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RELIGIOUS
FREEDOM
INSTITUTE

IMPACT REPORT 2019

MISSION

The Religious Freedom Institute is committed to achieving broad acceptance of religious liberty as a fundamental human right, the cornerstone of a successful society, and a source of national and international security.

VISION

We envision a world that respects religion as an individual and social good, and that protects religious freedom as a fundamental human right, as well as an indispensable driver of democracy, social stability, civil liberty, economic prosperity, equality of women, and the defeat of violent extremism. Religious freedom encompasses the rights of individuals and communities to practice their beliefs in private and to exercise their religious convictions in public, including in civil society, economic enterprise, politics, and law.



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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

The first thing to be said is “thank you.” During the past year, you have invested—or perhaps considered investing—in the Religious Freedom Institute’s new model of advancing religious freedom at home and abroad. That model emerged from our founders’ decades of experience in the field.

I am pleased to report that the investments are paying dividends. RFI has established itself as a preeminent organization advancing religious freedom on the ground in the United States and around the world.

Our distinctive model sounds simple: “research, educate, impact.” But consider how it can actually change things on the ground. First, we develop empirical, fact-based evidence (research) that religious freedom is good for religions, individuals, families, civil societies, women, minorities, economies, and political stability.

We educate by distilling that evidence into persuasive arguments tailored to the audience. We equip local stakeholders, especially rising generations of leaders, to understand and value religious freedom, and to impact culture and policy.

RFI Action Teams deliver the evidence and equip stakeholders through curricula, training, private briefings of policymakers, public conferences, persuasive studies and publications, and highly effective, strategic communications via print, the internet, social media, radio, and TV.

The result is real-world impact that reduces religious persecution and increases religious freedom, at home and abroad.

RFI is “on the ground” in Asia and the Middle East, as well as in North America. Our model is being emulated in Europe, where we have been invited to open offices in both Eastern and Western Europe.

HERE IS A BRIEF SAMPLING OF WHAT YOU WILL READ IN THIS REPORT:

RFI LAUNCHED ITS CENTER FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM EDUCATION, which provides high school and university-level curricula, training for faculty and administrators, internships, dissertation fellowships, structured mentoring, and more. Its mission is to restore religious freedom to its place as America’s first freedom in the education of emerging leaders.

RFI CONTINUED ITS INNOVATIVE, ONGOING PRIVATE CONSULTATIONS with religious, civil society, and government officials in the Middle East and South Asia. Far more substantial than interfaith dialogue, RFI’s private consultations are meticulously prepared, intensely honest, deeply respectful, and hold enormous potential for advancing religious freedom.

RFI HELPED SHAPE THE THREE-DAY MINISTERIAL TO ADVANCE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, hosted by Secretary of State Pompeo, which drew more than 100 foreign delegations and over 1,000 NGO leaders to Washington. Echoing RFI arguments made directly to the Administration and both Houses of Congress, the Ministerial focused on the value of religious freedom to human and social flourishing, and to national and international security. Two senior RFI officials spoke at the Ministerial.

RFI COMMUNICATED TO BUSINESS LEADERS, SCHOLARS, POLICYMAKERS, AND JOURNALISTS at home and abroad our findings from a set of “Landscape Reports” on the state of religious freedom in nine countries where it is imperiled. We showcased these reports at five RFI events in support of the Secretary of State’s second Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom.

RFI BRIDGED THE DEEP DIVIDE BETWEEN OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE ACTORS to provide desperately needed humanitarian resources for refugees in the Middle East.

We live in a time of crisis for religious freedom, both at home and abroad. There are those in our country who argue that religious liberty is a shield for bigotry. They are wrong. There are those abroad who argue that it is a shield for imperialism. They too are wrong.

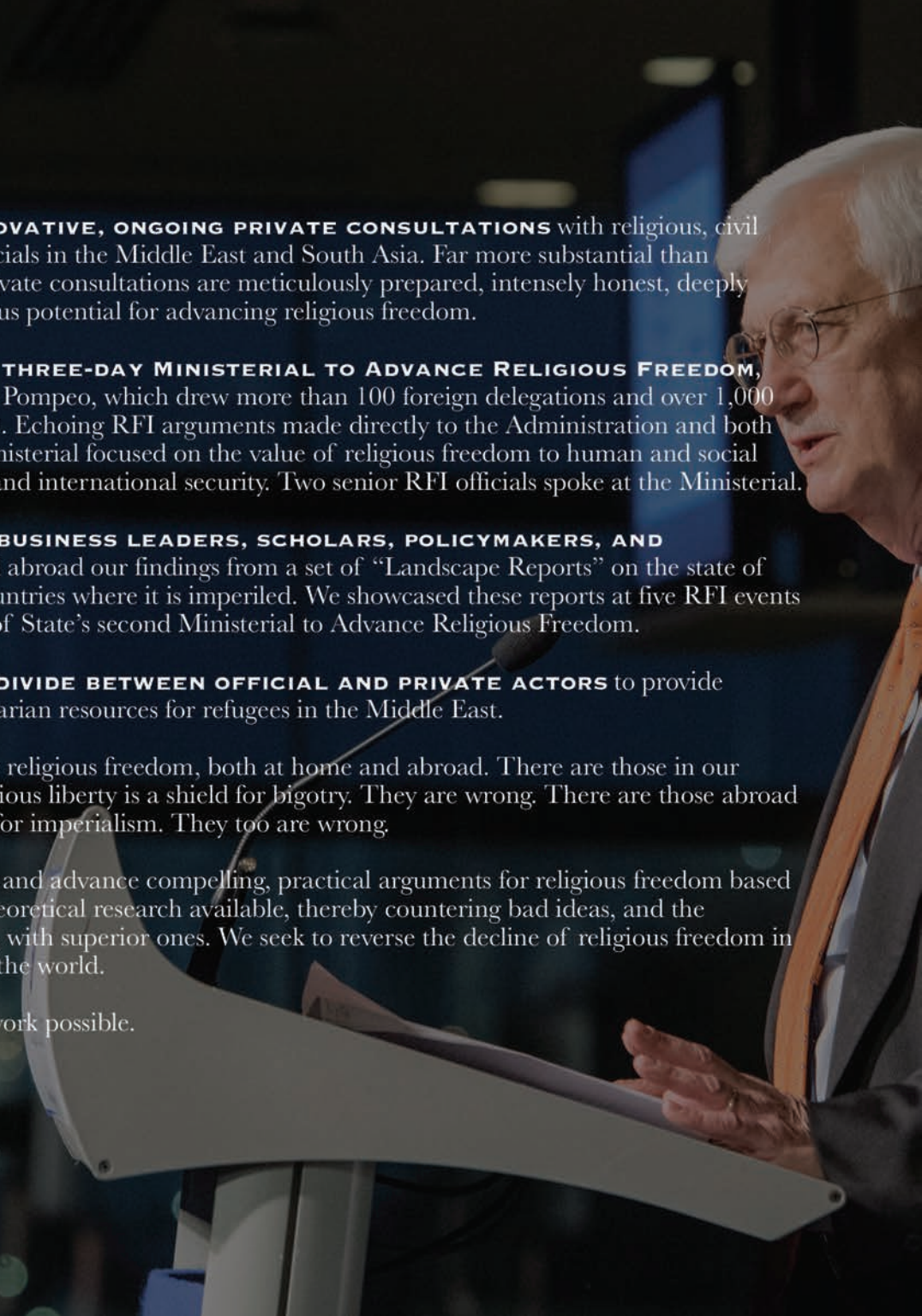
RFI was founded to develop and advance compelling, practical arguments for religious freedom based on the best empirical and theoretical research available, thereby countering bad ideas, and the consequences of those ideas, with superior ones. We seek to reverse the decline of religious freedom in our own nation and around the world.

