

January 18, 2017

Donald J. Trump
President
United States of America

Dear Mr. President:

We are U.S. religious institutions, faith-based organizations and organizations with long-standing ties to faith communities engaged with partners throughout the world. We write in support of the State Department's Office of Religion and Global Affairs.

Religion plays a vital role in every society; and religious leaders, institutions, and constituents have a tremendous impact on national policies. The Office of Religion and Global Affairs serves as an irreplaceable focal point where U.S. Government officials can deepen their own knowledge of religious actors and help foster relationships with and across religious communities. In today's world such engagement is more critical than ever.

The Office of Religion and Global Affairs serves U.S. policy goals and assists our organizations in many ways, such as:

- opening doors for our partners around the globe to meet with administration officials who are decision makers in the development of policies that directly affect their countries and communities;
- making it possible to bring our experience from troubled regions of the world to the attention of State Department decision-makers, serving as a critical link between concerned U.S. people of faith who live or work outside of the U.S. and U.S. officials interested in supporting effective solutions to global challenges;
- helping reduce and/or avert violence in global conflict areas by engaging the perspectives and on-the-ground experience of U.S. faith communities and our partners abroad;
- developing a sophisticated understanding of global religions and religious actors so as to provide in depth analysis and information to help shape nuanced U.S. policy approaches and responses;
- convening discussions on how State Department personnel can engage with local FBOs in conflict/humanitarian crises affecting our partner religious communities in around the world;
- providing crucial information that helps us galvanize support to advance U.S. foreign policies of importance to people of faith in the U.S. and our partners around the world;
- promoting religious freedom for persecuted minorities;
- staffing the Secretary's Religion and Foreign Policy Working Group, which, with its partners in civil society, brings a voice of moral authority to the humanitarian foreign policy hopes of the United States, encourages addressing the needs of those at the margins of society, including women and ethnic minorities, and is a voice for democracy and democratic participation.

The State Department's Office of Religion and Global Affairs serves America well and is a valued nexus between U.S. policy makers and people of faith in addressing international concerns. We look forward to continuing to work with the Office under your presidency, and we ask that the Office be kept in its current form and location at State.

Thank you and blessings.

Alliance of Baptists
American Hindu World Service
American Jewish World Service
Bahá'ís of the United States
Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty
Bread for the World
Center of Conscience and War
Christian Connections for International Health (USA)
Christian Reformed Church in North America
Church of the Brethren, Office of Public Witness
Church World Service
Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach
Conference of Major Superiors of Men
Creation Justice Ministries
The Episcopal Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Indian American Muslim Council (IAMC)
Islamic Relief USA
Islamic Society of North America
Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Jubilee USA Network
Latin America Working Group
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office
Muslim Public Affairs Council
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Religious Campaign Against Torture
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Pax Christi International
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas -- Institute Justice Team
Union for Reform Judaism
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
United Methodist Church General Board of Church and Society
Washington Office on Latin America
World Evangelical Alliance, Office of Intrafaith and Interfaith Relations,
World Renew

[Response can be sent to Martin Shupack, Church World Service, mshupack@cwsglobal.org.]