like-minded individuals into a globally recognized organization, advocating for atheists and secular individuals in areas where such beliefs are marginalized, misunderstood, or even criminalized. Through our projects, outreach programs, and advocacy efforts, AAI continues to stand as a voice for the voiceless and a beacon for secular values.

In this Annual Report, we reflect on a year of achievements, challenges, and growth. This report highlights our initiatives to protect fundamental rights, support marginalized atheists, and create awareness around issues that impact the global secular community. The resilience, creativity, and commitment of our volunteers and members have been crucial in overcoming challenges and pushing our mission forward.

As we honor our past, we look toward the future with renewed commitment and optimism. Together, we are building a world where everyone has the freedom to think, believe, or disbelieve as they choose. Thank you for being a part of this journey and for your continued support.

## Reflecting on a Transformative Year

This year has been extraordinary for AAI, marked by growth, adaptation, and progress. We welcomed several new member groups, bringing our total membership to an impressive 75 organizations worldwide.

Atheist Alliance International (AAI) is now fully reinstated and recognized by all relevant regulatory bodies, including the California Secretary of State and the California Department of Justice. As a registered 501(c)(3) charity, AAI enjoys tax-exempt status, enabling it to direct more resources toward its mission. In addition, AAI holds special consultative status, allowing it to engage on critical issues and promote secular values on an international platform.

Fundraising increased slightly this year. We also successfully secured substantial financial support for clients of the Atheist Support Network through partnerships with prominent human rights organizations dedicated to helping human rights defenders. The number of supporters remained stable. We have launched initiatives aimed at expanding our supporter base, and these efforts will continue moving forward.

This year marked the exciting launch of the Atheist Census Project, a significant initiative aimed at gathering comprehensive data on atheists and secular individuals worldwide. Designed not only as a tool of solidarity intended to normalize atheism, especially for those who live in closed societies and face punishment for openly identifying as non-believers, the Atheist Census will also play a key role in strengthening AAI's future by helping to attract new supporters and increase donations. Through this project, we aim to deepen public understanding of the atheist community while building a foundation for greater engagement and support.

Atheist Alliance International (AAI) continued its steadfast support for the Kasese Humanist School, a vital educational institution fostering humanist values in Uganda. This year, we were also proud to launch a new program to support the Eagles View Humanist School, expanding our reach and impact. Together, these efforts support the education of over 1,400 children in rural areas across Africa, providing them with opportunities for a quality education rooted in critical thinking, inclusivity, and compassion.

This year, Atheist Alliance International (AAI) introduced a new grant specifically designed to support atheist organizations operating in developing countries. This grant provides essential funding for building and maintaining websites, helping these organizations establish a stronger online presence, and connect with supporters and communities globally.

In a strategic move to broaden its outreach and engage more people globally, Atheist Alliance International (AAI) adopted new social media policies this year. These updated guidelines are designed to enhance our online presence, foster meaningful interactions, and extend our message to diverse audiences.

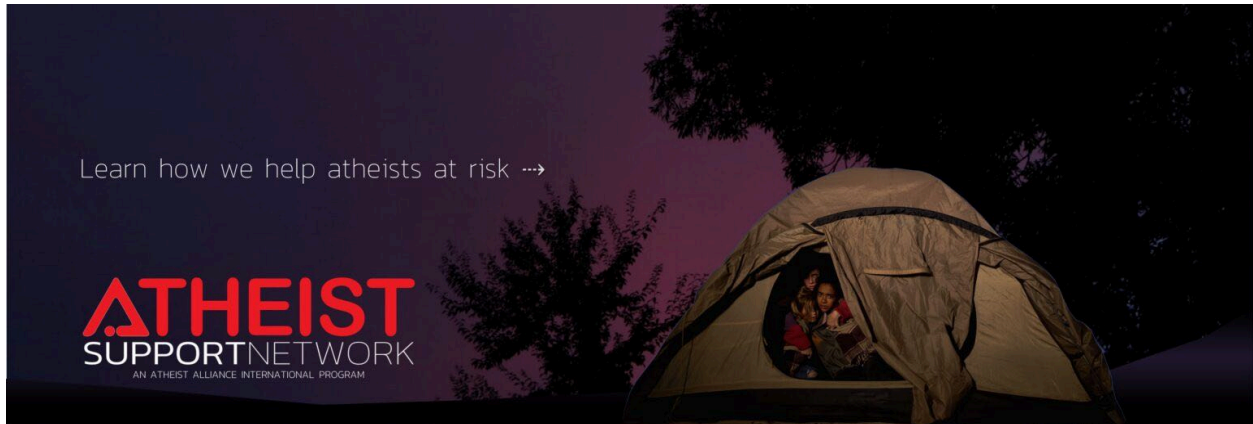
The Atheist Support Network (ASN) remains one of Atheist Alliance International's core initiatives, dedicated to providing aid to atheists facing persecution, discrimination, or hardship, especially in regions where secular individuals are at risk. Through this network, AAI offers critical support, including legal assistance, safe relocation options, and financial aid, to those in urgent need.

