Panel 4.3: Conflict Resolution in International Settings

**Keeping the Faith: Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion in ASEAN**

In January 2015, the HRRC published “Keeping the Faith: A Study of Freedom of Thought, Conscience, and Religion in ASEAN.” “Keeping the Faith” draws its inspiration from Article 22 of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, which states that, “Every person has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. All forms of intolerance, discrimination and incitement of hatred based on religion and beliefs shall be eliminated.” This strong statement of political intent is highly commendable, particularly as it sets the bar high, aiming to eliminate “incitement of hatred.” Understanding how, and in what ways both Member States and ASEAN as a regional body can realize this commitment continues to be the subject of discussion, both within the region and beyond. The study contributes to this discussion by providing an overview of state practice on freedom of thought, conscience, and religion across the 10 Member States of the ASEAN, and highlighting serious issues of religious persecution and conflict. This report also provides a critical analysis of recent significant events, through which ASEAN, its Member States, and civil society organizations can reflect on both the progress made and the challenges that need to be addressed to ensure that ASEAN’s aspiration is fulfilled.