



United States Commission *on* International Religious Freedom

On Friday, November 30th, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom will host a telephone briefing with the mandate assistant of the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief. The purpose of the call is to help NGOs and religious groups better understand how to utilize UN special procedures to raise concerns about severe religious freedom violations around the world.

Special Rapporteurs are independent experts selected by the UN Human Rights Council¹ to examine various thematic issues and country situations of concern. A number of different Special Rapporteurs exist, but the SR on Freedom of Religion or Belief is the main interlocutor for religious freedom advocacy groups. The office of the SR on Freedom of Religion or Belief falls under the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). See the website here:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/FreedomReligion/Pages/FreedomReligionIndex.aspx>

The Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief can take different actions to bring attention to situations of serious concern, such as by sending urgent appeals or allegation letters seeking clarification. These interventions, while confidential, can put offending governments on notice that the international community is aware of violations. The special procedure is complex, but is open to religious communities and advocacy groups and should be considered within a larger advocacy strategy. The teleconference will allow participants to hear a presentation by the office and ask questions via email.

Date: Friday, November 30th

Time: 10 am EST

Phone number (North America): 1-888-567-1603

Phone number (International): 1-201-604-5052

Call one of the numbers shortly before the start time.
You will be greeted by an operator and asked for your name and affiliation.

RSVP: communications@uscirf.gov

¹ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/Welcomepage.aspx>

USCIRF is an independent, bipartisan U.S. government advisory body – separate from the State Department – established by the U.S. Congress to monitor religious freedom worldwide and make policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State, and the Congress. For more information, visit the website, www.uscifr.gov.