The Atheist Refugee Assistance Program in Turkey is a vital initiative designed to support atheists and secular individuals fleeing persecution or discrimination in their home countries. As many face significant risks due to their beliefs, this program provides essential resources, including legal aid, housing support, jobs, and financial assistance to help refugees establish a safe and secure life in Turkey.

Atheist Alliance International (AAI) has been actively supporting conferences and initiatives that foster community building within the secular movement throughout the year. By providing financial assistance, resources, and organizational support, AAI aims to facilitate gatherings that promote dialogue, collaboration, and the sharing of ideas among secularists, humanists, and atheists worldwide.

The AAI Advisory Council has been an invaluable source of guidance and support throughout the year, holding regular meetings and offering crucial advice that has shaped our initiatives and strategic decisions.

## Atheist Support Network (ASN)



The Atheist Support Network (ASN), part of Atheist Alliance International, provides crucial aid to people persecuted for their nonreligious beliefs. ASN helps those facing blasphemy or apostasy charges with legal support, asylum assistance, relocation, and safe housing. In many places, these beliefs can lead to severe penalties, including prison or death.

A major focus of ASN is defending individuals charged with blasphemy, which is often used to silence dissent and punish disbelief. ASN provides legal representation, navigating complex legal systems where anti-atheist sentiment is common. For instance, ASN helped annul the legal decision against Yahia Sharif Aminu in Nigeria, who faced the death penalty for blasphemy.

ASN also assists with relocation, helping persecuted atheists leave hostile regions. It arranges travel and temporary housing, offering people a chance to rebuild safely. The network's safe house program provides immediate shelter for those under threat, and a new 15-bed facility in Turkey is planned to meet growing needs.

Recognizing that many victims face financial hardship, ASN provides funds to cover basic living costs. This support is especially critical for women fleeing both religious persecution and gender-based violence.

Beyond individual aid, ASN collaborates with global human rights organizations to strengthen protections for atheists, pushing for systemic changes that allow freedom of belief without fear.

## Sahadat Russell

Sahadat Russell, an independent filmmaker and outspoken atheist secular writer from Dhaka, Bangladesh, has dedicated his career to tackling human rights abuses and social issues in his home country. Since 2008, he has directed and written ten short films, eight television dramas, and one web series, all addressing pressing societal problems. In addition, he has authored five books and produced three documentaries, solidifying his place as a passionate advocate for change. Sahadat's commitment to human rights is further reflected in his regular contributions as an article writer for a prominent national newspaper.

Sahadat's work has earned him recognition on the international stage, with eleven awards at film festivals in France, the United States, India, and Bangladesh. These accolades reflect his dedication to exposing social injustices, particularly through the medium of film. His 2020 release, *Color of Childhood*, is a standout example, addressing the rampant physical, mental, and sexual abuse of children in Madrasas (Islamic educational institutions) in Bangladesh. This



powerful film, which highlights the brutal reality faced by children in these institutions, quickly sparked backlash from fundamentalist groups. Their anger over the film's unflinching portrayal of abuse led to violent threats against Sahadat, even calling for the film to be banned.

