



Highlights Impact of Financial Restrictions on Civil Society

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USCIRF Highlights Impact of Financial Restrictions on Civil Society

Washington, DC – The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom ([USCIRF](#)) today released the following factsheet on the impact of financial regulations on religious organizations and religious freedom:

Factsheet on Controlling Civil Society's Purse Strings – Around the globe, some governments misuse financial restrictions to hamper civil society actors, which can negatively impact religious communities. This factsheet explores the religious freedom implications from the use of excessive financial restrictions to harass and limit the activities of civil society organizations. The ability to solicit and receive financial contributions is an integral component of freedom of religion or belief, and these restrictions can be in violation of international human rights law. Financial harassment can take many forms, from attempts to delegitimize the work of foreign-funded civil society by enacting requirements to register as “foreign agents,” to excessive and intrusive reporting requirements, to exorbitant fees and fines for religious activity, to the seizure of assets or religious property. The factsheet also examines examples of government financial harassment of civil society organizations and its impact on religious freedom and communities in Belarus, China, India, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Russia, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan.

In its 2020 **Annual Report**, USCIRF recommended that the U.S. State Department designate China, India, Nigeria, Russia, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan as Countries of Particular Concern (CPCs) for engaging in or tolerating particularly severe violations of religious freedom. USCIRF also recommended that the U.S. State Department place Nicaragua on its Special Watch List (SWL) for engaging in or tolerating severe violations of religious freedom. The State Department designated China, Nigeria, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan as CPCs, and placed Nicaragua on its SWL, in **December 2020**.

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The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) is an independent, bipartisan federal government entity established by the U.S. Congress to monitor, analyze, and report on religious freedom abroad. USCIRF makes foreign policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State, and Congress intended to deter religious persecution and promote freedom of religion and belief. To interview a Commissioner, please contact USCIRF at media@uscirf.gov or Danielle Ashbahian at dashbahian@uscirf.gov.