

# USCIRF report, 2021

April 22, 2021

## About USCIRF report, 2021

- USCIRF is an independent, bipartisan U.S. federal government commission created by the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) that monitors the universal right to freedom of religion or belief abroad.
- USCIRF uses international standards to monitor religious freedom violations globally, and makes policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State, and Congress.
- USCIRF Commissioners are appointed by the President and Congressional leaders of both political parties.
- Their work is supported by a professional, nonpartisan staff.
- USCIRF is separate from the State Department, although the Department's Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom is a non-voting ex officio Commissioner.

## What Is Religious Freedom ?

- Inherent in religious freedom is the right to believe or not believe as one's conscience leads, and live out one's beliefs openly, peacefully, and without fear.
- Freedom of religion or belief is an expansive right that includes the freedoms of thought, conscience, expression, association, and assembly.
- While religious freedom is America's first freedom, it also is a core human right international law and treaty recognized; a necessary component of U.S. foreign policy and America's commitment to defending democracy and freedom globally; and a vital element of national security, critical to ensuring a more peaceful, prosperous, and stable world.

## **COUNTRIES OF PARTICULAR CONCERN**

- Burma
- China
- Eritrea
- India
- Iran
- Nigeria
- North Korea
- Pakistan
- Russia
- Saudi Arabia
- Syria
- Tajikistan
- Turkmenistan
- Vietnam

## **SPECIAL WATCH LIST COUNTRIES**

- Afghanistan
- Algeria
- Azerbaijan
- Cuba
- Egypt
- Indonesia
- Iraq
- Kazakhstan
- Malaysia
- Nicaragua
- Turkey
- Uzbekistan