Sahadat's outspoken critique of Islamic extremism and his consistent defense of human rights have made him a target for extremists in Bangladesh. As the political landscape shifted, fundamentalist factions became increasingly emboldened, intensifying their threats against Sahadat. The climate of fear reached a breaking point on August 7, 2024, when extremists attacked Sahadat's home, forcing his wife and four-year-old son to flee with nothing but the clothes on their backs. Though Sahadat was not home at the time, his family narrowly escaped death.

In the days that followed, the attackers returned to lock the family's home and threatened anyone who might help Sahadat. The situation became untenable, and Sahadat was forced to go into hiding, constantly moving to evade the violent extremists who sought to harm him and his loved ones.

With AAI's support, Sahadat was able to flee the country on August 9, 2024, seeking refuge in a neighboring nation.



## Ahmed Aref

Ahmed, originally from Yemen and now residing in the Netherlands, is a video content creator and dedicated advocate for human rights and freedom of belief. Raised in a strict Sunni Muslim household with a father who was a sheikh, he was deeply immersed in Islamic teachings. As a teenager, Ahmed studied Islam intensely, teaching it to younger children and aspiring to become a scholar. However, his worldview shifted when he encountered scientific literature and critiques of Islam. Initially, he became a more progressive Muslim, influenced by scholars like Dr. Adnan Ibrahim. Over time, though, Ahmed found contradictions in Islam that he could not reconcile with his search for truth, leading him to leave the faith at the age of twenty.



Openly expressing his new worldview and creating videos promoting atheism using artificial intelligence brought serious threats, and tragedy soon followed. Two of his close friends and fellow activists, Omar Batoil and Amjad, were murdered. Another friend, Mohammed Ali, survived an assassination attempt. These events made Ahmed realize the danger he faced in Yemen, and he resolved to leave the country, not only to protect his life but also to honor his friends' memories by standing against oppressive ideologies.

After relocating to the Netherlands, Ahmed has continued his advocacy. He openly shares his beliefs, collaborating with organizations such as Humanist Verbond, the Dutch humanist group. He also volunteers with Atheist Alliance International, creating some of the best atheist social media content globally, and runs his personal TikTok channel, where he speaks out against religious fundamentalism. Additionally, Ahmed is working on a scientifically grounded book examining Muhammad's prophethood.

Ahmed's journey fuels his commitment to defending intellectual freedom and confronting religious dogma. He envisions a future where Yemen, once central to spreading Islam, can lead in challenging restrictive ideologies through critical thought and a dedication to human rights. At Atheist Alliance International we are so happy to be able to support Ahmed in his time of need.

## Advocacy

Atheist Alliance International (AAI) continues to be at the forefront of advocating for the rights of atheists, secular individuals, and religious minorities across the world. Throughout the year, AAI has been actively involved in pushing for important human rights reforms, contributing to global discussions on freedom of belief, and addressing the safety concerns of those facing persecution. AAI's work is focused on supporting secularism, promoting freedom of conscience, and ensuring that vulnerable groups receive the protection and recognition they deserve.



One of the significant advocacy efforts by AAI this year took place during the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UN CSW) 68th session. AAI called for urgent action to ensure equal inheritance rights for women, particularly in regions where religious laws discriminate against women's rights to inherit property. In many countries, religious doctrines play a significant role in shaping the legal system, often resulting in unequal treatment of women. AAI's advocacy highlighted the need for reforms to protect women from discrimination, specifically in inheritance laws, which can significantly affect women's financial independence and well-being. The organization urged the United Nations to ensure that all member states align their laws with international human rights standards, ensuring that women are treated equally in inheritance matters. This campaign reflects AAI's commitment to pushing for secular reforms in the global human rights agenda.

