

Press Releases: U.S. Commitment to Religious Freedom

Press Statement
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Secretary of State

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Today the United States honors National Religious Freedom Day. On this day in 1786, the Virginia General Assembly adopted Thomas Jefferson's Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom. It begins with a groundbreaking statement: "Almighty God hath created the mind free." This Statute goes on to guarantee freedom of religion to people of all faiths and would inspire the religious freedom protections in the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and which in turn inspired the protections enshrined in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Every person around the world should be free to believe, or not believe, in accordance with their conscience. Governments have a duty to protect religious freedom, and promoting this freedom is a key foreign policy priority for the Trump Administration.

As part of our commitment to this freedom, the United States will host the second Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom July 16-18, 2019, in Washington, D.C. This Ministerial will again gather hundreds of government representatives, religious leaders, survivors of religious persecution, and members of civil society to build on the actions that began with the inaugural Ministerial last year. I look forward to hosting this important meeting and to strengthening the coalition of nations and organizations committed to defending this universal right.

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