

April 26, 2006: USCIRF Announces Recommendations to Secretary of State Rice on Countries of Particular Concern; Releases 2006 Annual Report

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact:

Anne Johnson, Director of Communications, (202) 523-3240, ext. 27 WASHINGTON - The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) will announce its 2006 recommendations to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice for "countries of particular concern," or CPCs, at an on-the-record press conference at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars on May 3, 2006. The Commission will also release its 2006 Annual Report and discuss its findings and recommendations for U.S. policy for the President, the Secretary of State, and the Congress. The Commission will also be joined at the press conference by Tibetan nun Phuntsog Nyidron, who was recently released from China in advance of the visit by Chinese President Hu Jintao. The press conference will be held from 10:00-11:30 a.m. in the 6th floor Board Room of the Woodrow Wilson Center at 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC. The press conference is open to all members of the media, the non-governmental, faith-based, and policy communities. Please see below for RSVP information. The Commission is mandated by Congress to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on countries whose governments have engaged in or tolerated systematic and egregious violations of the universal right to freedom of religion or belief. Under the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA), those countries may be designated by the Secretary of State as "countries of particular concern," or CPCs. IRFA also requires that the U.S. government take follow-on policy actions to CPC designation. In addition to announcing CPCs, the Commission will announce its list of Watch List countries, those countries where religious freedom conditions do not rise to the statutory level requiring CPC designation but which require close monitoring due to the nature and extent of violations of religious freedom engaged in or tolerated by the governments. The 2006 Annual Report includes the Commission's findings and policy recommendations for China, North Korea, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Vietnam, Egypt, Russia, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, among others. Copies of the Commission's 2006 CPC recommendations to Secretary of State Rice and its 2006 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 Commission's Communications department at (202) 523-3240. Interviews with Commissioners may be arranged by contacting Anne Johnson, Communications Director, at (202) 523-3240, ext. 27. Please RSVP to Anne Johnson at ajohnson@uscirf.gov or (202) 523-3240, ext. 27.

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