Alongside this, AAI has consistently participated in the United Nations Forum on Freedom of Religion or Belief (UNFoRB) meetings. These meetings, which take place regularly, offer a platform for global discussion on freedom of religion and belief, bringing together governments, human rights groups, and international organizations. AAI's participation in these meetings has focused on promoting the right to freedom of conscience, particularly for those who hold atheist, agnostic, or secular views. AAI has used these discussions to emphasize the growing challenges faced by non-believers in many parts of the world, where expressing secular views can lead to discrimination, violence, or imprisonment. The organization has been a vocal advocate for laws that protect individuals from persecution based on their personal beliefs, ensuring that freedom of thought and expression remains safeguarded for all.

AAI's advocacy for freedom of conscience has extended beyond its work at the UN. The organization has also been actively engaging with leading human rights organizations and NGOs to raise awareness about the risks faced by atheists around the world. Atheists and secular activists are often targeted for their views, particularly in regions where religion is deeply ingrained in the political and social fabric. AAI has worked year-round to call attention to the

plight of those facing violence, imprisonment, or threats simply for expressing their non-belief. The organization has worked closely with human rights groups to ensure that atheists receive the protection they need, advocating for policies and actions that can help provide safety, asylum, and legal support to those under threat. AAI has been instrumental in securing international attention to these issues, ensuring that the safety of atheists remains a key focus in global human rights discussions.

This year, AAI has also been deeply concerned with the situation in Bangladesh, where political instability has led to increased persecution of minority religious groups. As the political climate shifted with the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the rise of new political factions, the situation for religious minorities, including atheists, became more precarious. Fundamentalist groups gained more power, and there was a noticeable increase in violence and discrimination against secular activists and religious minorities. AAI has been a vocal advocate for stopping the persecution of these groups, urging both the Bangladeshi government and the international community to take action to protect religious and secular minorities from violence.

In addition to its work in Bangladesh, AAI has been committed to seeking justice for victims of violence and human rights violations. During the months of July and August 2024, a wave of attacks targeted secular activists, bloggers, and writers in Bangladesh, escalating the already dangerous environment for free thinkers and religious minorities. AAI, alongside other human rights organizations, called on the United Nations to investigate these incidents, as they may constitute crimes against humanity. The attacks, which included threats and actual violence, were part of a broader trend of intolerance and suppression of free thought in the country. AAI's request to the UN was a call for accountability and justice, urging an investigation into the perpetrators of these attacks. In response, the United Nations affirmed that it would investigate the situation in Bangladesh, a step that AAI views as crucial in holding those responsible for the violence accountable.

The investigation, which is currently underway, aims to assess the scale of the violence, identify the perpetrators, and bring justice to those who have been affected by these crimes. AAI continues to be actively involved in supporting the investigation and ensuring that the voices of the victims are heard. By demanding that the international community pay attention to these violations, AAI hopes to contribute to creating a safer environment for individuals who advocate for secularism, human rights, and freedom of thought in Bangladesh and other countries facing similar challenges.

Throughout the year, AAI has remained focused on its mission to advocate for the rights of atheists, religious minorities, and those persecuted for their beliefs. The organization's involvement at the UN and with various human rights groups demonstrates its commitment to fighting for the protection of freedom of conscience and expression on a global scale. AAI has been steadfast in its pursuit of justice for those affected by religious persecution and violence, ensuring that the voices of atheists and secular individuals are heard in international forums.



Through its ongoing efforts, AAI has worked tirelessly to promote a world where every individual can live freely, without fear of persecution based on their beliefs.

## Humanitarian Work In Africa

**Kasese Humanist School (KHS)** is a secular educational institution in Kasese, Uganda, supported by AAI since 2013. The school emphasizes science and humanist values, focusing on compassion, reason, and tolerance. The school is dedicated to providing a balanced and inclusive education, underpinned by the principles of scientific inquiry and ethical responsibility. This report details the progress made by Kasese Humanist School over the past year, highlights the challenges faced, and outlines ways for continued support.



