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Advocacy Avenues for International Religious Freedom

by

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Introduction¹

This paper is written by a practitioner for practitioners and individuals wanting to advocate for international religious freedom. Much has been written on international law and human rights norms, and the purpose of this paper is not to exhaustively speak to this well tilled ground, but rather to provide information on advocacy avenues for international religious freedom. It is difficult to bring truth to power, especially among the maze of U.S. government offices and international organizations. The following pages will provide an initial overview on where and how to engage effectively.

For individuals and organizations wishing to speak out against discrimination, mistreatment and even persecution of their coreligionists, questions abound on where to start. Where are the levers of power that activists can access both domestically and internationally? What role can representatives of faith-based groups play in advocating for the full panoply of rights for their fellow believers? One challenge is therefore knowing where best to interlock and raise issues. In response, the paper provides “action points” after each section to help the reader understand how non-governmental organizations can most effectively lobby various federal government offices, agencies and the U.S. Congress. Also, the paper will discuss advocacy options at the international level in the Europe/Eurasian context by examining the existing mechanisms of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the largest international

¹ The author serves as Counsel at the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, a federal agency that monitors human rights within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). In this capacity, the author advises the Commission on religious freedom and refugee/IDP issues within the 55 OSCE participating States. He has served as a member of U.S. State Department delegations to numerous OSCE meetings, as well as traveled on behalf of the Commission throughout Europe and Central Asia. In July 2004, he was selected by the State Department to serve as one of the two U.S. appointees to the OSCE Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief. The article represents the personal views of the author and does not necessarily reflect the official views of the United States Government, the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, or of any individual Commissioner.

regional security organization in the world. Finally, the paper will bring forth a case study, so the reader can appreciate how these mechanisms impact religious freedom.

International Religious Freedom

Religious freedom is a right dearly held in the United States, with members of the various Christian faith communities being no exception. Prominently placed in the first amendment to the U.S. Constitution, religious liberty is one of the defining characteristics of America. Of the various causes worthy of investing time and energy, the American Christian community, especially evangelicals, has gravitated naturally towards advocating for religious freedom both in the United States and abroad.

International conventions have similarly established religious freedom as a fundamental human right. Developed over time, treaties and international agreements now guarantee and reinforce the right of individual and communal religious freedom. Placing limitations on individual belief is never permitted, while governmental restrictions on practice is permissible, but only in exceptional circumstances that meet a narrow set of criteria. Of course, despite pledging to uphold and defend these norms, implementation is inconsistent, even among developed countries.

Consequently, limitations, abuse and oppression of religious liberties is still a daily occurrence. In Europe and the states emerging from the former Soviet Union, for instance, discrimination and even outright repression of individual believers and religious communities exists in a variety of pernicious forms. Ranging from discriminatory legal systems in Western and Central Europe, to outright repression further east, persons of faith face serious obstacles to

the full and free enjoyment of religious freedom, whether from Christian, Muslim or minority religious communities.

Considering that international enforcement mechanisms are usually inadequate or nonexistent, there are few routes available to force countries to comply with their international obligations. As a result, shame is often the only tool available for advocates, and they must speak out in truth, consistently and vocally, to make the international community aware. Embarrassment and bilateral pressure from sympathetic countries can make a difference. Consequently, providing current and accurate information to policymakers is critical. It is here that individuals and representatives of religious communities can play an active role.

U.S. Bodies and Institutions

In the American context, the protection of human rights as a U.S. foreign policy objective, including freedom of religion, emerged as a priority in the late 1980s. Some 15 plus years later, Congress, believing the State Department was not raising religious liberty vigorously enough, passed the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) to concretize religious freedom as a priority in all bilateral and multilateral talks. IRFA created new institutions where groups can lobby for change, foremost of which is a special office within the State Department to monitor religious freedom worldwide, headed by the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom. In addition, IRFA created the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom to act as a watchdog of the State Department's handling of religious freedom concerns.

Of course, individual Members of Congress remain engaged on international religious freedom issues, as their committee hearings consistently testify, and the Hill offers an open door for constituent groups to raise concerns about specific situations. In the Europe and Eurasian

context, the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the Helsinki Commission, is another government agency that monitors respect for human rights and religious freedom in Europe and the former Soviet Union. These institutions all represent places where advocates can advance their concerns and push for real action.

