

May 6, 2004: USCIRF to announce its 2004 policy recommendations

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 6, 2004 Contact:

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WASHINGTON - The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), an independent and bipartisan federal agency, will announce its Congressionally-mandated policy recommendations on the international effort to protect religious freedom at a press conference at the National Press Club. The press conference will be held in the Murrow/White/Lisagor rooms on the 13th floor from 9:30-11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, May 12. The USCIRF is the first government commission in the world with a mandate to review and report on violations of the internationally-guaranteed right to freedom of religion and belief worldwide, and to provide creative and responsible policy recommendations. The Commission reviews violations of religious freedom abroad throughout the year. In May of each year, the USCIRF is required to submit to the President, Secretary of State, and Congress an annual report containing its recommendations. This year's report includes recommendations on the process of constitutional development in Afghanistan and Iraq, the designation of "countries of particular concern," the global export of a religious ideology that explicitly promotes hate and violence toward members of other religious groups by Saudi Arabia, individual country reports on more than 20 countries, a review of U.S. Refugee and Asylum Programs, and a critique of the State Department's Annual Report on International Religious Freedom. "To create societies in which the true genius and power of the people all over the world can be unleashed requires governments abroad to uphold the internationally enshrined right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, or belief," said Commission Chair Michael K. Young. "This report includes the Commission's recommendations as to how U.S. policy can most effectively advance religious freedom." Copies of the Annual Report will be available at the press conference and will also be posted on the Commission's Web site at www.uscirf.gov. They can also be obtained by contacting the Communications department at (202) 523-3240. Interviews with Commissioners may be arranged by contacting Anne Johnson, Director of Communications, at (202) 523-3240, ext. 2

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