Thank you for making our work possible.

Faithfully,



Thomas F. Farr
President



WHAT IN THE WORLD IS RELIGIOUS FREEDOM?

Religious freedom is important for everyone, everywhere. Why? Because *religion* is important for everyone, everywhere. Human beings are innately religious. Our nature impels us to seek answers to profound questions about ultimate things. If we are not free to pursue those answers, and to live according to the truths we discover, we cannot live a fully human life.

Religious freedom is therefore the right of all persons to believe, speak, and act – individually and in community with others, in private and in public – in accord with their understanding of ultimate truth.

The American Founders understood the importance of religion for human, social, and political flourishing. That's why they styled religious freedom – that is, the freedom of all to *exercise* religion – as the *first freedom*. They were convinced religious freedom was necessary for the well-being of citizens, for the common good, and for public virtue without which they believed the new Republic would fail. Their view might be accurately called *free exercise equality*.

Until a few years ago, the vast majority of Americans supported the Founders' understanding of religious freedom. Consider, for example, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and International Religious Freedom Act. During the 1990s both passed with overwhelming, bipartisan support in Congress and were signed by President Clinton. Americans would sometimes disagree over how to apply religious freedom in particular cases, but they generally understood it to be our first freedom. With the Founders, they believed it to be a building block for all other fundamental freedoms, indispensable to the common good, and a source of protection for everyone.

Those days are gone.

In 2016 the chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, created by Congress to protect the civil rights of all Americans, issued the following statement[1]: “[t]he phrases ‘religious liberty’ and ‘religious freedom’ [are...] code words for discrimination, intolerance, racism, sexism, homophobia, Islamophobia, [and] Christian supremacy....”

This dangerous view, which continues to spread, is highly destructive of the American commitment to freedom and equality and demands a sustained effort to recover the true meaning and value of religious freedom. In other words, it demands nothing short of the recovery and realization of *free exercise equality*, a core feature of the American constitutional settlement.

What is Religion?

Religion is, first and foremost, the human search for a greater-than-human source of being and ultimate

meaning. Most people by their nature seek answers to questions that seem to be in our DNA. For example, is there something or someone to which or to whom I owe my being? If so, how should I order my life in light of that discovery? Why is there suffering? Is there life after death? If so, does my behavior in this life affect my fate after death?

Second, most people who believe they have discovered religious truths join with others of like mind and spirit. Accordingly, although it is deeply personal, religion is also an organized, shared set of beliefs and practices that define a religious community, and which are lived and expressed in the public life of the society in which that community is situated.

What is Religious Freedom?

Religious freedom is a *right* that is guaranteed in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. It is the equal right of all human beings and all religious communities to the free exercise of religion. Given its profound importance to the founding of America, and to human flourishing, it is a capacious right – i.e. universal, broad, and deep – though it is not absolute.

Religious freedom includes the right to believe, or not to believe, in religious truths. There is no hint of coercion in the American understanding of religious freedom, i.e. that one must believe. Coercion is alien to the American treatment of religion. If one does not believe, one's rights are fully protected under the Constitution's guarantee of free speech, expression, and assembly.

But if one does believe, such a person has the right to order his or her life in accord with religious truths, without undue coercion from any human agent, especially government, and to do so in community with others.

Religious freedom therefore includes the rights of churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, and other houses of worship not only to exist, but also to flourish. Given the importance of religion in the founding, houses of worship have historically been given privileges, such as tax exemptions, that encourage their building and their growth.

Religious freedom also includes the right of individuals and communities to create and operate religious institutions such as homes for the poor, the aged, and the dying; medical clinics and hospitals; primary and secondary schools; colleges and universities; services for immigrants; soup kitchens; food pantries; adoption and foster care agencies; drug rehabilitation centers, and the like. Without such private religious institutions, which generally provide services for all of us, American civil society would be a mere shadow of what it is today.

Religious freedom also includes the rights of faith-based businesses to operate according to the fundamental beliefs of their owners. For-profit businesses are also subject to regulation by governments,

and in recent years conflicts have arisen between the rights of customers and those of faith-based business owners.