State Department and the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor

In support of the stated foreign policy objective of supporting human rights, the State Department has steadily increased the amount of resources dedicated to human rights issues. Today, State Department efforts to press for human rights are taken primarily through the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL)². Headed by an Assistant Secretary of State, this bureau follows a variety of human rights issues on a day-to-day basis through the reporting from U.S. embassies and consulates abroad and through contact with nongovernmental organizations and foreign embassies in Washington. DRL also interacts with “desk officers,” Foreign Service Officers who cover specific countries and act as a liaison between the State Department bureaucracy and a U.S. embassy. While DRL is the primary office within the State Department to raise concerns about human rights, it also works with an array of boutique offices that follow specific issues, such as refugees, Holocaust-era property restitution issues, trafficking in persons, and religious freedom.

Playing a critical role in the collection of information are the U.S. embassies and consulates abroad. All U.S. embassies have at least one Foreign Service Officer detailed to cover human rights issues, and these individuals make field visits and meet with individuals and governmental representatives. Foreign Service Officers have proven willing to raise human

² The State Department is famous for its acronyms, some of which do not make complete sense. “DRL” is the designation for the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, despite the fact that it should have an additional letter. The author will use State Department designations when applicable, even when acronyms would be different.

rights and religious freedom concerns with the host government, lending credibility to the concerns and also putting officials on notice that the proper resolution is of interest to the United States. These civil servants also generate the first draft of the human rights report and the religious freedom report.

Overall responsibility for the *Annual Country Reports on Human Rights* falls to DRL, and the report assesses the state of human rights in every country in the world (except the United States). Initial drafts are created at the embassies and sent to DRL for refinement, and the finished product is available online.³ These comprehensive reports are a tremendous resource for documenting abuses or tracking improvements, and they cover a multitude of human rights issues, from religious freedom to torture to press freedom.⁴ Reporting on the calendar year, the report is an important tool for policy makers when determining a course of action in regards to a particular country, as, by law, security assistance may be limited to any country that “engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights.”⁵

Action Points

- Write letters, send emails, or speak directly with DRL and provide detailed information about specific concerns to help ensure that the human rights report is complete and accurate.
- Meet with U.S. Embassy staff (and/or recommend coreligionists meet) to ensure embassy personnel receive current information to report or act upon.
- Ask DRL or embassies for assistance (i.e., raising concerns with government officials or foreign embassies).

Office for International Religious Freedom

³ <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/>>.

⁴ <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/index.htm>>.

⁵ 22 USC 32 § 2304.

Responding to concerns that the State Department was not forcefully advocating for freedom of religion, Congress in 1998 passed the International Religious Freedom Act to ensure all official U.S. talks included this topic. IRFA created new institutions, foremost the Office for International Religious Freedom (IRF) within the State Department, headed by the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom.

The Ambassador-at-Large leads a dedicated cadre of Foreign Service Officers and civil servants who monitor religious freedom globally and devise strategies to reduce abuses. The IRF Office works with DRL and other offices within the State Department to ensure that religious freedom concerns are included in discussions with foreign governments. The Ambassador-at-Large and his staff also meet directly with private individuals, State Department personnel, religious groups and foreign officials about religious freedom concerns, either while traveling into the field or in Washington. The activities of the ambassador and the office lead up to the annual *International Religious Freedom Report*, which is produced six months after the human rights report.⁶ As with the human rights report, U.S. embassies compile the information and write the first draft, which the country experts in the IRF Office will further edit.

Similar in function to the human rights report, the religious freedom report is utilized for policy decisions. However, IRFA created a new designation for countries found to be “severe violators of religious freedom”; Country of Particular Concern (CPC) status. The Act defined “severe violations” as “continuous, ongoing and egregious,” listing examples such as torture and imprisonment.⁷ Congress gave teeth to the new office and the status it created; if a country is designated with CPC status, there is a menu of sanctions available to motivate recalcitrant

⁶ The Annual Report on Human Rights covers January to December, while the International Religious Freedom Report covers July to June <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/irf/>>.

