

## October 7, 2002: Commission to Testify on the State Department's Religious Freedom Report

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**WHAT:** Felice D. Gaer, Chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, an independent federal agency advising the Administration and Congress, will testify on the Commission's behalf before the House International Relations Committee Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights regarding the State Department's 2002 Annual Report on International Religious Freedom.

**WHEN:** Wednesday, October 9, 2002 from 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** Room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building.

**BACKGROUND:** On October 7, the State Department issued its fourth Annual Report on International Religious Freedom. In its testimony, the Commission will assess the factual accuracy of the report, the Department's use of sources, and raise questions about the Department's description of its own policy follow-up on the findings in the report. The Commission's testimony will emphasize conditions and U.S. policy with regard to the 12 countries that it has recommended be designated by the Administration as "countries of particular concern" (CPCs): Burma (Myanmar), the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Iran, Iraq, Laos, Pakistan, People's Republic of China, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Turkmenistan, and Vietnam. The State Department has yet to name this year's CPCs. The Secretary of State is required by law to designate as CPCs those countries in which the government has engaged in or tolerated particularly severe violations of religious freedom as defined in the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.

The full report can be found on the Commission's Web site at [www.uscirf.gov](http://www.uscirf.gov) or at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

Felice D. Gaer, Chair

- Michael K. Young, Vice Chair Firuz Kazemzadeh Richard D. Land Bishop William Francis Murphy Leila Nadya Sadat Nina Shea The Hon. Charles R. Stith The Hon. Shirin Tahir-Kheli Tad Stahnke, Acting Executive Director

