

IRD Joins Coalition Letter Asking Trump for US Action Against UN Attack on Religious Free

WASHINGTON, May 20, 2019 — A coalition of individuals and organizations dedicated to freedom of religion is urging President Trump to take action against United Nations' overreach.
By Christian Newswire

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Institute on Religion and Democracy President Mark Tooley joins leaders representing the Heritage Foundation, Concerned Women for America, the Ethics and Public Policy Center, the Family Research Council and others in expressing concern to President Donald Trump about the February 27 report of the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Ahmed Shaheed, to the U.N. Human Rights Council.

The letter explains that the report's "dangerous and ill-founded attack on religious freedom" is part of a "broader, troubling trend of U.N. human rights entities politicizing human rights" but this report is "particularly egregious."

The coalition asks President Trump respond by sending guidance from the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor at the State Department to foreign service officers on the correct understanding of religious freedom, women's rights, and erroneous assertions of new rights to abortion or those based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

The full statement and signatories can be viewed at: TheIRD.org/international-religious-liberty/

IRD Religious Liberty Program Director Faith J.H. McDonnell, a signatory of the letter, commented:

"Religious freedom is a fundamental and inalienable right, but the United Nations report advances a social narrative that undermines the concept, so we urge President Trump to ensure that our own US Foreign Service officers are clear about what are truly religious freedom issues and women's rights.

"This narrative has long been on the agenda of the U.N. - particularly by countries condemning the concept of the 'universality' of human rights. But it appears to be growing in the U.N. and this social narrative damages the work to defend persecuted Christians and those of other persecuted faiths. We hope that President Trump will inform UN Secretary General Guterres of the U.S. discontent with this report.

"The purpose of Shaheed's report was to address gender-based violence and discrimination in the context of freedom of religion or belief. The report neglects problems faced by women from persecuted, minority religions, including abduction, enslavement, rape, forced conversion, and forced abortion.

"Most of the report heaps condemnation upon the religious beliefs of those who believe in protecting unborn life, marriage as the union of one man and one woman, and even the immutability of biological sex."

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