

# Anila Ali Honored with International Religious Freedom (IRF) Builders Award for Peacemaking Leadership

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, May 27, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Anila Ali](#), President and co-founder of the American Muslim & Multifaith Women's Empowerment Council ([AMMWECC](#)), has been awarded the prestigious International Religious Freedom (IRF) Award for her exceptional contributions to peacebuilding, interfaith dialogue, and the promotion of religious freedom.

The premier award, presented by the [IRF Builders Forum](#) and Roger Williams IRF Award, recognizes individuals and organizations that have demonstrated outstanding leadership in advancing religious freedom and fostering peace among diverse faith communities.

Anila Ali's dedication to these principles is evident through her work with AMMWECC, which she co-founded in 2009 to empower Muslim women and build bridges between communities. Under her leadership, AMMWECC has launched initiatives such as internships with the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, a helpline for women in need, and an annual interfaith Ramadan iftar bringing together Muslims, Jews, Christians, Bahais, and Hindus.

In addition to her work with AMMWECC, she serves as the chair of the International Religious Freedom (IRF) Roundtable for Pakistan. In this capacity, she has visited communities affected by religious persecution, including the Christian community in Jaranwala and Sargodha, Pakistan, to offer support and advocate for religious minorities. The IRF-RT Pakistan also launched a short documentary on persecution of the Christian community in Pakistan. The documentary titled, Faith Under Fire, is available publicly. Anila Ali is also determined to expand the IRF mission to other South Asian countries including Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.



Anila Ali Receives The IRF Builder Award

Among many faith leaders and religious freedom advocates who attended the award ceremony also included President Trump's White House advisor on faith, the Honorable Pastor Paula White. Ali received her award from one of the known champions of religious freedom, Dr Katrina Lantos Swett, who serves as President of the Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice and is the daughter of the only Holocaust survivor to serve in the United States Congress, Tom Lantos.

"As a Pakistani American and a South Asian Muslim woman, I accept this recognition with humility - not for myself alone, but for the Sufi spirit of the Indus Valley that shaped me," Ali said in her acceptance speech. She called for the revival of the Sufis of the Indus - the Lal Shahbaz Qalandars of our time - Baba Farid, Khawaja Moinuddin who brought people together through love, music, and divine truth, and the beloved Guru Nanak Dev who preached love for the Divine and his Creations. "These shrines still echo with the footsteps of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and Christians, who revere them, a living testimony to the unity that once defined our land," she said emphasizing that her mission was global. "In America, I have seen Jewish families walk into synagogues through metal detectors. That, too, is a siege of the soul. No one - anywhere - should feel unsafe while worshipping God."

Through this IRF platform, we are not just holding conversations. We are nurturing resilient leaders - ones who will speak louder, stand firmer, and fight harder to protect every human being's God-given right to believe freely, she concluded in her speech.

The IRF Builders Award ceremony was held on May 21, 2025, at The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., bringing a landmark gathering of global leaders, advocates, and champions of religious freedom. The two-day event spotlighted groundbreaking initiatives, fostering dynamic collaboration, and celebrated the extraordinary efforts of those building religious freedom from the group up.

For more information about Anila Ali and AMMWEC's initiatives, please visit [www.ammwec.org](http://www.ammwec.org).



Anila Ali and Filmmaker Wajid Ali Syed Speak with Paula White, White House Faith Advisor, at the IRF Builders Award Dinner

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AMMWEC Board Member  
Soraya M. Deen Speaks at the  
IRF Builders Forum

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