

2021-2022

RFI IMPACT REPORT





Letter from RFI's President

In guaranteeing the right of “free exercise” of religion in the First Amendment, our Founders had two goals in mind: first, to protect an inalienable human right given to everyone by God; second, to ensure that religion remains at the center of American public life.

Advancing and protecting *free exercise* for all is also the goal of the Religious Freedom Institute (RFI).

In the American constitutional system, one of the duties of government is to protect the rights of all Americans to believe, or not believe, in religious truths. If they are believers, Americans have the rights of private worship and of public *exercise* of religion. Religious individuals and their communities have the right to engage in public life by creating faith-based institutions, such as schools, hospitals, and charities. They also have the right to engage in political life by contending for their religious views on justice, peace, equality, freedom, and the common good.

At RFI, we call this expansive vision of religious liberty—the Founders’ vision—*free exercise equality*. It has produced the most dynamic, compassionate civil society in the history of mankind. It has yielded tens of thousands of religious hospitals and schools and faith-based charities serving the poor and homeless, caring for orphaned and abandoned children, and providing hope for the desperate, including those incarcerated in our prisons.

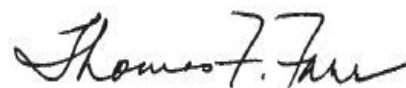
The American tradition of religious *free exercise* has also produced thousands of faith-based organizations that mold virtue and character among the young and old alike. It has led to hundreds of public policy institutions that educate state and federal officials on the value of religion and its presence in our lives as a people.

In short, *free exercise equality* has benefited this great land for more than two centuries, just as our Founders intended. Unfortunately, the free exercise of religion in the twenty-first century is under fierce assault by cultural and political elites who are using the power of the state to drive morally orthodox people of faith and their institutions to the margins of our society.

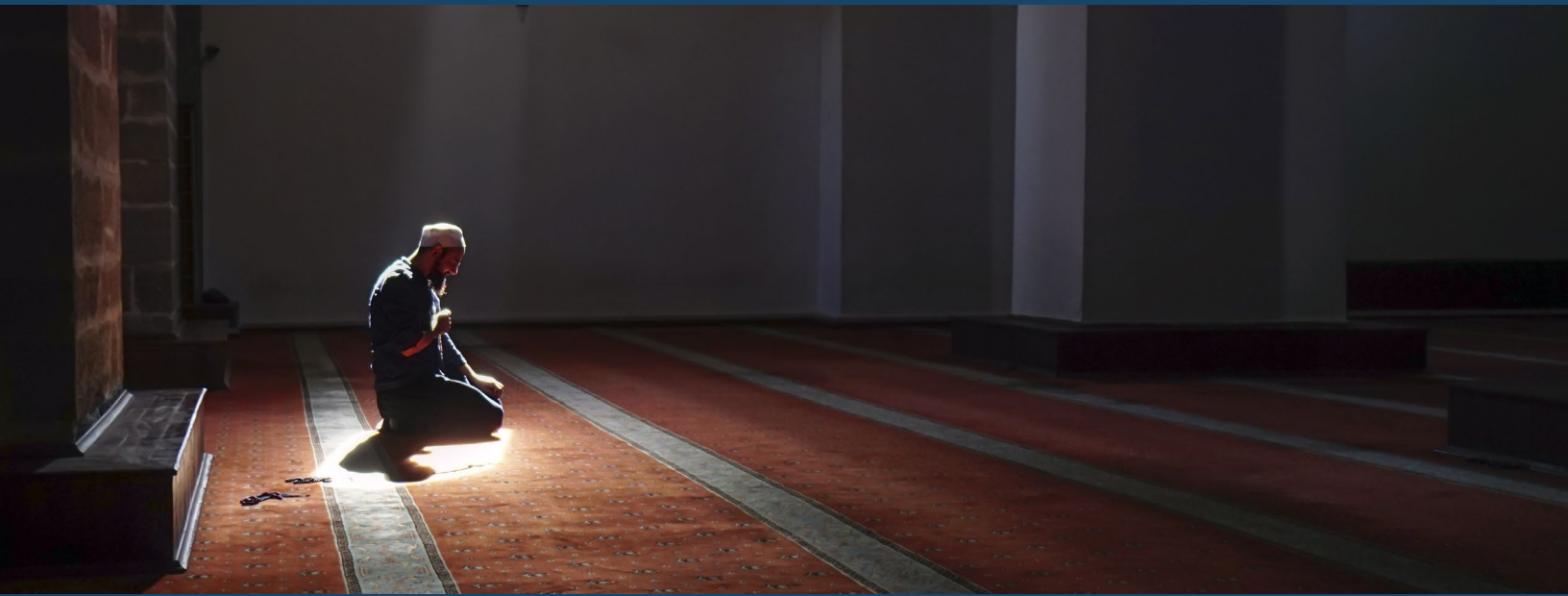
As always, RFI is committed to advancing religious freedom internationally amid what can only be described as a global crisis. Violent religious persecution, severe government restrictions, and rising social hostilities threaten religious freedom in every region of the world.

