

William Hodgkiss, Eric Hollinger, Robert Hurrell, Paul Imhof, William Kisner, Roberta James, Thomas Jones, John Laraway, Sarah Lawson, John Litterio, Harry Malatesta, Mary Marchut, Pedro Martinez, Raymond Matthews, Denise McCarthy, Diana Messersmith, Bernard Pierce, Joseph Randazzo, Kenneth Razillard, Norman Rimbey, Jacquie Roach, Gail Rosado, Richard Sanders, Douglas Satterfield, Jay Schopp, Ronald Sexton, Evelyn Stefula, Walter Streeter, John Sweeney, Joanne Tindall, Jose Toress, Robert Tucker, Leonard Valerio, Annemarie Walsh, John Wenner, Mary Wig, and Barbara Worthly.

These names will be entered into the permanent record at the Library of Congress documenting their accomplishments. These individuals symbolize everything that is good about America. They serve as a daily reminder of what public service is all about. These men and women went above and beyond their basic responsibilities in order to make someone else's life a little easier, and—in doing so—make the world a little better place to live. Once again, I would like to thank all the participants of Operation Provide Refuge: your dedication and selfless service is an inspiration to our nation and the world.

**RELIGIOUS LIBERTY PROTECTION
ACT OF 1999**

SPEECH OF

HON. CHARLES T. CANADY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 15, 1999

Mr. CANADY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful for the support of so many religious and public policy organizations in the passage of the Religious Liberty Protection Act. I would like to give special recognition to Prison Fellowship Ministries and Justice Fellowship, Christian Legal Society, Focus on the Family, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, American Center for Law and Justice, American Jewish Congress, Association of Christian Schools International, Family Research Council, Southern Baptist Convention: Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, United States Catholic Conference, Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and Council on Religious Freedom for their important contribution to this legislation.

I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Douglas Laycock, Alice McKean Young Regents Chair and Associate Dean of the University of Texas School of Law, for his invaluable legal analysis during the drafting and passage of the Religious Liberty Protection Act. I would also like to recognize the important contribution of the scholarship of Presidential Professor Michael McConnell of the University of Utah College of Law in the area of religious liberty.

I note that Congressman CHARLES W. STENHOLM from the 17th District of Texas requested to be a cosponsor of H.R. 1691 but was inadvertently omitted from the list of cosponsors.

UZBEKISTAN'S LITANY OF
VIOLATIONS

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 21, 1999

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, as Chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, I rise today to highlight the persecution of religious believers in Uzbekistan. The problem is worsening by the day, as the crackdown continues under the guise of "anti-terrorism." While there is some justifiable threat of terrorism, the widespread violations of rule of law and human rights perpetrated by authorities are not defensible, especially in light of Uzbekistan's OSCE commitments.

Under President Islam Karimov, Uzbekistan has been the second most repressive former Soviet republic, next to Turkmenistan. Karimov has used new constitutions and referendums extending his tenure to remain in office, where he seems determined to stay indefinitely. In mid-1992, he cracked down on all opposition parties, driving them underground or into exile, and all opposition or independent media were eliminated.

In Uzbekistan today, human rights are systematically violated. Arbitrary arrests, abuse and torture of detainees are pervasive, and flagrantly politicized judicial proceedings are routine. According to Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, there are well over 200 individuals who are prisoners of conscience either for their religious or political activities. Defendants have been convicted of criminal offenses based on forced confessions and planted evidence. The regime has also refused to register independent human rights monitoring organizations (the Human Rights Society and the Independent Human Rights Society), while groups which cooperate closely with the government (Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Individual) have been registered without delay. On June 25, Uzbek police savagely beat Mikhail Ardzinov, one of the country's most prominent human rights activists.

A key component of Uzbekistan's assault on human rights has been a thoroughgoing campaign against religious believers. Since 1997, hundreds of independent Muslim activists and believers associated with them have been arrested. In February of this year, bombs exploded in the capital, Tashkent, which killed sixteen bystanders and damaged government buildings, narrowly missing President Karimov and government officials. Karimov accused Muslim activists of having carried out a terrorist attack intended to assassinate him. The harassment and detention of Muslim activists has greatly intensified since then and an ongoing series of show trials had discredit them as dangerous religious extremists. Last month, six people were sentenced to death and another 16 received prison terms ranging from eight to 20 years in a trial that by no means met Western standards for due process. Since then, two arrested Muslims have died in prison, and there is no sign of a let up. President Karimov has argued that the threat of Islamic fundamentalism in Central Asia's most populous and traditional state necessitates a hard line, especially because Islamic radicals from neighboring Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan are determined to subvert Uzbekistan's

secular, developing democracy. But the state's repressive policies are radicalizing Muslims and turning them against the regime.

Non-Muslims faiths, particularly Christians, have also been subjected to harassment, imprisonment and violations of their religious liberty, especially those who share their faith and are actively meeting. According to Compass Direct, Ibrahim Yusupov, the leader of a Pentecostal church in Tashkent, was tried and sentenced last month to one year in prison on charges of conducting missionary activity. Another court in June sentenced Christian pastor Na'il Asanov to five years in prison on charges of possession of drugs and spreading extremist ideas. As with other cases mentioned below, witnesses attest that police planted a packet of drugs on Pastor Asanov and also severely beat him while he was in detention.

Also in June, three members of the Full Gospel Church in Nukus were sentenced to long prison sentences. Pastor Rashid Turibayev received a 15-year sentence, while Parhad Yangibayev and Issed Tanishiev received 10-year sentences for "deceiving ordinary people" as well as possessing and using drugs. Their appeal was denied on July 13. Reports indicate that they have suffered severe beatings in prison, have been denied food and medical attention, and their personal possessions have been confiscated by the police, leaving their families destitute. Recently, the most senior Pentecostal leader in Uzbekistan, Bishop Leonty Lulkin, and two other church members were tried and sentenced on charges of illegally meeting. The sentence they received was a massive fine of 100 times the minimum monthly wage. The leaders of Baptist churches, Korean churches, the Jehovah's Witnesses, as well as many others, have also been subjected to harsh legal penalties. Although they have filed for registration, local authorities refused to sign their documents.

Mr. Speaker, the State Department's report on Human Rights Practices for 1998 reported that the Uzbekistan law on religion "limits freedom of religion" with strict registration requirements which make it virtually impossible for smaller church organizations to gain legal status. The law passed in June 1998, "prohibits proselytizing, bans religious subjects in school curriculums, prohibits teaching of religious principles, forbids the wearing of religious clothing in public by anyone except clerics, and requires all religious groups and congregations to register or re-register." Also approved last May was a second law establishing the penalties if one were convicted of violating any of the statutes on religious activities. The penalties can range anywhere from lengthy prison sentences, massive fines, and confiscation of property, to denial of official registration rights. On May 12 of this year, Uzbekistan tightened its Criminal Code, making participation in an unregistered religious group a criminal offense, punishable by a fine equivalent to fifty times the minimum monthly wage or imprisonment of up to three years.

Mr. Speaker, these actions indicate that the policies of the Government of Uzbekistan toward religious groups are not moving in the right direction.

In fact, these initiatives are in direct violation to Uzbekistan's OSCE commitments, including Article 16.3 of the Vienna Concluding Document which states that "the State will grant upon their request to communities of believers, practicing or prepared to practice their