

## **OVERVIEW AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

### **Why and How the Reports are Prepared**

The Department of State submits this report to the Congress in compliance with section 102(b) of the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) of 1998. U.S. embassies prepare the initial drafts of the reports based on information from government officials, religious leaders, nongovernmental organizations, journalists, human rights monitors, religious groups, academics, and others. U.S. foreign service officers go to great lengths, often under difficult circumstances, to collect the information on which the reports are based.

The Office of International Religious Freedom collaborates in collecting and analyzing information for the country reports, drawing on its own consultations with foreign government officials, religious leaders, nongovernmental and faith-based organizations, representatives from the UN and other international and regional organizations and institutions, journalists, academic experts, community leaders, and Department of State offices. The Department's guiding principle is to ensure that all relevant information is assessed as objectively, thoroughly, and fairly as possible.

The reports can be directly accessed at <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm> in a format that allows readers to search the texts and compare reports across regions and themes. Translations of the report are available via [www.humanrights.gov](http://www.humanrights.gov). Both the International Religious Freedom Report and the Human Rights Report spotlight examples of abuses and restrictions that typify and illuminate the types of problems frequently reported in each country in 2014. Specific inclusions or omissions should not be interpreted as a signal that a particular case is of greater or lesser importance to the U.S. government, or that a case is the only available example. Rather, our goal is to shed light on the nature, scope, and severity of the violations we report with illustrative examples. Both reports cover the calendar year so that readers can reference the two reports jointly and benefit from year-end data.

### **How the Reports Are Used**

A wide range of U.S. government agencies and offices use the reports to shape policy; conduct diplomacy; and inform assistance, training, and other resource allocations. The Secretary of State also uses the reports to help determine which

countries have engaged in or tolerated “particularly severe violations” of religious freedom in order to designate “Countries of Particular Concern.”

### Acknowledgements

This report reflects the dedicated efforts of hundreds of people in the Department of State and at U.S. missions abroad. We thank the dedicated staff at our embassies and consulates for monitoring and promoting religious freedom, and for chronicling in detail the status of religious liberty.

The reports were produced under the direction of Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom David Saperstein and Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Assistant Secretary Tom Malinowski, with guidance from Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Virginia Bennett, Deputy Assistant Secretary Steven Feldstein, and the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism Ira Forman.

The editorial staff of the International Religious Freedom Report consists of the following: Editor-in-Chief: Robert W. Boehme; Senior Editors: Daniel T. Fantozzi, Andrew Goodman, Carol Thompson, Laurie J. Tracy, and Vicente Valle; Office of International Religious Freedom Acting Director Brian D. Bachman and Acting Deputy Director Daniel Nadel; and the office’s editorial and support staff: Madison Ashley, Leanne Cannon, Warren Cofsky, Elizabeth Cooke, Nancy Cooper, Jordan Dannenberg, Stacy Bernard Davis, Shelly J. Dittmar, Ariel H. Ehmer, Matthew Fry, Cassandra Harris, Sameer Hossain, Veronica Jablonski, Christine Juwle, Sarah Koulogeorge, Katherine Lawson, Sang Lee, Ilana Lieberman, Christine Malarkey, Leeanna Matarazzo, Amber J. McIntyre, Ryan Mulvenna, Rustum Nyquist, Douglas Padgett, Kaela Reilly, Michael Roth, Omar Safadi, Victoria L. Thoman, Daniele Villela, Rachel Washington, Ramis Wadood, Savannah Wallace, and Kathleen Wilson.