

U.S. Department of State

Diplomacy in Action

Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (/j/drl/) **International Religious Freedom Report for 2017**

Overview and Acknowledgements

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Why and How the Reports are Prepared

The Department of State submits this annual report to the Congress in compliance with section 102(b) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-292), as amended. This report covers the period between January 1 and December 31, 2017.

U.S. embassies prepare the initial drafts of country chapters based on information from government officials, religious groups, nongovernmental organizations, journalists, human rights monitors, academics, and others. The Office of International Religious Freedom, based in Washington, collaborates in collecting and analyzing additional information, drawing on its consultations with foreign government officials, domestic and foreign religious groups, domestic and foreign nongovernmental organizations, multilateral and other international and regional organizations, journalists, academic experts, community leaders, and other relevant U.S. government institutions.

The State Department's guiding principle is to ensure that all relevant information is presented as objectively, thoroughly, and fairly as possible. Motivations and accuracy of sources vary, however, and the Department of State is not in a position to verify independently all information contained in the reports. To the extent possible, the reports use multiple sources to increase comprehensiveness and reduce potential for bias. The views of any particular source are not necessarily those of the United States government. The report is designed to spotlight examples of government and societal action that typify and illuminate issues reported in each country. 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, the goal is to shed light on the nature, scope, and severity of actions impacting religious freedom through illustrative examples.

Acknowledgements

This report reflects the 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. Many of them went to great lengths under difficult circumstances to acquire the information in this report.

The reports were produced under the direction of Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom Sam Brownback, with guidance from Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) Senior Bureau Official Michael G. Kozak, Deputy Assistant Secretary Randy W. Berry, Deputy Assistant Secretary Scott Busby, and Special Advisor Knox Thames.

The editorial staff of the International Religious Freedom Report consists of the following: Editor-in-Chief: Robert W. Boehme; Senior Editors: Victoria Alvarado, Daniel T. Fantozzi, James A. McVerry, Carol Rodley, and Vicente Valle; Office of International Religious Freedom Director Daniel L. Nadel and Deputy Director Daniel W. Wright; the office's editorial and support staff: Tony Agayby, Eun Si Aum, Robbie Austin, Natalie Balents, Chelsea Brint, Mariyam A. Cementwala, Warren Cofsky, Sean Comber, Stacy Bernard Davis, Rachel Eilbaum,

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Special thanks to Laura Conn in the Office of the Legal Advisor, and to Aaron Bruce, Jonathan Collett, Janine Czarnecki, Carol Finerty, Claudette Laprise, and Kerri Spindler-Ranta in DRL's Office of Policy Planning and Public Diplomacy for their contributions.

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