All the more reason then that we, as Americans, must retrieve our own historical model of religious freedom—to protect human dignity; promote stable, flourishing societies; and advance the common good. The stakes are high. If religious freedom is lost in America, it will be lost everywhere. We at RFI are privileged to lead this fight.

Faithfully,



Tom Farr
President



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A Brief History of RFI



2010

Tom Farr and Kent Hill conceive of a university-based project to examine the meaning and value of religious freedom. In 2011 the Religious Freedom Project is established at Georgetown University. Tim Shah joins the Project as Associate Director.

2013

Byron Johnson, Director of Baylor University's Institute for Studies of Religion, brings Baylor on board as a strategic partner.

2016

Hill, Farr, Shah, and Johnson create the independent Religious Freedom Institute. Together they represent over a century of experience in religious liberty. They decide to "put their experience on the ground" worldwide.

2018

Jeremy Barker joins RFI.

RFI names Ismail Royer as Director of its Islam and Religious Freedom Action Team.

RFI appoints David Trimble to lead its public policy and educational efforts.



RFI launches the Center for Religious Freedom Education, which Trimble directs.

RFI relocates its offices from Georgetown to Capitol Hill.

RFI names Eric Patterson Executive Vice President. Patterson previously served as Dean of the Robertson School of Government at Regent University and as Associate Director of Georgetown's Berkley Center.

RFI establishes an office in Iraq. Jeremy Barker, Director of RFI's Middle East Action Team, relocates to Erbil, Iraq.

RFI names Paul Marshall as Director of its South and Southeast Asia Action Team.

RFI names Nathaniel Hurd as Director of its North America Action Team.

RFI announces the nationwide expansion of its Center for Religious Freedom Education.

2019

2021

2022

Action Team Updates

North America Action Team





Nathaniel Hurd

Director of RFI's North America Action Team, is based in Washington, DC.

Experts

Six experts based in the United States and Canada, representing fields ranging from theology, law, and public policy to bioethics and journalism support the North America Action Team.

Brian Bird

Assistant Professor, Peter A. Allard School of Law, University of British Columbia



Andrew Bennett

Canada's first Ambassador for Religious Freedom and Program Director for Religious Freedom at Cardus



Daniel Mark

Assistant Professor of Political Science, Villanova University



John Scott Redd

President and Associate Professor of Old Testament, Reformed Theological Seminary in Washington, DC

Jennie Bradley Lichter

Deputy General Counsel, The Catholic University of America and former Deputy Director, White House Domestic Policy Council



Kathryn Jean Lopez

Editor-at-Large, National Review Online



Team Overview

RFI's North America Action Team defends and advances religious freedom primarily in the United States and Canada, where threats to religious freedom are multiplying. Most of these threats reflect significant shifts in understandings of God and the human person, and what leads to true freedom, equality, justice, and happiness. Foremost among the threats are ideologies of sexual expression, particularly in the areas of abortion, "sexual orientation," and "gender identity."

These and allied ideologies (such as "critical race theory") systematically target morally orthodox religious people and their institutions, including the family, to force orthodox Jews, Christians, Muslims, and others to violate their religious tenets or exit public life. RFI is countering these trends in culture, law, and policy by promoting the true meaning of the free exercise of religion as the American Founders guaranteed it in the First Amendment.