### Enrollment Overview

During the academic year, Kasese Humanist School (KHS) achieved robust enrollment across its three campuses and the secondary section at Municipal High School Kasese (MHSK), reaching a total of 839 students. The enrollment includes 384 boys and 455 girls, reflecting KHS's commitment to gender balance and accessibility. The distribution is as follows: KHS N/P Rukoki with 250 students (118 boys, 132 girls), KHS N/P Muhokya with 272 students (126 boys, 146 girls), KHS N/P Kahendero with 215 students (95 boys, 120 girls), and MHSK Rukoki with 102 students (45 boys, 57 girls). This growth highlights the community's trust in KHS's educational mission.

The School is supported by 34 teachers and 8 non-teaching staff across nursery and primary campuses, with 17 staff at MHSK. Their dedication ensures a nurturing, effective learning environment.

### Sustainable Initiatives

Kasese Humanist School (KHS) has implemented initiatives to foster sustainability, self-sufficiency, and community welfare. On-campus and off-campus gardening projects provide food for students, supported by donations, and offer practical lessons in sustainable farming. To boost income, KHS operates ventures like the Bizoha Backpackers Hostel and an auto garage, using profits to fund scholarships for disadvantaged students and support teacher training.

To enhance staff wellbeing, KHS offers teachers access to farmland and free accommodation, reducing living costs and improving staff retention. In line with its commitment to environmental

stewardship, KHS launched a tree-planting campaign, adding over 600 seedlings on its Rukoki campus to create a future forest.

These efforts collectively strengthen KHS's financial independence, expand educational access, support staff livelihoods, and promote sustainability, reinforcing its role as a valuable community asset.

### **New Infrastructure Developments and Challenges**

In the past year, KHS has made substantial infrastructure investments to enhance educational quality and campus facilities. A key improvement was the renovation of the library, broadening student access to learning resources and promoting a stronger reading culture. Upgrades to the science laboratory, now equipped with essential reagents and apparatus, have enriched science education, creating more hands-on learning opportunities.

Dormitory enhancements at the Rukoki campus included 25 new metal-framed beds, improving boarding accommodations. Additionally, KHS distributed textbooks and sanitary supplies across all campuses, supporting both educational and hygiene needs. The Kahendero campus was recently connected to the power grid, allowing the introduction of computers, thus advancing digital literacy. A new solar lighting system at Rukoki now provides illumination for classrooms, administrative areas, and dormitories, creating a safer environment and extending study hours.

However, KHS faces ongoing challenges. Economic instability affects the school's ability to meet regular salary obligations, as many families depend on farming incomes, which are seasonally vulnerable. Rising demand for financial aid, limited teaching resources, and the need for professional development also stretch the school's resources. To accommodate increasing enrollment, KHS urgently requires more computers to ensure all students have access to technology-based learning.

**Eagle's View Humanitarian Primary School** is in Kaira village, Jinja Uganda. Atheist Alliance International has been supporting the school since 2021. This year Eagle's View Humanitarian Primary School has been adopted as an AAI program.

**The school** has a student enrollment of 404, with 190 male and 214 female pupils. The school is staffed by 12 teachers and 3 additional staff members,



working to provide quality education despite financial constraints. The school also operates a sponsorship program to support orphans and bright but less fortunate children, though it faces challenges due to limited funding.

### **New Infrastructure Developments in 2024 and Challenges Ahead**

One of the most significant additions is a motorcycle with a truck, purchased for 13 million Ugandan shillings. This motorcycle has reduced transport costs and provided affordable transport services to the community, benefiting both the school and local families. Earnings from these services are used to provide scholastic materials for orphans and fund an ongoing brick-making project. The school is nearing completion of this project and will soon be able to bake the bricks once resources are available.

The school also purchased a 50 ft by 100 ft plot of land for 20 million Ugandan shillings. This land is being developed to build rental rooms, generating additional income for the school. Additionally, 5 million Ugandan shillings were spent on timbers for roofing, with construction of a new building still ongoing.

Despite these improvements, the school faces significant challenges. A major issue is the lack of permanent classrooms. Currently, students learn in temporary structures made of corrugated iron sheets, which provide inadequate learning conditions. The school is also located in a remote area with no immediate access to electricity. Installing solar power or connecting to the main electricity grid remains a financial challenge.

