



UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

WHAT IS USCIRF?

USCIRF is an independent, bipartisan U.S. federal government agency created by the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA), as amended.

USCIRF monitors the universal right to freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) abroad; makes policy recommendations to the President, Secretary of State, and Congress; and tracks the implementation of these recommendations.

USCIRF's nine Commissioners are appointed by either the President or Congressional leaders of each political party, supported by a non-partisan professional staff.

While USCIRF is independent from the State Department, the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom is a non-voting member.

USCIRF's analysis is based on international standards. Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms 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."*

WHAT DOES USCIRF DO?

Advises Congress by working with Congressional offices, convening and testifying at hearings, and holding briefings on countries and thematic issues.

Engages the Executive Branch by regularly meeting with Executive Branch officials to share information, highlight situations of concern, and discuss USCIRF's policy recommendations.

Monitors Religious Freedom Conditions Abroad

through research, travel, and meetings with foreign officials and international partners, representatives of independent human rights groups and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), religious leaders, victims of persecution, and others.

Raises Public Awareness by holding public events, hosting podcast episodes, releasing public statements, and publishing op-eds. USCIRF also advocates for victims of FoRB violations and calls for the release of prisoners through its Religious Prisoners of Conscience (RPOC) Project, the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission's Defending Freedoms Project, and USCIRF's FoRB Victims List.

Issues an Annual Report & Other Publications

that assess foreign countries that violate religious freedom in a systematic, ongoing, and/or egregious manner; highlight thematic issues affecting religious freedom abroad; evaluate U.S. policy; and make recommendations to the U.S. government.