These conflicts have raised several questions, especially whether such business owners should be coerced to provide their services to same-sex couples for their wedding ceremonies. In general, coercion should not be applied in such matters, particularly when the services sought are easily available from other businesses willing to provide them. Unfortunately, some state governments and political groups have sought to coerce such businesses into financial ruin or to demonize them as haters and bigots. Whatever one's views on same-sex marriage, these methods are bad for religious freedom and bad for America.

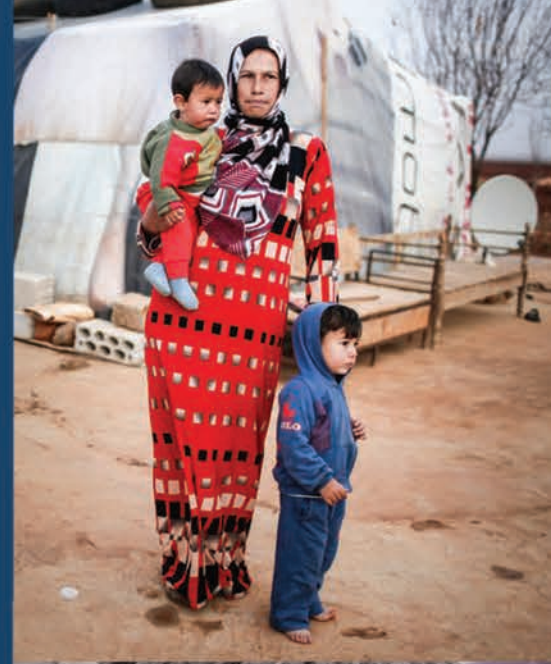
Finally, religious freedom includes the right of religious individuals, institutions, and communities to bring into political life their respective claims about justice, peace, equality, and freedom, and to seek the agreement of their fellow citizens on a basis equal to all others in society. This dimension of religious freedom is captured in the phrase: *free exercise equality*.

The limits on religious freedom are, as indicated in the discussion of same-sex marriage, a source of growing disagreement in America. But some limits are clear. Religious freedom does not provide any protection for violence or coercion in the name of religion. Nor can any religion seek a monopoly through the law, which is why the Founders prohibited a federal *establishment* of religion in the First Amendment. State establishments continued to exist, but disappeared by the 1830s as states gradually accepted the Founders' premise: state control of religion, and the coercion of conscience that inevitably results, is bad for religion and therefore bad for America.

Beyond America's Shores: the Stakes Are High

The world is experiencing a growing global crisis of religious freedom. Violent religious persecution, severe government restrictions, and rising social hostilities challenge religious freedom in every region of the world.

The global crisis makes it all the more imperative that the United States retrieve its historic understanding of the importance of religious freedom for the affirmation of human dignity, and for the flourishing of human beings and the societies in which they live. If the precious right of religious freedom is damaged or lost in America, where else can it be retrieved? What country at this point in history will defend the right of religious freedom for everyone, everywhere, if America does not?



SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA ACTION TEAM



During the second Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom in July 2019, RFI fellow in Sri Lanka, Yamini Ravindran, participated in this meeting in the Oval Office with President Trump.



RFI's SSEA Action Team Associate Director Rebecca Shah meets with local residents on the ground.



RFI's SSEA Action Team partnered with the Islam and Liberty Network on the "Making an Islamic Case for Religious Freedom Conference" in Jakarta, Indonesia. SSEA Action Team Director Timothy Shah is featured far left.

The South and Southeast Asia Action Team advances religious freedom in a region that is home to one-third of the world's population and is characterized by fierce and intensifying political and social restrictions that affect all religious communities, including Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, and Muslims. Non-believers are also affected. Countries in this region, particularly Burma and Pakistan, experience some of the most violent religious persecution in the world. It causes great harm to these societies and threatens U.S. national interests.

With support from the Templeton Religion Trust, RFI developed landscape reports identifying key challenges and untapped opportunities for advancing religious freedom. Additional support from the United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the John Templeton Foundation is allowing our team to provide more detailed mappings of restrictions on the religious freedom of individuals and institutions. These projects are designed to inform policymakers.

With your support, RFI is building a diverse network of key actors, civil society groups, religious leaders, and religious freedom advocates from religious communities across all the major countries in South and Southeast Asia. To catalyze our growing network, our consultations have featured government ministers from Malaysia and Sri Lanka and members of parliament from Indonesia. Among the members of our network is the president of Malaysia's largest Muslim youth organization and representatives of the 90-million member Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Indonesia's largest civil society organization and the world's largest Islamic social-welfare agency. Working with these partners, we have set in

motion robust and sustainable initiatives to promote religious freedom in each of these countries.

IN 2019, THE SSEA ACTION TEAM:

ORGANIZED RELIEF AND RESOURCES FOR VICTIMS following the Sri Lanka bombings on Easter Sunday. During the second Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom in July 2019, our RFI fellow in Sri Lanka, Yamini Ravindran, participated in a meeting in the Oval Office with President Trump. Ravindran showcased how our partners have been responding to the bombings by promoting reconciliation and religious freedom for all Sri Lankans.

HELPED ORGANIZE THE ANNUAL SOUTHEAST ASIA FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF CONFERENCE in Bangkok, Thailand. The event convened 140 leaders from Southeast Asia to create a network supporting religious freedom throughout the region. Ambassador Pusin Tali, Taiwan's first Ambassador at Large for Religious Freedom, and Ambassador Sam Brownback, U.S. Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, among other global political and religious leaders, participated in this event.

PARTNERED WITH THE ISLAM AND LIBERTY NETWORK ON THE "MAKING AN ISLAMIC CASE FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM CONFERENCE" in Jakarta, Indonesia. The conference featured a keynote address by Said Aqil Siradj, the leader of Indonesia's largest Muslim social-welfare organization, and gathered 150 Muslims leaders from across the world to strengthen Muslim religious freedom advocacy, particularly in South and Southeast Asia.