Activities

RFI's North America Action Team works on behalf of all American religious communities, with an emphasis on those committed to the dignity of the human person in matters of human sexuality, marriage, family, and the sacredness of human life. The Team develops, leads, and participates in coalitions of like-minded religious freedom experts and groups. It provides direct support to American religious institutions, investigates and reports on violence against them, works with U.S. congressional offices on key legislation, and employs video platforms to explain and defend religious freedom.

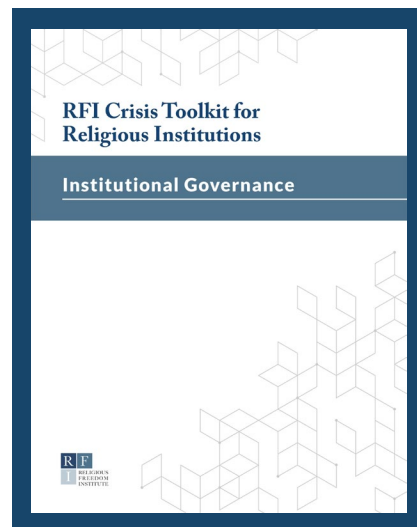
Achievements

- Retooled the North America Action Team to go on the offense against growing threats to religious liberty in the United States.
- Produced videos vividly highlighting threats to the religious freedom of morally orthodox individuals and institutions in the United States.
- Advanced religious liberty partnerships with highly effective organizations, including:

01	Alliance Defending Freedom
02	The Becket Fund
03	Coalition for Jewish Values
04	Ethics and Public Policy Center
05	Notre Dame Law School
06	Brigham Young University Law School
07	Catholic Playbook
08	Christian Employers Alliance
09	Napa Legal Institute
10	Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission
11	Catholic Education Partners
12	Institute for the Transformation of Catholic Education
13	Legatus
14	State Catholic conferences
15	U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

Key Initiative

- RFI released the *RFI Crisis Toolkit for Religious Institutions*, which guides religious institutions in preparing for, mitigating, and responding to legal and public relations crises while remaining faithful to their core convictions.
- Twenty-five religious institutions will pilot the Toolkit throughout 2022, implementing its recommendations and providing feedback on its applicability in their policies and practices.



Successes To Build On

Restoring America's First Freedom to its proper place in American public life will require institutional partners and extraordinary individual talent. In 2022, the North America Action Team brought on two skilled experts in the fields of law and journalism. Jennie Bradley Lichter, Deputy General Counsel at The Catholic University of America and former Deputy Director of the White House Domestic Policy Council, is RFI's first Senior Legal Fellow. Additionally, Kathryn Jean Lopez, Editor-at-Large for National Review Online, serves as RFI's first Senior Media Fellow.

Given the proximity of RFI's main office to the U.S. Capitol as well as Nathaniel Hurd's extensive congressional experience, the North America Action Team works with key congressional offices to ensure that staff and Members are informed about domestic and international developments that have religious freedom implications. Senate offices regularly consult Hurd and RFI Vice President for Public Policy David Trimble as subject matter experts on relevant legislation, regulations, and political appointments.