⁷ Section 3(11) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.

governments to improve religious freedom conditions.⁸ Technically, the Secretary of State can make a determination at any time, but in practice these determinations occur soon after the release of the religious freedom report. The list makes up a “who’s who” of worst violators, and the Ambassador-at-Large and the IRF Office play a crucial role in recommending to the Secretary of State which countries should be designated.⁹

Action Points

- Build relationships with the IRF Office staff and aid them in gathering information about situations of concern.
- Provide to the IRF Office and the Ambassador-at-Large actionable information that contains specific details on which state actors perpetrated what abuses and when.
- Make coreligionists in other countries aware of the IRF Office.
- Advocate for CPC designations and urge the State Department to act.

U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom

IRFA also created the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (CIRF) to be a watchdog of the State Department’s handling of religious freedom concerns. Nine private sector commissioners lead CIRF, three appointed by the President, three by Senate leadership and three by House leadership. The Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom serves as an ex-officio commissioner.¹⁰ Commission staff follow religious freedom issues worldwide, in a sense shadowing the activities of the IRF Office. Staffers are active in monitoring religious freedom abuses, often traveling to countries to conduct fact-finding missions with Commissioners or alone. While CIRF does not conduct diplomacy directly with foreign governments, each year CIRF nominates countries for CPC status and issues a report

⁸ Section 405 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.

⁹ At the time of writing, current countries designated as CPC are: Burma, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea), Iran, People’s Republic of China, Sudan, Eritrea, Vietnam and Saudi Arabia.

¹⁰ Section 201 of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.

with policy recommendations for actions the United States should take towards countries with problematic policies.¹¹ The State Department is not bound to these nominations, but all designated countries have been nominated by CIRF.

Action Points

- Supply information to CIRF to help ensure that issues are addressed in their annual reports.
- Make sure concerns are of high level, as CIRF does not have the capability to report on lesser infractions of religious freedom in every country.
- Provide suggestions for additional CPC nominations to aid their deliberations.

The Congress

Members of Congress and the various committees have, can and do play an energetic role in advocating for religious freedom. As discussed, the passage of IRFA demonstrated Congress' ability to respond to concerns of religious freedom in significant ways. This activism and interest still remains. Even Members who have little or no interest in foreign affairs will often engage on issues of international religious freedom, either because of their own personal faith perspective or because of the urging of their constituents. Congressmen and Senators often engage heads of state and ambassadors accredited to the United States to raise their concerns about limitations on religious practice. Most ambassadors will find time to meet with Members or respond to their letters, as well as convey these concerns back to their capitals.

In addition to individual action, congressional committees play an important role through their various hearings. Hearings are important, as it expresses congressional interest in a subject to both the country concerned and the State Department. Members are action oriented and they will use hearings to search for concrete steps that can be taken. In addition, usually after the

¹¹ <www.uscirf.gov>.

release to Congress of the religious freedom report by the State Department, the House International Relations Committee (HIRC)¹² holds an oversight hearing to review the findings and to discuss countries needing further attention. HIRC also holds country specific hearings where issues of religious freedom can also be raised. For instance, during a general hearing on Afghanistan, panelists spent time discussing whether the new constitution will limit or facilitate religious freedom for non-Muslims.¹³ HIRC also maintains a special subcommittee that focuses specifically on human rights, the Subcommittee on International Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Human Rights,¹⁴ and religious freedom concerns often arise. On the Senate side, the Foreign Relations Committee also addresses human rights and religious freedom concerns.¹⁵ While the committee does not have a thematic subcommittee dedicated to human rights, its regional subcommittees often focus on religious freedom concerns within a country context.

Action Points

- Contact your Representative and Senator about concerns regarding religious freedom either through letter, email, or personal meetings.
- Ask him or her to take action, by meeting with a representative of the government in question, writing the head of state, or pushing the State Department to act.
- Present information in an easily accessible format to staff in personal offices and committees.

U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki Commission)

Established in 1976 by Congress, the Helsinki Commission monitors the compliance of member countries in North America, Europe and Eurasia concerning the commitments made

¹² <http://wwwc.house.gov/international_relations/>.