MIDDLE EAST ACTION TEAM

The Middle East Action Team works to convince stakeholders on the ground that increasing religious freedom in their nations can serve their interests, such as reducing violence and strengthening economic development. In nations such as Iraq and Syria, RFI is educating and influencing policymakers, endeavoring to persuade them of the need and opportunities for promoting religious freedom.

DURING THE PAST YEAR, RFI AND ITS MIDDLE EAST ACTION TEAM:

SHAPED AND SUPPORTED THE PASSAGE OF THE IRAQ AND SYRIA GENOCIDE ACCOUNTABILITY AND RELIEF ACT, which was signed into law by President Trump on December 11, 2018.

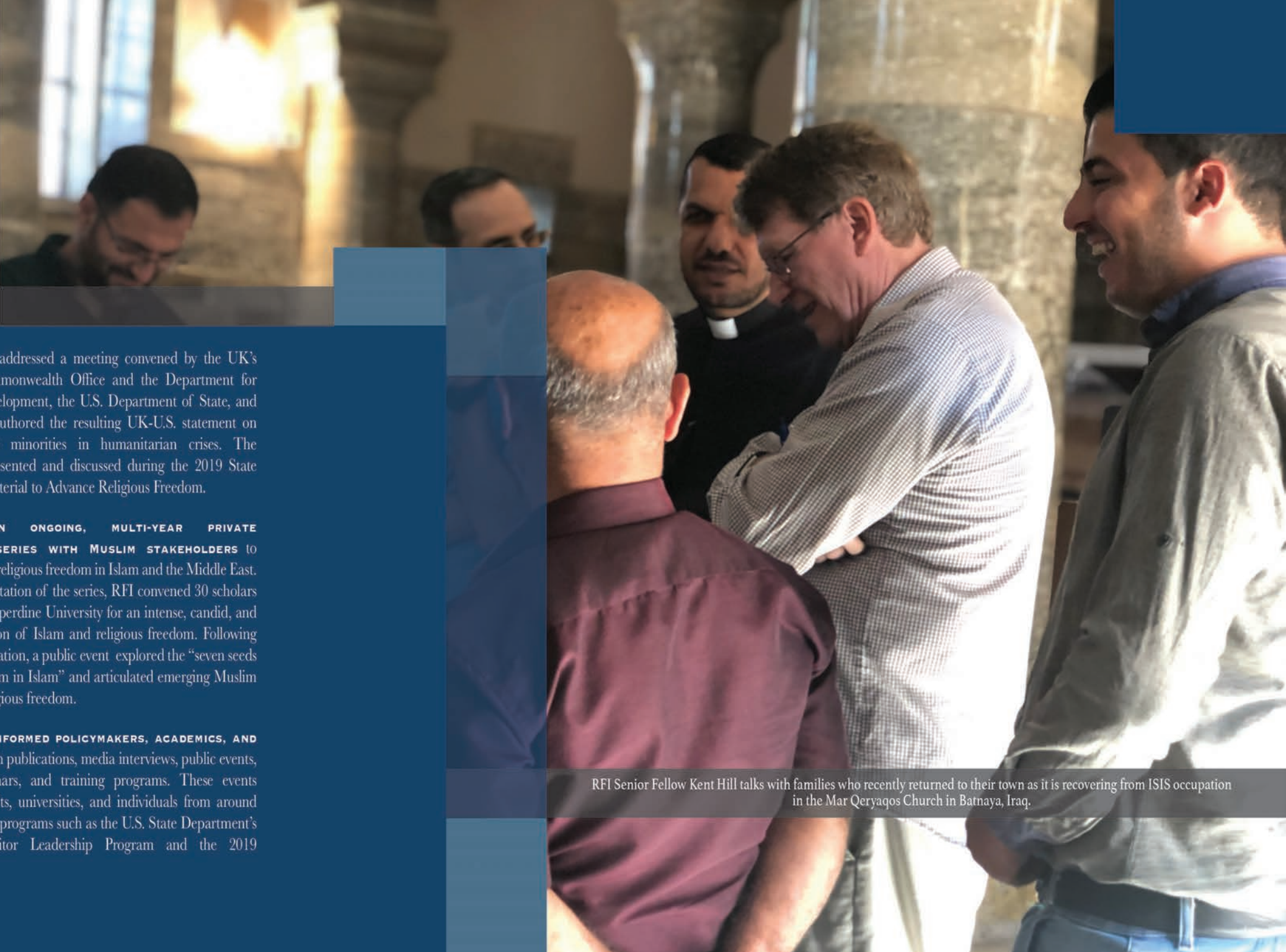
BRIEFED THE WHITE HOUSE ON THE LOOMING DISAPPEARANCE OF CHRISTIANITY IN IRAQ. RFI produced a report documenting the realities on the ground in Iraq, *Hanging by a Thread: Christians and Other Minorities Are Fading into History on the Nineveh Plains*, and briefed it to the Office of the Vice President, the National Security Council, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Department of State, USAID, and key members of Congress.

INFORMED AND RESHAPED GOVERNMENT CONVERSATIONS IN THE UK AND U.S. ON HUMANITARIAN RELIEF. RFI's Senior

Fellow Kent Hill addressed a meeting convened by the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development, the U.S. Department of State, and USAID. RFI co-authored the resulting UK-U.S. statement on assisting religious minorities in humanitarian crises. The statement was presented and discussed during the 2019 State Department Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom.

CONTINUED AN ONGOING, MULTI-YEAR PRIVATE CONSULTATION SERIES WITH MUSLIM STAKEHOLDERS to discuss the role of religious freedom in Islam and the Middle East. In the third consultation of the series, RFI convened 30 scholars and experts at Pepperdine University for an intense, candid, and successful discussion of Islam and religious freedom. Following the private consultation, a public event explored the "seven seeds of religious freedom in Islam" and articulated emerging Muslim arguments for religious freedom.