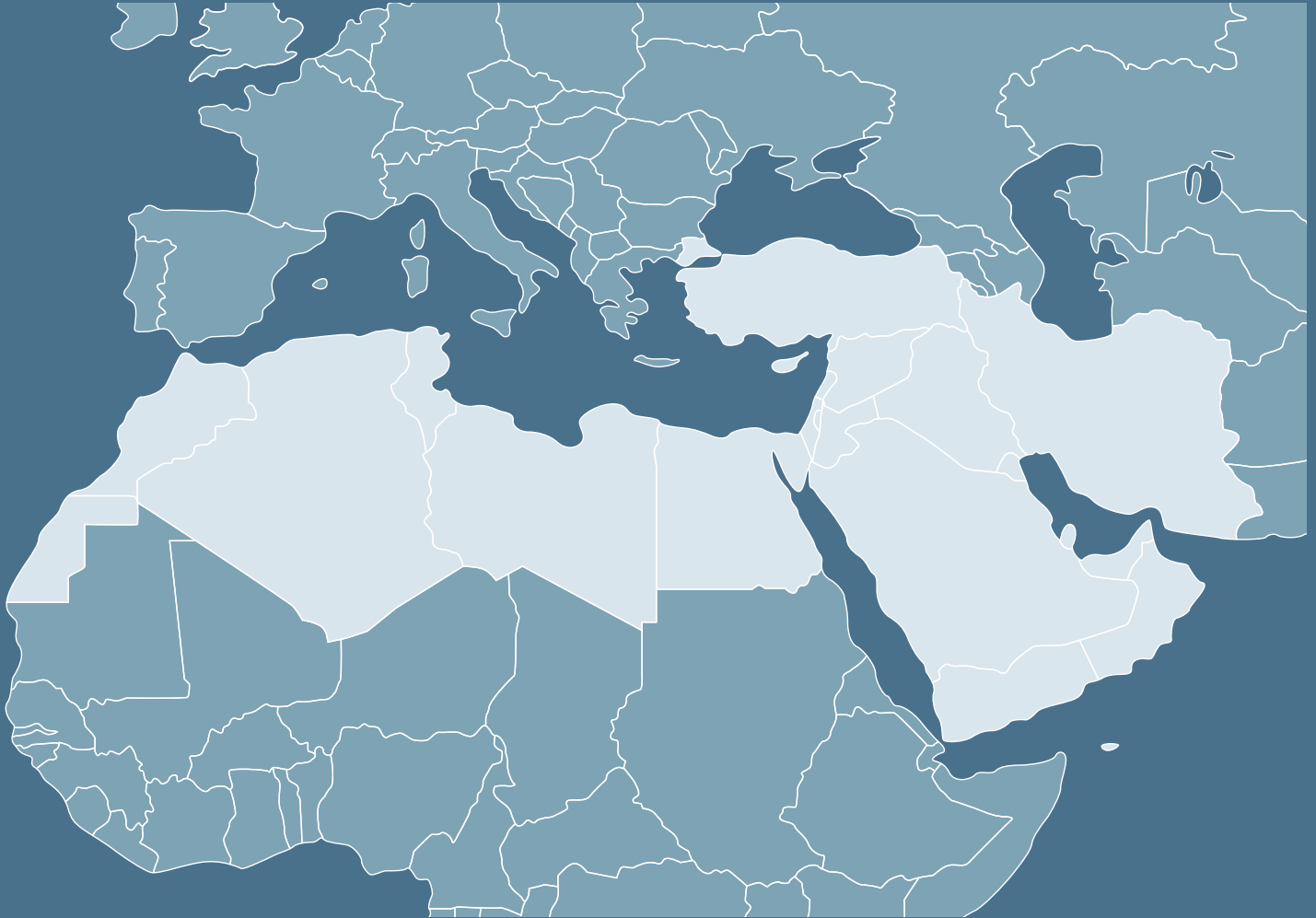
Looking Ahead

Tracking and countering ongoing, violent attacks on Catholic parishes and monitoring and documenting excessive government COVID-19 restrictions on religious gatherings or clergy access to the sick and dying, are among the North America Action Team's growing areas of focus.

RFI is creating a series of short videos featuring high-profile people of faith testifying about living out their religious convictions in all areas of life. This series demonstrates that religious liberty is not only about hotly contested legal cases but rather the freedom of real people to exercise their faith without coercion or intimidation.

The North America Action Team will adjust the *RFI Crisis Toolkit for Religious Institutions* based on its pilot program and market the Toolkit to religious institutions throughout the United States.

Middle East Action Team



Jeremy Barker

Director of RFI's Middle East
Action Team, based in Iraq.



Miles Windsor

Senior Manager for
Strategy and Campaigns,
Middle East Action
Team, based in the United
Kingdom



Lena Abboud

Senior Manager for
Research and Policy,
Middle East Action Team,
based in Lebanon

Experts

Six experts based in the United States and
abroad support the Middle East Action Team.