¹³ United States, Cong., House International Relations Committee, United States Policy in Afghanistan: Current Issues in Reconstruction - Part I, 108th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington: GPO, 2003) 116 <http://wwwc.house.gov/international_relations/108/87793a.pdf>.

¹⁴ <http://wwwc.house.gov/international_relations/ithrhear108.htm>.

¹⁵ <<http://foreign.senate.gov/>>.

when they joined the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. (The OSCE will be discussed later.) The Helsinki Commission is unique, in that it has 21 Commissioners representing two branches of government; 18 from Congress and three from the Executive branch.¹⁶ Congressional Commissioners are bipartisan and evenly divided between the House and Senate. The remaining three Commissioners represent the Departments of State, Commerce and Defense. Notwithstanding the Executive branch relationship, the Helsinki Commission follows the lead of their congressional Commissioners, as the Chair rotates between the House and Senate with each Congress. A professional staff supports Commissioners by following specific countries and thematic issues, one of which is religious freedom. The Helsinki Commission convenes congressional hearings and briefings on various human rights topics and its Commissioners are very engaged with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.¹⁷ Helsinki Commission staff are also fully integrated with State Department delegations to OSCE meetings.

Action Points

- Provide detailed information to Helsinki Commission staff on various concerns in Europe and Eurasia about specific abuses.
- Attend Helsinki Commission hearings and briefings and provide documentation of abuses, when appropriate.

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Looking at mechanisms outside of U.S. bodies, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe is an important institution for advocacy in Europe and Eurasia. Encompassing North America, Europe, Russia and the successor states emerging from the former Soviet Union, the 55 member OSCE is the largest regional security organization in the

¹⁶ 22 U.S.C. 3003.

¹⁷ <<http://www.osce.org>>.

world.¹⁸ Emerging at the height of the Cold War, it has developed some of the most sophisticated commitments on religious freedom at the international level.

The Organization is headquartered in Vienna, Austria, and is led by a different participating State each year. When a country assumes the “Chair-in-Office,” its foreign minister is the nominal leader of the Organization for a one-year term. The Chair-in-Office works with the Permanent Council, also seated in Vienna. At the weekly Permanent Council meetings, accredited ambassadors meet in nonpublic plenary sessions to discuss various issues facing the region. Considering that the OSCE’s primary focus is human rights, these issues are often raised at the Permanent Council. The Organization also convenes four annual meetings to review implementation of the “human dimension,” OSCE parlance for human rights. Three Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings (SHDM) are held throughout the year, usually in Vienna, on topics selected by the Chair-in-Office. In addition, every October the Human Dimension Implementation Review Meeting (HDIM) convenes in Warsaw, Poland. This two-week meeting covers the entire gamut of human rights, with a special session specifically on protection of religious freedom. These meetings are open to the public, and nongovernmental organizations are encouraged to participate and speak. Unlike the United Nations system, there is no accreditation process for NGOs. Surprisingly egalitarian, NGO representatives may participate on the same level as member States at these meetings, giving statements (referred to as “interventions”) in the main plenary sessions criticizing the very countries seated around the table. Recommendations emerging from these meetings will be forwarded to the annual

¹⁸ <<http://www.osce.org>>.

December meeting of foreign ministers for possible consideration as new, politically binding commitments.¹⁹

Action Points

- Attend appropriate SHDM events and the annual HDIM meeting and give interventions during plenary sessions.
- Highlight specific abuses to place governments on notice that the international community is aware of the mistreatment.
- Try to meet with delegations from participating States to brief about situations and ask for their assistance.

OSCE Institutions

OSCE institutions play an important role in human rights advocacy, as well. The OSCE maintains field missions in the Balkans, Central Asia and the Caucasus. These missions are headed by an ambassador from a participating State and provide the OSCE with a presence in the more difficult portions of the region. Missions often meet with NGOs to collect information and report their findings to the Permanent Council.²⁰ The Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is a special arm of the Organization headquartered in Warsaw concentrating solely on human rights and democracy building. ODIHR engages the governments of participating States with election monitoring, technical assistance on the drafting of laws and works to convene regional meetings on various human rights topics. For instance, ODIHR held two meetings in Central Asia over the past three years on religious freedom related issues and has provided brief critiques of draft religion laws.²¹

¹⁹ Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, *OSCE Handbook*, 3rd ed. (Vienna, 2001) <<http://www.osce.org/publications/handbook/>>.

