

Centre. Unknown Martyrs - United Nations

A woman and a man are shown standing patiently, their hands tied behind their backs, their heads covered with hoods. As their racial features are hidden from view they could be from anywhere. The cross hairs of a sniper rifle are drawn over each head and fill the height and breadth of the haloes. These people are constrained, anonymised and targeted. They are unknown martyrs.

They represent the countless Christians who endure persecution for their faith.¹ Some suffer overtly, others in more subtle ways. Pressure may be exerted on them because of religious nationalism, secular intolerance, or totalitarian insecurity. They may face attacks from government, family or culture; from priests, corrupt business traders, and mobs; and sometimes from fellow Christians because of Church infighting. These people may be unknown to us, but they are seen and loved by an all-knowing God.

The quote from Article 18 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, declares that **'Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief,** and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.'

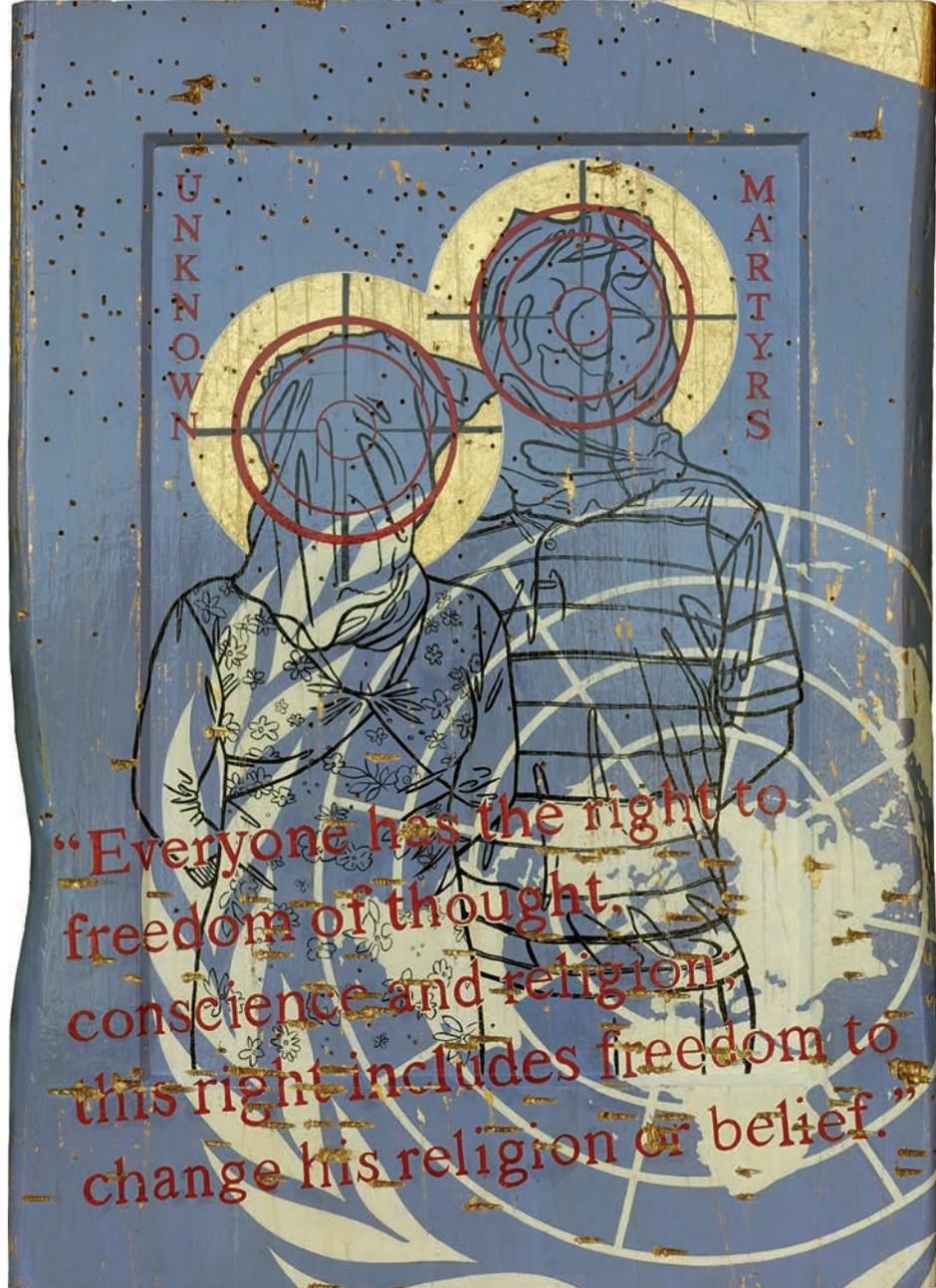
The United Nations flag is used as a backdrop to the figures. The juxtaposition both references the high aspirations of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and our widespread failure to uphold its standards. The panel has been fired upon by a shotgun, and thus peppered and slightly shredded by its pellets.

The flag's design is a world map centred on the North Pole, surrounded by a wreath of stylised olive branches, a symbol of peace.

¹ In 2020, 260 million Christians live in World Watch List top 50 countries where Christians are at risk of high, very high or extreme levels of persecution. Open Doors 'World Watch List Report 2020'.

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