Salah Ali

General Coordinator,
Iraq Religious Freedom
and Anti-Discrimination
Roundtable



Farahnaz Ispahani

Former Member of the
Pakistani Parliament and
Advisor to the President of
Pakistan from 2008–2012

Ahmet Kuru

Bruce E. Porteous
Professor of Political
Science, San Diego State
University



AJ Nolte

Assistant Professor of
Government, Regent
University's Robertson
School of Government



Charles M. Ramsey

Resident Scholar, Baylor
University Institute for the
Studies of Religion



Nilay Saiya

Assistant Professor
of Public Policy and
Global Affairs, Nanyang
Technological University,
Singapore

Team Overview

RFI's Middle East Action Team advances religious freedom throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia. Amid tremendous adversity, the Team is equipping and mobilizing young people, community and religious leaders, and government officials to understand and promote religious freedom in their own spheres of influence. Nowhere is the global crisis of religious freedom more evident than in the Middle East.

Activities

The Middle East Action Team provides RFI's arguments and research to elites and the general public in countries as diverse as Iraq, Egypt, and Algeria. The Team builds coalitions with regional partners (religious and civil society leaders) to disseminate data and facts, monitor key trends, conduct trainings, and mobilize action within societies across the region. The Middle East Action Team advises Western and Middle Eastern policymakers on opportunities to strengthen religious freedom. Barker and his team are also reaching young people in the region on a massive scale through a social media campaign highlighting religious freedom as essential to a more peaceful and promising future.

Achievements



Trained and mobilized more than **250 government officials, scholars, religious leaders, and others** throughout the region.



Authored or co-authored 3 major reports in addition to publishing 3 scholarly papers, writing **17 op-eds and blog posts**, appearing in **6 television interviews**, renewing the “Middle East File” (a biweekly newsletter), and launching a podcast by the same name.

Key Initiative

The Middle East Action Team's "We Are United" campaign has reached more than **2.5 million people** on social media. Since November 2021, this grassroots, region-wide campaign has promoted religious freedom through moral and pragmatic arguments that urge governmental and non-governmental actors in the Middle East and North Africa to stop persecuting their fellow citizens of differing religious backgrounds. "We Are United" translates RFI's core messaging into the languages and cultures of the region.



Successes To Build On



I came to understand better the importance of cooperation, tolerance, and camaraderie in overcoming challenges to multi-faith coexistence in the Kurdistan region of Iraq.

— Professor at Zakho University (Iraq)
after attending an RFI roundtable discussion



I built meaningful relationships with other attendees and heard from speakers who displayed great expertise in religious freedom and who provided practical approaches for advancing religious freedom for all.

— Member of the Kurdistan Parliament
at a Middle East Action Team gathering

Thousands of people have been killed in my country merely for their identity or their name. Protecting religious freedom in Iraq means protecting life.

— Iraqi imam attending an RFI event

Looking Ahead

In 2022, the Middle East Action Team is expanding its training programs to reach more than 3,000 students and leaders to equip and mobilize them to promote the fundamental right of religious freedom in their own communities.



“

In my country, religious freedom means life. It is not easy to live in a country where the authority and the community can't accept your beliefs or your rituals. So religious freedom is crucial for my country.

— Abdulghaffar, an Iraqi government official who went through an RFI-led religious freedom training program.

”

Islam and Religious Freedom Action Team



Ismail Royer

Director of RFI's Islam and
Religious Freedom Action Team

Yusuf Lenfest

Research Fellow who completed advanced training in Islamic
theology, jurisprudence, and legal theory with leading scholars
in Damascus, Tarim, the Hijaz, Abu Dhabi, and Mauritania



Team Overview

RFI's Islam and Religious Freedom Action Team builds on the robust sources of religious freedom found in the traditions of Islam. Ismail Royer, a Muslim convert who has studied religious sciences with traditional Islamic scholars and spent over a decade working at Islamic non-profit organizations, urges Muslims in America and abroad to recognize these sources and to put them into practice. American Muslims are potential allies in restoring the classical American social compact. The Islam and Religious Freedom Action Team dissuades American Muslims from appeals to identity politics and encourages them to embrace their distinct contributions to the common good.