EQUIPPED AND INFORMED POLICYMAKERS, ACADEMICS, AND ACTIVISTS through publications, media interviews, public events, educational seminars, and training programs. These events involved non-profits, universities, and individuals from around the world through programs such as the U.S. State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program and the 2019 Ministerial.



RFI Senior Fellow Kent Hill talks with families who recently returned to their town as it is recovering from ISIS occupation in the Mar Qeryaqos Church in Batnaya, Iraq.

INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM POLICY ACTION TEAM



Thomas Farr, RFI president, testifies before the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission. Co-Chair Christopher H. Smith presided over the hearing titled, "Violations of the International Right to Freedom of Religion: Christians," June, 2019.

The International Religious Freedom Policy Action Team exists to provide information, encouragement, and counsel to the United States and other Western nations that seek to advance religious freedom in foreign policy. We draw on the extensive foreign policy experience of our senior leaders, as well as RFI's distinctive model of research, educate, impact. RFI's signature message in foreign policy is that religious freedom is an unheralded source of peace, justice and security. It contributes to individual flourishing, economic growth, political stability, and reducing religious violence and terrorism.

IN 2019, THE IRFP ACTION TEAM:

PUBLISHED A LANDMARK REPORT, SURVEYING THE LANDSCAPE OF INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM POLICY. Released at the National Press Club during the 2019 Ministerial, the report surveys the foreign policies and activities of 18 nations and 5 multilateral bodies. RFI also released the report at the United Nations Headquarters during the General Assembly in September.

HOSTED FIVE SEPARATE PUBLIC EVENTS in Washington D.C. in support of the Secretary of State's second Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom. The events focused on Burma, violent religious and ethno-religious extremism in South and Southeast Asia, and international declarations that attempt to promote religious freedom and human dignity.

SHAPED THE MESSAGE OF THE MINISTERIAL, in particular on national

security and political stability. The Ministerial brought to Washington official delegations from over 100 nations, and more than 1,000 heads of private organizations from around the world: the largest human rights gathering in the history of the State Department. RFI Senior Fellow Kent Hill and RFI President Thomas Farr were both featured speakers at the Ministerial.

INCREASED U.S. STATE AND DEFENSE DEPARTMENT COLLABORATION ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM by convening in its offices a briefing with Sam Brownback, U.S. Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, and the Chiefs of Chaplains for the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard.

PROVIDED A CONSTANT AND RELIABLE SOURCE OF INFORMATION, EXPERTISE, AND ADVICE for government agencies at home and abroad. Over the course of this year, RFI officials gave testimony or provided briefings to both Houses of the U.S. Congress, the U.S. Departments of Defense, State, Homeland Security, and Justice, the Canadian Parliament, the British Foreign Office, the Organization of American States, and the governments of Romania and Hungary.

INSTITUTED A U.S. MILITARY CHAPLAIN'S FELLOW PROGRAM. The inaugural fellow, Naval Captain Father Dan Mode, developed key relationships for RFI at the DOD, Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the military intelligence agencies. In December 2019, RFI welcomed its latest chaplain fellow, U.S. Army Major Graham Glover





RFI Executive Vice President Eric Patterson introduces George Weigel as keynote during RFI Annual Dinner at the Hay-Adams in Washington D.C. Weigel's address was titled "Freedom, Including Religious Freedom, Is Never Free."

INSTITUTE

NORTH AMERICA ACTION TEAM

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The North America Action Team exists to reverse the decline of religious freedom in Canada and the United States. Too many Americans and Canadians no longer understand the meaning of religious freedom, and why it remains critical to the health of our two nations.

This amnesia pervades not only public institutions, such as those involved in public service and the media, but it also affects our faith communities. Too often political and cultural leaders reduce religious faith to a private matter in an attempt to remove it from the public square. But vigorous religious expression, including in debates over law and public policy, is essential to our common life.

When religious freedom is strong in North America, U.S. and Canadian policies of advancing international religious freedom are strong. When it is weak in North America, our respective foreign policies are also weak.

IN 2019, THE NORTH AMERICAN ACTION TEAM:

DRAFTED AND COORDINATED A MAJOR MULTI-FAITH LETTER TO THE CALIFORNIA STATE ASSEMBLY opposing Senate Bill 360, an

egregious attack on religious freedom in California. The Bill was defeated.

COORDINATED A MULTI-FAITH LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN against the Quebec law on secularism, which attacks Canadian religious public sector employees and was enacted in June 2019. RFI continues to monitor its effects and consider strategies for its repeal.

PUBLISHED A MAJOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM LANDSCAPE REPORT, *Surveying the Landscape of International Religious Freedom Policy*, in collaboration with the IRFP Action Team.

PROVIDED SPEAKERS FOR GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE AUDIENCES in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

DEVELOPED A NETWORK OF YOUNG RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES, a partnership between the North America Action Team, RFI's Center for Religious Freedom Education, and the "Faith in the Future" initiative of Canada's Cardus Institute.