Another obstacle is the school's limited ability to expand its scholarship program due to insufficient funds. The program is currently unable to enroll more needy children, particularly orphans. Furthermore, the school struggles with delinquent school fees, making it difficult to pay teachers on time. Teachers are paid for only nine months of the year, with efforts made to ensure timely payments within that period.

A donation from David P. Silverman has been crucial in supporting these initiatives, enabling the school to make strides in its development and support its students and community.

**Bizoha Women Empowerment Group**, founded by Ngabirwe Phiona, a teacher at Kasese Humanist School, is a community-driven initiative focused on empowering young mothers and girls in Bizoha, Uganda. Since its inception, the group has worked to provide education, vocational training, and financial resources to vulnerable individuals. This program includes tuition fees for students, providing reusable menstrual pads, and offering mentorship to young girls.

Many women supported by Bizoha are currently studying in secondary schools and colleges, creating opportunities for them to improve their lives through education. In addition to academic support, the group also offers vocational training, which helps young mothers achieve economic

independence. Programs for credit and savings have enabled these women to better support their families and develop a sense of financial stability.

This program was supported by David P. Silverman. AAI hopes to continue supporting the program to further enhance its impact on the community and help more girls and young mothers access the opportunities they deserve.

## Atheist Refugee Assistance Program

**The Atheist Refugee Assistance Program in Turkey** is a collaborative initiative led by Atheist Alliance International, the Center for Inquiry, and Ateizm Dernegi, focused on supporting atheist refugees who have fled severe religious persecution. Many of these individuals come from countries like Iran, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Afghanistan, where atheism is met with hostility, severe punishment, or even death. Among them are women who have endured profound oppression under Islamic law, where they face both gender-based and religious persecution, reinforcing their status as second-class citizens. For these refugees, finding refuge in Turkey is an escape from imminent danger, but new challenges often await them.



While Turkey offers a degree of safety, navigating the asylum process remains difficult for nonreligious individuals due to widespread biases. Local immigration officials frequently hesitate to process applications from atheist refugees, fearing backlash or simply harboring prejudiced views. The program, therefore, helps refugees by providing essential resources and support to overcome these bureaucratic hurdles.

A crucial component of the program is the support provided in securing accommodation. Housing in a new country can be difficult for anyone, but for atheist refugees the challenge is often compounded by the possibility of discrimination in the rental market. The program assists in advertising housing needs on both local and online platforms, provides translation services for necessary documents, and offers step-by-step guidance to ensure that applicants understand the processes involved. By connecting refugees with suitable housing or compatible roommates, the program helps create a sense of stability during a tumultuous period in their lives.

Job placement is another essential service offered by the program. Finding employment in Turkey requires not only language skills but also familiarity with local hiring practices. The program assists refugees by translating their CVs into Turkish, providing job application templates, and offering interview preparation. These efforts aim to empower refugees to secure income, gain independence, and integrate into the Turkish labor market.



Legal aid, facilitated through Ateizm Dernegi, plays a crucial role in protecting the rights of atheist refugees. After verifying the authenticity of each case, Ateizm Dernegi connects refugees with pro bono lawyers who guide them through complex legal processes, advocating for their rights within Turkey's immigration and legal systems. In addition, the program provides official letters of support and verification to Turkish immigration offices, consulates, and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) representatives to bolster refugees' claims. These documents often require further verification from reliable sources in the refugees' home countries, adding credibility to their cases.

The program also offers guidance in applying for financial aid and scholarships through national and international organizations, associations, and secular charities. Pro bono counseling services are available to help refugees prepare documentation and present strong applications for these resources, which can significantly enhance their ability to rebuild their lives.

The Atheist Refugee Assistance Program is a lifeline for those who might otherwise face exclusion, aiming to empower non-believing refugees and help them overcome the daunting challenges of building a new life in Turkey.