Activities

The Islam and Religious Action Team delivers education programs, develops policy and legal resources, and authors a variety of articles for popular and elite media outlets. Under Royer's leadership, the Team makes Muslim scholarship accessible to broader audiences and encourages Muslims to promote religious freedom in both Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority settings.

Achievements



Since 2018, filed or joined **21 amicus briefs** before the U.S. Supreme Court and U.S. Courts of Appeals on behalf of religious individuals and institutions seeking to exercise their faith freely, among them *Carson v. Makin*, *Agudath Israel of America v. Cuomo*, and *Fulton v. City of Philadelphia*.



Convened a symposium at the **University of Chicago** titled, "What Happened to Virtue, the Common Good, and Pluralism? Teachings from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam," with more than 50 participants, including 25 leading orthodox Jewish, Christian, and Muslim scholars.



Hosted livestream events viewed by more than **6,000 people**.



Symposium: "What Happened to Virtue, the Common Good, and Pluralism? Teachings from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam" held at the University of Chicago, May 19-21, 2021.

Key Initiative

Launched the **Virtues Project**, which brings together leading Jewish, Christian, and Muslim scholars to explore classical traditions of virtue, rooted in the transcendent, as a potent antidote to America's deteriorating consensus on the common good. While this project is producing illuminating scholarship, its ultimate goals are to convert that scholarship into school curricula, training materials tailored to business environments, digital learning resources, and much more.



Looking Ahead

The Islam and Religious Freedom Action Team is a leading voice for the Muslim community in the United States. The Team is producing an academic volume and launching an online course to extend the work of its Virtues Project. Royer is developing a virtues curriculum for middle school students and providing virtues instruction for corporate training. The Team is also circulating video and written content for Muslim and non-Muslim media outlets with greater frequency than ever before. In 2022 alone, Royer has published pieces in *First Things*, *The American Conservative*, and *USA Today*.



“Including orthodox Muslims to participate in the event, rather than secular academics, was unique and valuable.”

— Dean of the University of Chicago Divinity School commenting on the Virtues Symposium

Testimonials

“I was amazed that the perspective of Orthodox Jews was included and taken seriously, which rarely happens in academia.”

— Jewish scholar attending the Virtues Symposium



National Center for Religious Freedom Education

David Trimble

Director of the National Center for Religious Freedom Education



Jim Bennett

Associate Director, National Center for Religious Freedom Education



Experts

Three experts in the fields of law and education support RFI's National Center for Religious Freedom Education.



Andrew Kubick

RFI Research Fellow for Bioethics and Medical Conscience

Andrew Graham

Senior Counsel for Academic and Professional Affairs, Alliance Defending Freedom



Timothy Hall

Vance County Schools Program Coordinator, K-12 Social Studies Instructional Specialist, and Program Administrator



University students hear from USAID officials as part of RFI's *Statesmanship and Religious Freedom Seminar*.



RFI's David Trimble (left); Professor Steven Collis, University of Texas School of Law; Professor Richard Garnett, University of Notre Dame Law School; and Dr. Larry Taylor, President of the Association of Christian Schools International (right) speaking during an event celebrating the expansion of RFI's National Center for Religious Freedom Education held May 5, 2022 in Washington, DC.



University students participate in RFI's Statesmanship and Religious Freedom Seminar in Washington, DC.



U.S. Congressman Chris Smith (NJ-04) greets student after speaking at an RFI event.

Team Overview

RFI's National Center for Religious Freedom Education delivers high-impact educational resources and initiatives that foster a proper understanding of religious freedom among America's current and future leaders. Religion is often denounced as backward or even bigoted in America today, and religious freedom is regularly disparaged as a result. If religious freedom is to be returned to its rightful place in American society, the gateway is education. The National Center partners with students, teachers, professors, academic leaders, and institutions as it promotes America's First Freedom in a culture that is increasingly antagonistic to the faith traditions of so many.

Activities

The National Center develops and distributes curriculum anchored in the genius of America's Founders, who understood that the fundamental principle of religious freedom is rooted in human nature and meant to be enjoyed by everyone. The National Center also directs RFI's highly successful internship program, and teaches and trains a variety of audiences, including religious leaders, government officials, young professionals, scholars, educators, and students. Advancing religious freedom scholarship through research and publication partnerships also remains a priority for the Center.