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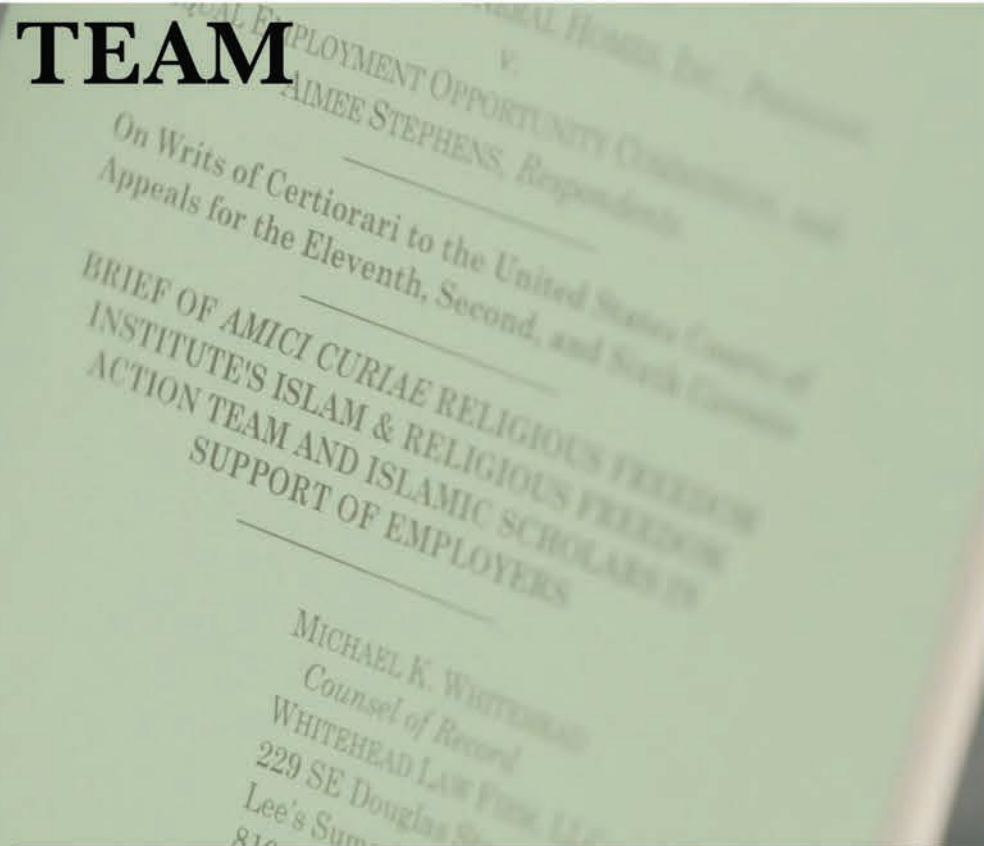
North America Action Team Director Fr. Deacon Andrew Bennett speaks at the National Press Club during an event in support of the second Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom hosted by the U.S. Department of State, 2019. Bennett was Canada's first International Religious Freedom Ambassador (2013-2016).



ISLAM AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ACTION TEAM



RFI's Ismail Royer engaging with Islamic scholars such as Sherman Jackson at a private consultation. Also pictured are RFI Senior Fellow Professor Dan Philpott and advisory board member Shaykh Hamza Yusuf.



RFI's Islam and Religious Freedom Action Team files amicus curiae briefs in multiple Supreme Court cases, all of which provide an authentically Muslim rationale for supporting religious freedom for all.

The Muslim-majority world is characterized by governments that exercise a tight grip on religion, endemic religious strife, and a lack of religious freedom for non-Muslim minorities and disfavored Muslim populations. At the same time, Muslim minorities in the West are often unfamiliar with the protections of religious freedom, even as they are affected by the same trends threatening religious freedom for all believers.

To meet these challenges, RFI launched its Islam and Religious Freedom Action Team in April 2018. The aim of this action team is to amplify Muslim voices speaking on behalf of religious freedom for all, seek a deeper understanding of the support for religious freedom within the teachings of Islam, and protect the religious freedom of Muslims.

SINCE ITS FOUNDING, THIS TEAM HAS:

ADVANCED THE UNDERSTANDING OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN ISLAM through publications, speeches, social media, and consultations. RFI hosted thought leaders from the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia, the Balkans, and Pakistan to discuss Islam's support for the dignity of all human beings and the virtues that foster justice and harmony between religions. In collaboration with the Middle East Action Team, the Islam and Religious Freedom Action Team convened a private consultation at Pepperdine University with Islamic scholars on advancing religious freedom.

CHALLENGED FOREIGN BLASPHEMY LAWS. Ismail Royer, director of this action team, authored an influential monograph on Pakistan's

blasphemy law that was distributed widely in English and Urdu. RFI also hosted a dialogue with Islamic scholars on Pakistan's blasphemy law at the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars, and the video has been viewed online over 1,200 times. Royer's insightful commentary has attracted over 10,000 Twitter followers.

ADVOCATED FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN THE U.S.: such as by friend-of-the-court briefs (amicus briefs) in Supreme Court cases. This action team provided an authentically Muslim rationale for the religious freedom of all Americans, including briefs supporting a World War I memorial cross in Bladensburg, Maryland, a funeral home and a flower shop the owners of which wanted to operate according to their faith, and a Christian school in Ohio that was blocked from expanding by city authorities.

LED SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES FOR MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS TO DEMONSTRATE PUBLICLY LIVED FAITH in Utah, New York, and Washington, D.C. This action team held a multi-faith dialogue at the University of Connecticut School of Law on faith-based legal advocacy for the common good, and a discussion at America's Islamic Heritage Museum on the imperfect implementation of religious freedom in the case of Muslims, Mormons, and Catholics. In Utah, the team partnered with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and a Bosnian mosque for a service project, while in New York the action team brought a group of inner-city Muslim youth to meet the youth of the Bruderhof's upstate Christian intentional living community.

CENTER FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM EDUCATION



Director of RFI's Center for Religious Freedom Education, David Trimble, introduces University of Dallas President, Thomas Hibbs, as a guest speaker for a year round Speaker Series program offered to young professionals in Washington, D.C.

In 2019, RFI established the Center for Religious Freedom Education (CRFE) to transform current intellectual and cultural understandings of religious freedom in the United States. Religious freedom must once again be recognized and honored as America's first freedom and the cornerstone of the American experiment in constitutional self-government. To achieve these goals, CRFE is educating and equipping tomorrow's citizens and leaders to be informed, persuasive champions of religious freedom for all.