²⁰ <http://www.osce.org/field_activities/>.

²¹ <<http://www.osce.org/odihhr/>>.

ODIHR also manages the Advisory Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion. The Advisory Panel of Experts is composed of two bodies, the Council and the Panel. The Council is composed of roughly 15 individuals selected by the ODIHR director from academia or nonprofit organizations. When requested by governments, Council members will offer technical assistance on laws affecting religion or belief, writing comprehensive legal critiques with suggestions on how to bring draft legislation into conformity with OSCE commitments on religious freedom. The other broader part, the Panel, is less active and every participating State may appoint two individuals.²²

In addition to the governmental side, the OSCE maintains a parliamentary component. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is comprised of parliamentarians elected to national legislative bodies. With support staff based in Copenhagen, Denmark, the Assembly meets regularly throughout the year in a variety of locations, bouncing from city to city. The annual summer session is the main event where the Assembly debates and passes nonbinding resolutions. These resolutions do not have the force of law, but do provide parliamentarians with the opportunity to speak in unison on human rights concerns.²³ NGOs may attend these meetings, but speaking is usually limited to the parliamentarians.

Action Points

- Encourage coreligionists to meet with OSCE Missions to share their concerns.
- Provide information to ODIHR about abuses.
- Draw the attention of ODIHR and the Panel of Experts to situations where legislation is not supporting religious freedom.

²² OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Terms of Reference - Advisory Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief, 2000

<http://www.osce.org/odihr/index.php?page=human_rights&div=religion&subdiv=panel_tor>.

²³ <<http://www.oscepa.org/>>.

- Attend OSCE Parliamentary Assembly meetings to meet with legislators from countries of concern and to brief parliamentarians from more sympathetic nations on needed actions elsewhere.

Case study – Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan is arguably the most difficult country to push for human rights and religious freedom in the entire 55-nation OSCE expanse. It therefore provides a helpful case study, as many of the advocacy tools previously highlighted have been used with varying degrees of success. Gaining independence after the fall of the Soviet Union, Turkmenistan “elected” in 1992 as president its former communist boss, Saparmurat Niyazov. Niyazov has since ruled Turkmenistan with an iron fist. Now appointed president for life and referring to himself as the Turkmenbashi, the father of all Turkmen, Niyazov has created a cult of personality comparable to Kim Jong-il in North Korea; his face adorns almost every government building and he has renamed the months of the year, one after himself and one after his deceased mother. Niyazov has written his own spiritual book, the *Ruhnama*, a collection of his thoughts on morality that by law must be physically placed in mosques on the same level as the Koran.²⁴ The book is required reading in schools and at government jobs, and was recently incorporated into the driving test.²⁵ These seemingly ridiculous actions, however, disguise a brutal regime that allows no dissent and significantly limits religious freedom.

Until recently, only two religious groups were allowed to operate openly, the Russian Orthodox Church and Sunni Islam, but with significant government interference and control. For instance, Turkmen authorities select imams (or preachers) for mosques and limit the number of Orthodox services. To obtain permission to enjoy basic religious freedoms, like meeting for

²⁴ State Department, International Religious Freedom Report 2004 – Turkmenistan, (Washington: GPO, 2004) < <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2004/35490.htm>>.

²⁵ “Drivers to Be Tested on Scripture,” Reuters 2 August 2004.

corporate worship, a congregation had to prove its membership exceeded 500 adult citizens in the locality where it wished to meet. An impossible hurdle for small groups to overcome, many risked government action and met anyway. The repercussions could be severe, as the Adventist church in the capital Ashgabat, for example, was bulldozed to the ground in 1999.²⁶

Representatives of religious communities struggling to operate in Turkmenistan met regularly with U.S. Government officials in Washington at the State Department and in Vienna at the U.S. Mission to the OSCE. In addition, these coreligionists provided information and petitioned Members of Congress and their staffs for help, asking offices to write Niyazov, meet with the Turkmen ambassador or consider reducing U.S. assistance to the country. NGOs wrote letters to Secretary Powell and to CIRF urging for CPC designation, as well as spoke out at the yearly HDIM meeting in Warsaw.