Achievements



Trained **300 government officials and civil society leaders** in the United States, Poland, Iraq, Latin America, and elsewhere.



Worked with about **30 partners** across the education, healthcare, and religious freedom sectors.



Assisted with **passage of medical conscience rights bills** in Arkansas, Ohio, and South Carolina.

Expanded the impact of all major programs, including:



America's First Freedom Curriculum: Junior and senior-level high school instruction applicable in public, private, and homeschool settings that is designed to help students understand why religious freedom is fundamental to a stable and flourishing American society.



Statesmanship and Religious Freedom Seminar: A program offered in Washington, DC, Philadelphia, and the United Kingdom to educate highly motivated undergraduate students about the meaning and value of religious freedom, introduce them to the role that religious liberty plays in a free and flourishing society, and highlight the role that key historical figures have played in protecting this basic right.



Foundations of Religious Liberty Series: Student-focused program designed to equip high-achieving university students with the fundamental philosophical principles they need to understand and defend religious freedom's crucial role in culture and law.



Medical Conscience Rights Initiative: A joint effort of RFI, Alliance Defending Freedom, and Christ Medicus Foundation to advance state-level legislation that protects the conscience rights of healthcare providers. The Center educates healthcare practitioners, hospital administrators, state legislators, and religious leaders on the importance of medical conscience rights and what these rights entail.

Key Initiative

The National Center's educational programs reached more than **3,800 students** from nearly **100 different schools and universities**, ranging from elementary school children in Poland to university students in Iraq and the United States.

Looking Ahead

The Center is increasing its capacity as America's leading provider of religious freedom educational resources and programs. RFI announced the National Center's expansion at a major event in May 2022, which includes ramping up its university partnerships, K-12 student programs, and strategic relationships abroad. For example, in March 2022, RFI entered into a partnership agreement with the Catholic University of Erbil (CUE) in Iraq to bring RFI's vision of religious freedom to CUE students, members of the broader university community, and beyond.

The National Center is on track to train more than 8,000 students from America and around the world in 2022.



In February 2022, RFI's David Trimble signed an MOU with Archbishop Bashar Warda, Chancellor at the Catholic University of Erbil in northern Iraq.

Student Testimonials



Former RFI interns



Testimonials

“Religious freedom is necessary for a society to prosper... Without religious freedom our hearts and our souls would never be at rest. Not only does religion bring truth into our lives, but it also contains morals, which guide us on the journey of life.”

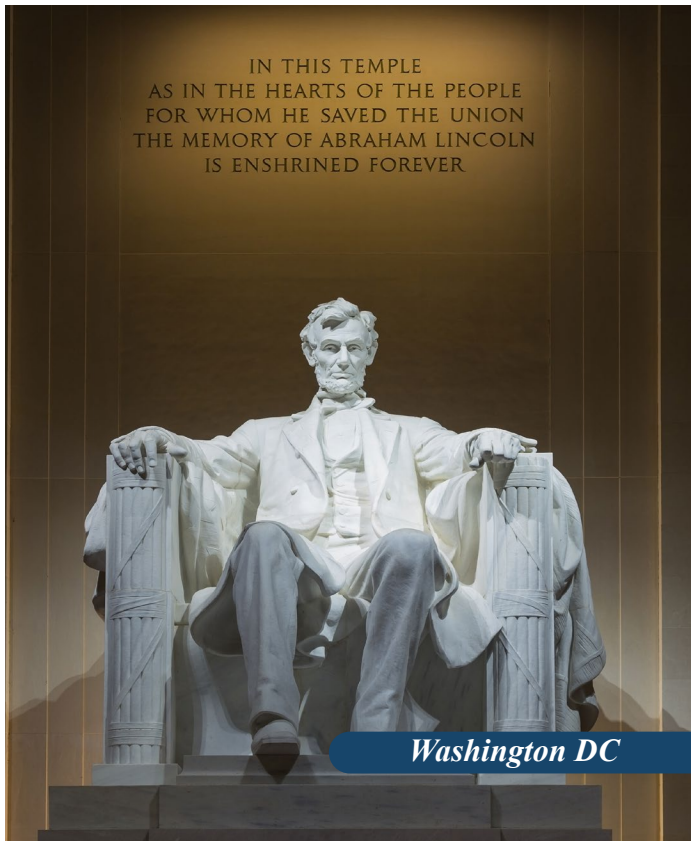
— High school student who studied RFI’s *America’s First Freedom Curriculum*

“At the Religious Freedom Institute, one will quickly learn that religious freedom is more than a campaign tactic.... In a time of great division, the Religious Freedom Institute elevates a cause that unites people. This is why I chose RFI.”