CFRE'S PRIMARY ACTIONS IN 2019 INCLUDED:

AUTHORED THE AMERICA'S FIRST FREEDOM CURRICULUM AND PILOTED IT IN 8 RELIGIOUS AND CLASSICAL SCHOOLS. This high school curriculum consists of five lessons on religious freedom, supplementing a senior-level high school social studies course. Our rigorous before-and-after evaluation of student learning demonstrates a significant increase in understanding of, and support for, the philosophical and constitutional bases for religious freedom.

TO RECOVER RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AS VITAL TO CIVICS EDUCATION, RFI presented the America's First Freedom curriculum, which is tied to nationally-recognized social studies standards, at a nation-wide curriculum conference in Austin, Texas, in November 2019. RFI will present the curriculum to public, private, and homeschool conferences in 2020.

OFFERED UNIVERSITY STUDENT INTERNSHIPS, RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS, AND GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS, AS WELL AS A JUNIOR FELLOWS PROGRAM AND CURRICULAR RESOURCES FOR PROFESSORS. RFI hosted interns and research assistants from: Baylor University, Regent University, Biola University, Hillsdale College, Colgate University, Davidson College, University of Oklahoma, Harvard University, the Hungary TFAS Program, and the American Council of Young Political Leaders from Jakarta, Indonesia.

PROVIDED A YEAR-ROUND SPEAKERS' SERIES FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND YOUNG PROFESSIONALS at RFI's Capitol Hill headquarters. Our experts also spoke at numerous universities across the U.S., from elite private colleges to top public research institutions.



RFI offers a robust internship program to university students, as well as research assistantships and graduate fellowships. Photo features 2019 Summer Interns outside the U.S. Capitol, near RFI's new office space.

THE AMERICAN CHARTER

OF FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND CONSCIENCE



RFI Co-Founder and Senior Fellow Byron Johnson was project co-director of The American Charter's three year development.



The Charter was signed at the National Archives by leaders such as former U.S. Congressman Frank Wolf and RFI Advisory Board Members Jacqueline Rivers, Anuttama Dasa, Kit Bigelow, and Pastor Cheryl Gaines.

Religious liberty is being narrowed, distorted, and attacked in the United States in ways that make this “first freedom” unrecognizable by historic standards. To counter these attacks, RFI enlisted a broad, bipartisan group of American leaders in an urgent effort to rebuild the floundering consensus on religious liberty and expand the promise of religious freedom for all Americans in a time of rapidly expanding diversity and deepening division.

Co-chaired by public intellectuals Os Guinness and William Galston, this three-year initiative culminated with the publication of the American Charter on Freedom of Religion and Conscience. Project Co-Director and RFI Senior Fellow Byron Johnson led the three-year development and launch of The Charter.

The American Charter was publicly launched at the National Archives in Washington, DC, bringing together nationally-recognized signatories to demonstrate their support for the objectives of the Charter, which aim to: restore civility to public discourse on religion and freedom of religion and conscience in America; explore the meaning and value of freedom of religion and conscience as a foundation of American democracy, as well as national and global prosperity; and build a multi-faith, non-partisan coalition working to affirm freedom of religion and conscience as a vital safeguard for people of all faiths and none.

The American Charter does not attempt to resolve today's most

contentious controversies. Instead, it states, for example, that while “it is not always possible to uphold both non-discrimination and religious liberty claims in particular cases, both claims should be taken seriously, and both sides should seek common ground.” The Charter does not say which side should win in any of these cases, but instead calls on leaders not to view such disputes as zero-sum, winner-take-all battles.

The American Charter calls on Americans of goodwill to “work together to fashion reasonable accommodations for the good of all.” The Charter goes on to state: “We believe that an urgent challenge of our time is to build and sustain societies that are worthy of human beings possessing innate and inalienable dignity and freedom and to resolve the question of how we are to live with our deepest differences, especially when those differences are religious and ideological.”

The American Charter's vision is to advance a productive, respectful discussion and increase understanding of the meaning and value of freedom of religion and conscience, as well as America's extensive and ever-increasing religious pluralism. To actualize this, RFI's CRFE is currently planning a curriculum series for schools and civil society groups to advance the goals of the American Charter.

To learn more, visit www.americancharter.org

RFI LEADERSHIP



THOMAS FARR PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM POLICY ACTION TEAM

Thomas Farr served for three decades in the U.S. Army and Foreign Service, including as founding director of the U.S. State Department's Office of International Religious Freedom. Subsequently, he led RFI's predecessor organization, and taught for a decade in the School of Foreign Service, both at Georgetown University. His writings and counsel to U.S. officials have had a major impact on U.S. international religious freedom policy.

ERIC PATTERSON EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Eric Patterson has worked as a university dean, military reserve commander, White House Fellow, and at the U.S. Department of State. He has published more than a dozen books on religion and foreign policy. His scholarly expertise and his extensive management experience render him perfectly suited to lead RFI and implement its distinctive methods.



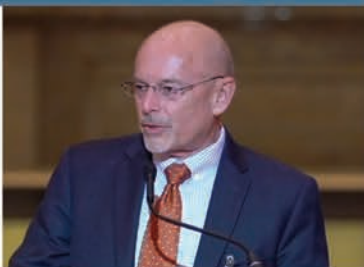
TIMOTHY SAMUEL SHAH VICE PRESIDENT FOR STRATEGY AND INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH AND DIRECTOR, SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA ACTION TEAM

Timothy Samuel Shah is an internationally recognized expert on the relationship between religion and political dynamics in theory, history, and contemporary practice. A co-founder of RFI and prolific researcher and scholar, Shah has profoundly influenced the organization's approach to advancing religious freedom on the ground.



BYRON JOHNSON SENIOR FELLOW

Byron Johnson is Distinguished Professor of the Social Sciences at Baylor University, and founding director of Baylor's Institute for Studies of Religion. One of the world's most influential social scientists, Johnson's work on the effects of religious freedom in prisons has been widely praised. A co-founder of RFI, Johnson led our initiative, The American Charter of Freedom of Religion and Conscience.



