



United States Mission to the OSCE

Release of U.S. Religious Freedom Report

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Kate Byrnes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 15, 2015

Yesterday, Secretary of State Kerry released the 2014 International Religious Freedom Report, highlighting that religious freedom is a pillar of U.S. foreign policy and national security strategy. The report is required by U.S. law, and is available on the State Department website.

Religious freedom is a source of stability for societies and a foundation for democratic governance. Repression of religious freedom undermines genuine stability and often exacerbates societal hostility, potentially leading to violence.

The United States welcomes the opportunity to engage with other participating States and civil society in an ongoing dialogue about the need to protect religious freedom - a universal human right - in line with our shared OSCE commitments.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.