### **2023-2024 Progress**

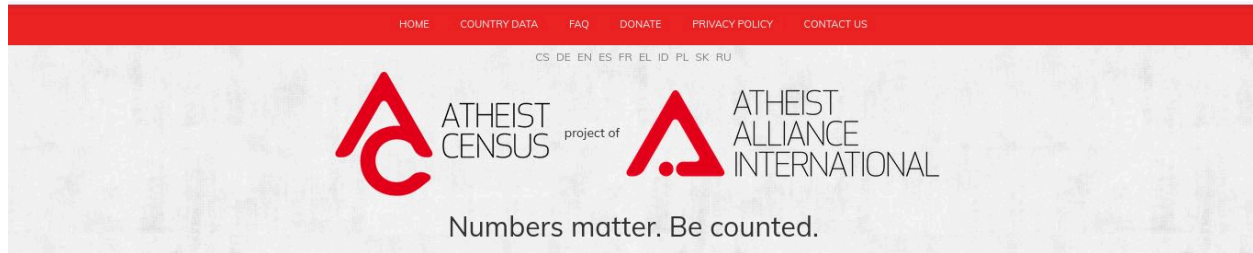
In the 2023-2024 period, the Atheist Refugee Assistance Program in Turkey has provided essential support to atheist refugees facing religious persecution. The program assisted with accommodation solutions for 2 cases and secured employment for 6 individuals, helping refugees achieve stability in their new environment. Legal aid was extended to 11 cases, while 19 letters of support were issued to bolster their applications with Turkish authorities and international bodies. Additionally, guidance services addressed 35 inquiries, offering pro-bono counseling and aid with documentation. Three workshops were conducted to further equip refugees with practical knowledge and skills.

### **Lifetime Progress**

Since inception, the program has facilitated accommodation for 22 cases, employment for 25, and legal aid for 51 cases. A total of 78 support letters and guidance in 109 inquiries reflect its commitment to sustained support. Sixteen workshops have been held, underscoring the program's ongoing dedication to empowering atheist refugees in Turkey.

To sustain and expand the Atheist Refugee Assistance Program in Turkey, we urgently need additional partners. Increasing support from two to seven partners will enable us to build a 15+ bed Refugee Safehouse. Join us with a \$4,000 (Canadian) annual pledge and help protect persecuted atheist refugees.

# Atheist Census



# 291,069

participants so far and counting...



Title ▾

Background ▾

Education ▾

Year of birth ▾

Gender ▾

Country ▾

The Atheist Census is a project by Atheist Alliance International (AAI) aimed at collecting global data on individuals who identify as atheists. As of the latest figures, over 291,000 people have participated, identifying themselves as atheists from a wide range of countries and

backgrounds. This data collection effort offers a unique and valuable resource for understanding demographics, beliefs, and the social and political concerns of atheists worldwide.

Moreover, the Atheist Census website has proven to be a high-traffic platform, attracting individuals interested in atheism, secular issues, and human rights. This significant web traffic creates opportunities for Atheist Alliance International to use the site as a channel for awareness and outreach. The census can also serve as a platform for related advertising, making it financially beneficial for AAI by potentially attracting donors and supporters of secular causes.

Through this initiative, AAI can also better understand its own community and engage with its supporters, improving its global advocacy efforts and reinforcing connections among atheists around the world. In this way, the census is not only a data collection tool but also a means of community building and public engagement, allowing AAI to further its mission of promoting secularism and supporting the rights of atheists globally.

## Social Media



This year, AAI implemented a more robust and modern social media policy that has already shown a significant impact in reaching and engaging with a larger audience. For example, from September 13 to October 10, AAI's organic reach on platforms like Facebook and Instagram reached an estimated 340,000 people. This growth in organic reach indicates that AAI's refined approach is effectively resonating with followers and helping to spread awareness of its mission and activities without reliance on paid advertising.

Additionally, AAI's presence on YouTube has strengthened through its podcast, which consistently features notable atheist activists. This platform introduces new voices and perspectives to a wide audience, fostering a space for discussions on secularism, human rights, and freedom of belief. Through these podcasts, AAI connects listeners with prominent figures in the atheist and secular movement, expanding knowledge and understanding around critical issues faced by atheists worldwide.

Together, these efforts are helping AAI build a more engaged and informed community, while amplifying voices that promote secularism and advocate for the rights of non-believers globally.