KENT HILL SENIOR FELLOW FOR EURASIA, THE MIDDLE EAST AND ISLAM AND FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kent Hill has held senior positions at USAID, World Vision, and the John Templeton Foundation, and served as president of Eastern Nazarene College as well as the Institute on Religion and Democracy. One of RFI's four co-founders, Hill's decades of experience in eastern Europe, Russia, and the Middle East has shaped the organization's approach to advancing religious freedom in these areas.



ACTION TEAM DIRECTORS

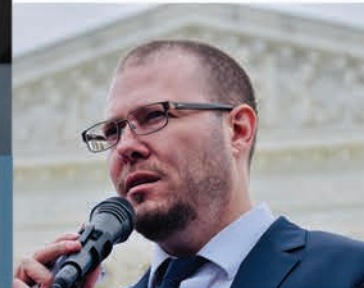
ANDREW BENNETT DIRECTOR, NORTH AMERICA ACTION TEAM

Andrew Bennett is the former Ambassador for Religious Freedom in the Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic deacon of the Eparchy of Toronto and Eastern Canada and senior fellow at Cardus, Canada's faith-based think-tank, Bennett brings a wealth of international experience and expertise to RFI, helping us battle the decline of religious freedom in Canada and the United States.



ISMAIL ROYER DIRECTOR, ISLAM AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ACTION TEAM

Ismail Royer has studied with traditional Islamic scholars and worked at non-profit Islamic organizations. He is RFI's most active social media commentator and his writing has appeared in *The Washington Post*, *Journal of Religion and Society*, *Public Discourse*, *Al Jumuah*, *Muslim Matters*, and *The Catholic Thing*. Royer is building a following of young Muslims interested in the role of religious freedom in Islam.



DAVID TRIMBLE DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM EDUCATION

David Trimble has wide experience in law, public policy, and education. Trimble leads RFI's faculty, student, and educational initiatives, including the America's First Freedom curriculum. His long-time involvement in the Middle East has also made him a valued senior fellow on RFI's Middle East Action Team.



JEREMY BARKER DIRECTOR, MIDDLE EAST ACTION TEAM AND SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER

Jeremy Barker has lived or worked in the Middle East since 2010. He has worked in rights-based relief, development, and advocacy across the region from Iraq and Turkey to Egypt and Morocco with a particular focus on issues of religious persecution and post-conflict justice and accountability.



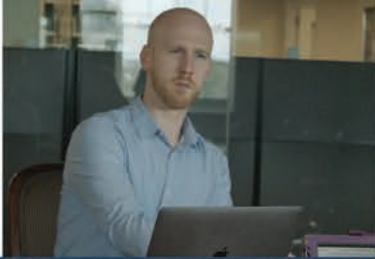
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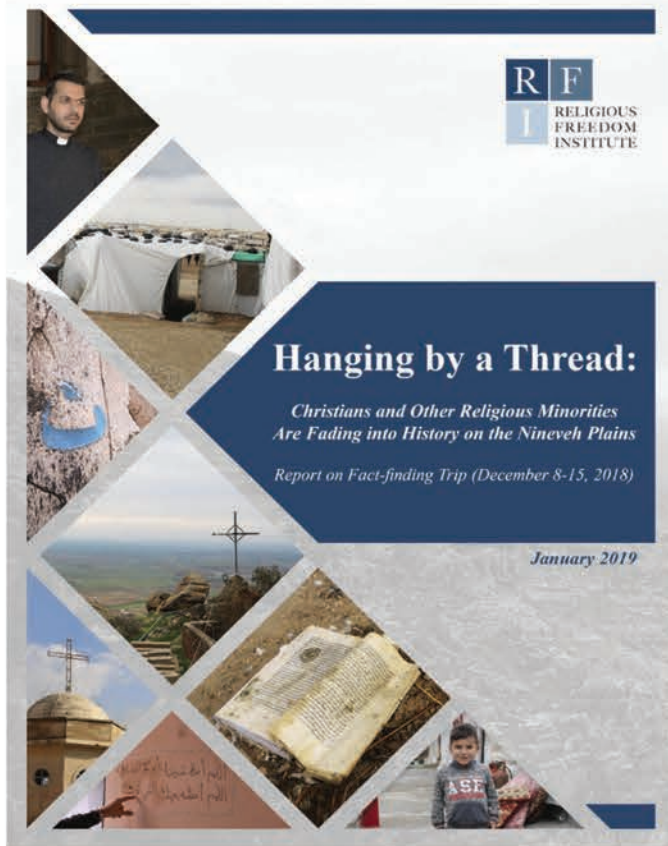
ANDREW KUBICK

REBECCA SHAH

PAUL MARSHALL

EUGENE YAPP

SELECT PUBLICATIONS



RFI's Action Teams published eight country reports through 2019, each documenting conditions on the ground that are impacting religious freedom in those societies and prospects for making advances in the future.

AND EVENTS *THROUGH 2019*

From November 2018 to November 2019, RFI held over 25 events, a selection of which is listed below.

MARCH 7, 2019 -
AN ISLAMIC CASE FOR PLURALISM, EQUAL
CITIZENSHIP, AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

APRIL 3, 2019 -
BOOK LAUNCH "LIBERTY IN THE THINGS OF GOD"
WITH AUTHOR ROBERT LOUIS WILKEN

MAY 29, 2019 -
FREEDOM OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS IN SOCIETY
PROJECT LAUNCH

JULY 15, 2019 -
REPORT LAUNCH: "SURVEYING THE LANDSCAPE OF
INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM POLICY"

OCTOBER 10, 2019 -
SPEAKER SERIES WITH BYRON JOHNSON ON "IDENTITY
TRANSFORMATION, OFFENDER-LED RELIGIOUS
MOVEMENTS, AND JUSTICE
SYSTEM REFORM"



The world is experiencing a growing global crisis of religious freedom. Violent religious persecution, severe government restrictions, and rising social hostilities challenge religious freedom in every region of the world.

Thomas Farr, RFI president

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