The U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat, in response to increasing reports brought forward by NGOs and Foreign Service Officers of repression and control of religious groups, offered vigorous protests to Turkmen authorities, making clear that CPC designation was a real possibility if concrete steps were not taken to relax the registration system and allow greater freedom. State Department officials from the IRF Office, DRL and the desk reinforced this message in Washington to the Turkmen Embassy. The Commission on International Religious Freedom also twice nominated Turkmenistan for designation in its annual reports.²⁷

Members of Congress engaged, as well, publicly calling on the State Department to designate Turkmenistan as a Country of Particular Concern. 34 Members of the House and Senate wrote to Secretary of State Collin Powell in October 2003 calling for this action against

²⁶ State Department, Turkmenistan.

²⁷ U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (Washington: GPO 2004) 24
<<http://www.uscirf.gov/reports/12May04/finalReport.php3>>.

Turkmenistan, as well as Vietnam and Saudi Arabia.²⁸ The Chairman of the Helsinki Commission met with the Turkmen ambassador and handed over a letter to Niyazov asking for improvements on religious freedom and the release of six Jehovah's Witnesses jailed for conscientious objection. In addition, the Helsinki Commission and CIRF held a joint congressional briefing to highlight the limits on religious freedom to Members of Congress and their staffs, and to push for change. Concern was also expressed at OSCE Permanent Council by U.S. officials and at the Warsaw HDIM by participating States and NGOs. Unfortunately, Turkmen representatives regularly skip OSCE meetings. In addition, the OSCE Mission in Ashgabat could do little, as it was already on bad terms with the government.

The confluence of pressure from the U.S. Embassy and State Department, CIRF, the Helsinki Commission and Congress did eventually move this strange and reclusive regime to liberalize its policies. Initial attempts, however, fell short of the line set by the State Department to avoid designation.²⁹ Not deceived by these paper promises, the United States maintained its insistence on real reforms. Finally, Niyazov issued a new presidential decree reducing the registration threshold from 500 per locality to five individuals nationally and registered four communities.³⁰ In addition, in response to the Helsinki Commission chairman's letter, authorities released six Jehovah's Witnesses from prison after serving more than two years in abysmal conditions for conscientious objection to military service. These advances were enough for Turkmenistan to avoid CPC designation this year. However, reports continue to surface of

²⁸ U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, "Helsinki Commission Members: Turkmenistan Has Place on Powell's List of Religious Freedom Violators," press release, 21 Oct. 2003 <http://www.csce.gov/press_csce.cfm?press_id=330>.

²⁹ Felix Corley, "Religious Persecution's Latest Disguises," Forum 18 News Service 13 May 2004.

³⁰ John Kinahan, "Adventists Get State Registration, Bahai's May Be Next," Forum 18 News Service 3 June 2004.

repression and harassment, so continued pressure will be necessary to ensure the full respect of religious freedom rights for all.

Conclusion

Advocating for the full enjoyment of religious freedom can be difficult work. However, the United States Government and OSCE institutions are committed to advance these rights with both friend and foe, so equipping faith communities to effectively agitate for greater freedoms is critical. By bringing truth to power, American believers can assist their suffering coreligionists from afar.

APPENDIX

Contact List

U.S. Department of State

2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20520
Main Switchboard: (202) 647-4000
<http://www.state.gov>

Desk officers by country: http://www.foia.state.gov/mms/CountryOffices/cntry_off.asp

U.S. Embassies: <http://usembassy.state.gov/>

Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor

2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20520
Main Switchboard: (202) 647-4000
<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/>

Office of International Religious Freedom

2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20520
Main Switchboard: (202) 647-4000
<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/irf/>

U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom

800 N. Capitol Street, N.W., Suite 790
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 523-3240
(202) 523-5020 (fax)
<http://www.uscirf.gov>
communications@uscirf.gov

Congress

<http://www.house.gov/>
<http://www.senate.gov/>

House International Relations Committee (HIRC)

2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 225-5021
http://www.house.gov/international_relations/

Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6225

Majority Phone: (202) 224-4651
Minority Phone: (202) 224-3953
<http://foreign.senate.gov/>

U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki Commission)

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