



# Ministerial to Advance **RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**

## **Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom**

### Statement on Counterterrorism as a False Pretext for Religious Freedom Repression

As representatives of the international community, we condemn the justification of violations of religious freedom, targeting of religious groups, and repression of peaceful political dissent by civil society actors, including members of religious communities, under the guise of counterterrorism or other security imperatives. While underscoring the necessity of effective, rights-respecting counterterrorism policies, we deplore the misuse and abuse of any laws and practices to impose state power at the expense of respect for religious freedom and other civil and political rights. Security tactics that violate human rights have been demonstrated to strengthen and validate terrorist recruitment and radicalization to violence.

We therefore commit ourselves to continuing to support persons and communities that have been subject to terrorist violence and to holding the perpetrators of terrorism accountable using policies, practices, and laws that comply with international human rights and humanitarian laws. When working to prevent or mitigate the drivers of violent extremism and terrorism, we emphasize that our own actions and behaviors are critical to success and urge our partners to do the same. We will promote accountability for government officials responsible for violations of religious freedom and other human rights and encourage reports of such violations to be investigated through relevant mechanisms, because failure to implement accountability measures exacerbates the drivers of the problem, further undermining our security worldwide.

**Co-Signatories:** Armenia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Georgia, Israel, Kosovo, Lithuania, New Zealand, Oman, Poland, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom, United States of America