

# International Summit to Address Increase in Religious Restrictions and Persecution Around the World

*As much as 80% of the world's population is affected by restrictions on religion or persecution. An international summit is being held to address these abuses.*

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, January 30, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Dedicated advocates of religious freedom are meeting in a global summit this week to help turn the tide of [religious persecution](#).

This two-day, in-person conference will be co-chaired by former US Ambassador-at-Large for International

Religious Freedom and former senator, Sam Brownback and Katrina Lantos Swett, President of the Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice. Honorary Congressional co-chairs both Democrat and Republican will join them. Congressman Mike McCaul (R-TX), Chairman of the



International Religious Freedom Roundtable meeting with diverse faith groups to work together to fight repression internationally

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*Rev. Susan Taylor, Church of Scientology National Affairs Office*

House Foreign Affairs Committee; Gregory Meeks (D-NY), Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee; and Senators Roger Wicker (R-MS) and Jacky Rosen (D-NV). Others sharing important remarks and viewpoints will be Taiwan's Legislative Yuan President, Mr. You Si-Kun; US Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, Rashad Hussain; US Commission on International Religious Freedom Commissioner, Congressman Frank Wolf; and UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Nazila Ghanea; as well as other Commissioners from the US Commission on International Religious Freedom.

Faith leaders from many organizations will share their thoughts and proposals including Baptists, Evangelical Christians, Catholics, Scientologists, Baha'is, Hindus, Falun Gong, Uyghurs


Muslims, and others.

“If we are to have religious freedom for everyone, everywhere, all the time, we need a strong and diverse coalition working towards this goal. With the power of congressmen and senators, backed by their constituents, we have a formidable force for change,” said Rev. Susan Taylor, Public Affairs Director of the Church of Scientology National Affairs Office in Washington, DC, who will speak at a breakout session on the importance of US Congressmen and Senators in bringing religious freedom to the rest of the world.


Over 900 faith and government leaders, academics and international lawyers are coming together in Washington, DC, for the third annual International Religious Freedom (IRF) Summit ([www.irfsummit.org](http://www.irfsummit.org)) to share the plights of those persecuted for their religious faith. At the same time, media from around the world, including the publication [Bitter Winter](#), give platforms to voices of the persecuted to save them from incarceration, concentration camps, murder and in many cases “disappearance”.

The issue of international religious freedom has been a top priority for many around the world including the US government as religious persecution touches every culture, every country, every political system. In fact, every faith is a minority in some part of the world and open to severe restrictions and abuses against their members.

During a Geneva conference in 2022, UN experts and the Special Advisor of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide noted that “The cynical abuse of religion or belief as a tool of discrimination, hostility and violence should be condemned by all actors at every level of society.” Their [joint statement](#) said, “The United Nations General Assembly designated 22 August



# IRF Summit 2023



Rev. Susan Taylor speaking at the International Religious Freedom Summit in 2022

as the International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief, deploring the widespread violations suffered by individuals, and persons belonging to minorities, who are targeted on the basis of their religion or belief.”

According to Pew Research Center, “Indeed, the latest data shows that 52 governments – including some in very populous countries like China, Indonesia and Russia – impose either “high” or “very high” levels of restrictions on religion, up from 40 in 2007. And the number of countries where people are experiencing the highest levels of social hostilities involving religion has risen from 39 to 56 over the course of the study.”

To address this, those attending the IRF Summit will seek to bring attention to persecution in these countries and seek to bring about solutions by increasing tolerance and respect for all faiths or no faith, helping to change the tide of persecution with government leaders as well as civil society.

Advocacy for religious freedom supports the ideals of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted in 1948, which includes freedom of religion in Article 18: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.” Although the UDHR is having its 75th anniversary this year and is one of the founding documents of the United Nations, the concept of freedom of religion is still not broadly recognized around the world. Information on the UDHR is available from United for Human Rights at [www.humanrights.com](http://www.humanrights.com).

The Church of Scientology has engaged, throughout its existence, in activities to promote and protect religious freedom around the world for everyone. Scientologists are dedicated to this principle as evidenced by their pledge to support freedom of religion for the good of all. For more information go to: [www.scientologyreligion.org](http://www.scientologyreligion.org)

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