

October 5, 2004: Congress: USCIRF Chair to testify on State Department's Religious Freedom Report

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON - Preeta D. Bansal, Chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), will testify tomorrow at a hearing on the State Department's 2004 Annual Report on International Religious Freedom and its designation of "countries of particular concern" (CPCs). The hearing is being held by the House International Relations Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives (HIRC). You can access this testimony online at our website (www.uscirf.gov) in either PDF or HTML format.

In a September 15 press release, the Commission welcomed the release of the Annual Report and lauded the announcement by Secretary of State Powell of the designation of Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, and Eritrea as (CPCs) for severe religious freedom violations. In addition, Burma, China, Iran, North Korea, and Sudan were re-named as CPCs. Though the USCIRF supports the new designations of these three countries, the Commission would like to call attention to the fact that CPC designation is not an end point, but only the beginning of focused diplomatic activity to promote freedom of religion or belief.

What: Hearing on the State Department's Annual Report on International Religious Freedom and Designations of Countries of Particular Concern

Where: Rayburn House Office Building, Room 2172

When: Wednesday, October 6, 2004, 10:30 a.m.

Others testifying are:

The Honorable John V. Hanford III, Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, U.S. Department of State;

Mark B. Levin, Executive Director of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry;

Paul Marshall, Senior Fellow, Center for Religious Freedom, Freedom House;

Timothy Shah, Senior Fellow in Religion and International Affairs, The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life; and

Ali Al-Ahmed, Director, Saudi Institute.