## New Grant Announcement

This year, Atheist Alliance International (AAI) announced a new grant aimed at supporting atheist groups in developing countries, as well as student-led atheist organizations. This grant is specifically intended to assist these groups in hosting, building, and managing their websites, helping them establish a stronger online presence and improve communication within their communities.

Previous recipients of the grant include organizations such as the Women Chapter, the Humanist Society of Kenya, and Ex-Hindu Atheists, demonstrating a commitment to supporting diverse groups within the global atheist community. By providing these resources, AAI aims to

empower atheist and secular organizations that may have limited access to funding or technical expertise. The new grant initiative will further expand support for grassroots efforts, enabling more atheist and humanist groups to connect with local communities, share resources, and advocate for secularism and freedom of belief in regions where such support can be particularly impactful.

## BAHAcon 2024

This year, Atheist Alliance International (AAI) co-sponsored BAHAcon, a conference organized by Bluewater Atheists, Humanists, and Agnostics (BAHA). BAHA is a community group based in the Bluewater region, drawing members from both sides of the St. Clair River, including Sarnia, Ontario, and Port Huron, Michigan. The conference provided a platform for discussions on secularism, humanism, and building supportive networks among atheists and humanists in the area.

## Protecting Our Organizational Brand

This past year a small group of individuals tried to commandeer AAI's identity, including cloning our website and Facebook page, and presenting themselves as the true AAI. We found a patent and trademark lawyer and we fought back. This group of people ceased operations. Court costs for filing fees and to copyright our name and logo were paid for by private donations earmarked for this cause. A final settlement is in sight but we have achieved our main goals.

## Charting the course for 2024 - 2025

Atheist Alliance International (AAI) envisions a future grounded in tolerance, inclusivity, and respect for individual beliefs. Our ongoing work will continue, including the support of nearly 1,400 children in rural Uganda, offering them educational opportunities rooted in critical thinking and humanist values. This commitment to educational empowerment is just one of the many ways we aim to build a more compassionate world.

Looking forward, a core part of our vision is to strengthen our advocacy for the rights and safety of atheists globally. Regaining our Council of Europe status is a top priority, as this will enhance our credibility and influence in addressing secular rights issues on an international platform. In



parallel, we aim to advance our advocacy at the United Nations and across Europe to ensure that the concerns of non-religious individuals are heard. Additionally, pursuing an affiliation with the African Union will allow us to directly support African atheists and address critical issues with continent-wide impact, enabling more meaningful engagement with unique challenges faced by atheists across Africa.

Another critical initiative is establishing a safe house in Turkey to provide immediate shelter and protection for atheist refugees and those at risk due to their beliefs. This safe house will be the first of its kind, providing a secure refuge for individuals facing persecution. Beyond offering immediate safety, we plan to support refugees with essential resources, including legal assistance, mental health services, and skills training, helping them rebuild their lives with resilience and dignity.

Community-building will also play a vital role in our future. Working alongside local partners, AAI aims to create support networks across the United States, Canada, and Australia to help resettle atheist refugees and individuals affected by blasphemy laws. These networks will foster safe, welcoming environments, offering those who have experienced persecution a new beginning in communities that celebrate diversity. Our goal is to cultivate a sense of belonging and community, allowing individuals who have faced discrimination and isolation to find support and solidarity.

To realize this vision, sustainable fundraising remains essential. As we expand our outreach and programs, responsible and transparent use of funds will guide all of AAI's efforts. We will explore diverse funding strategies, including partnerships with human rights organizations, individual campaigns, and community-based initiatives, ensuring that resources are effectively used to support our growing mission.

Our broader advocacy goal is a world free from violence, hate, and discrimination, where individuals are respected for their beliefs without fear of persecution. We believe this vision is achievable through collaboration, so AAI will continue working closely with organizations and allies who share our commitment to human rights.

Together, we can create a future where freedom, safety, and respect for all are universal values. AAI invites everyone who believes in this vision to join us in our mission to protect and empower atheists worldwide, fostering a world where compassion and understanding flourish.