



## INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ROUNDTABLE

April 3, 2024

Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY)  
Senate Majority Leader  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY)  
Senate Minority Leader  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD)  
Chairman  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
509 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Jim Risch (R-ID)  
Ranking Member  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
483 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Chairman Cardin, and Ranking Member Risch:

We write as an informal group of 113 organizations and individuals who are scholars, religious and secular leaders, human rights advocates, and practitioners to express our support for S. Res. 569, recognizing religious freedom as a fundamental right, expressing support for international religious freedom as a cornerstone of United States foreign policy, and expressing concern over increased threats to and attacks on religious freedom around the world.

We have seen firsthand the increasing threats to religious freedom around the world described in the resolution. From ongoing genocides and mass atrocities perpetrated against religious minority groups, to individuals imprisoned and exiled for their faith and beliefs, from unjust restrictions on religious gatherings and practices, to the destruction of religious sites, these threats against both people of faith and no faith are not only grave violations of fundamental human rights, but also lead to instability, insecurity, and a lack of economic development.

We have also seen firsthand the importance of the U.S.'s voice in promoting religious freedom worldwide. Since the passage of the International Religious Freedom (IRF) Act in 1998 and the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act of 2016, through the development of the Ministerials to Advance Religious Freedom and the establishment of the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance, the

U.S. has for decades led on the creation of a global movement for religious freedom. Congress has provided strong bipartisan support for the promotion of international religious freedom and has passed important mechanisms for holding violators of religious freedom accountable, as with the IRF Act and the permanent reauthorization of the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act.

While the recent trend of increasing violations of religious freedom is disturbing, we have seen these important efforts to push back against these violations bear real fruit. We have seen the release of prisoners of conscience imprisoned for their faith and beliefs, positive changes in the laws of many countries to ease restrictions on religious minorities, and more countries united in promoting international religious freedom in a concerted way than ever before. Because of the grave and increasing threats to international religious freedom, it is vital that these positive efforts continue to be developed and given priority in U.S. foreign policy.

S. Res. 569 paints an accurate and disturbing portrayal of the religious freedom situation in too many countries. Because of that situation, the resolution's policy recommendations are vital: promoting religious freedom as an "utmost priority" in U.S. foreign policy, holding violators accountable using all available diplomatic and sanctions tools, working with global partners, and expanding support for leaders and activists working to protect religious freedom worldwide. These recommendations, if followed, would continue and extend the U.S. 's leading role in promoting international religious freedom, expand the coalition of partners so that better outcomes can be achieved, and create a greater space for religious freedom to thrive and grow on the ground where severe violations are currently happening. We view these recommendations as absolutely essential for the protection and promotion of religious freedom worldwide.

For all of these reasons, we strongly support S. Res. 569 and urge the Senate to quickly pass it.

Sincerely,

**Greg Mitchell**

Co-Chair, IRF Roundtable  
Founder & CEO, IRF Secretariat

**Nadine Maenza**

Co-Chair, IRF Roundtable  
President, IRF Secretariat

#### ORGANIZATIONS

Accountability Lab Nigeria

ADF International

AdvanceUSA

Advocates for Faith and Justice in Vietnam

AFJV

ALEVI Philosophy Center Association

American Muslim & Multifaith Women's Empowerment Council

American Sikh Council

Asian Children's Educational Fellowship  
Baptist World Alliance  
Bellwether International  
Boat People SOS  
Buddhist Solidarity Association  
Burma Advocacy Group  
Chin Association of Maryland  
China Aid Association  
Church of Scientology National Affairs Office  
Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de Conscience  
Coptic Solidarity  
Empower Women Media  
Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention  
Ex-Muslims of North America  
Faith & Freedom Coalition  
Federation of Indian American Christians of North America  
Genocide Watch  
Gilgit Baltistan Studies  
Global Christian Relief  
High Place Ministries  
In Defense of Christians  
Indian American Muslim Council  
Institute for Global Engagement  
International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace  
International Christian Concern  
International Human Rights Committee  
International Society for Peace and Justice  
IRF Secretariat  
Jubilee Campaign  
Justice For All  
L. Ron Hubbard Foundation  
Lantos Foundation for Human Rights & Justice  
Law & Liberty Trust  
Love Your Neighbors Community

Muslims for Progressive Values  
Parity  
Peace and Justice Committee of CBCUSA  
Prayer Pioneers  
Red Eagle Enterprises  
Rumi Forum  
Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church of America, Inc.  
Shai Fund  
Stop Amhara Genocide  
The Episcopal Church  
The Washington Times Foundation  
Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union  
United for Human Rights, National Office  
Uyghur Human Rights Project  
West Papua Human Rights Center

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