— University student who attended an RFI-led religious freedom seminar



Locations of Statesmanship and Religious Freedom Seminar



South and Southeast Asia Action Team





Paul Marshall

Director of the South and Southeast Asia Action Team

Experts

Five experts based in the United States and South and Southeast Asia support the Action Team.



Farahnaz Ispahani

Former Member of the Pakistani Parliament and Advisor to the President of Pakistan from 2008–2012

Robert Hefner

Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Institute on Culture, Religion, and World Affairs at Boston University



Charles M. Ramsey

Resident Scholar, Baylor University Institute for the Studies of Religion



Yamini Ravindran

Attorney-at-Law and Director for Legal and Advocacy for the Religious Liberty Commission for the National Christian Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka



Eugene Yapp

Director of Religious Freedom and Liberty Partnership of Malaysia



Team Overview

South and Southeast Asia is home to one-third of the world's population. It is linguistically, culturally, and religiously diverse. This vast region presents both extreme challenges for religious freedom and useful examples of pluralistic harmony. Led by Paul Marshall, Wilson Professor of Religious Freedom at Baylor University, the South and Southeast Asia Action Team collaborates with local communities and organizations to put solutions into action to counter the many regional challenges.

Activities

The South and Southeast Action Team publishes scholarly and popular works that address key threats to religious freedom in this region. The Team also engages with government officials, international organizations, and existing coalitions to advance religious freedom in Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and elsewhere. The exceptional group of experts supporting the South and Southeast Asia Action Team maintain important academic partnerships

with universities in the United States, such as Baylor University and Brigham Young University, researching and applying relevant religious freedom scholarship to countries for which they have unparalleled knowledge and experience.

Achievements



Published more than 20 books, scholarly essays, and popular articles providing expert analysis and policy recommendations on India, Indonesia, regional blasphemy laws, and the history of Muslim-Christian relations.



Participated in dozens of public engagements speaking about religious freedom threats and opportunities in Afghanistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Burma, among others.

Key Initiative

The South and Southeast Asia Action Team co-sponsored and shaped the agenda for an event titled, “Protecting the Social Space Needed To Optimize Religious Contributions to Society” convened in partnership with the Southeast Asia Freedom of Religion or Belief (SEAFORB) Network. SEAFORB members come from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds and stand together to promote freedom of religion



for everyone in the region. The event included speakers from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and other Southeast Asian countries and featured RFI Senior Fellow Eugene Yapp.



Successes To Build On

In 2020, RFI’s South and Southeast Asia Action Team published seven landscape reports documenting the religious freedom conditions in Bangladesh, Burma (Myanmar), Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. RFI promotes these reports among governmental, religious, and civil society leaders in the SEAFORB Network and a variety of other alliances and associations in the region.

Looking Ahead

The South and Southeast Asia Action Team will continue to forge strategic partnerships with influential figures in government, religious communities, and civil society who are well-placed to strengthen freedom of religion in their own spheres. For decades, Paul Marshall and his Action Team colleagues have cultivated deep connections in this region, positioning RFI to bring about measurable change “on the ground” in South and Southeast Asia.

International Religious Freedom Policy Action Team

Tom Farr

Director of the
International
Religious Freedom
Policy Action Team



Experts

Eight experts based in the United States and United Kingdom support the International Religious Freedom Policy Action Team.



Farahnaz Ispahani

Former Member of the
Pakistani Parliament and
Advisor to the President of
Pakistan from 2008–2012



Rehman Chishti

Member of the UK
Parliament since 2010 as
well as the British Prime
Minister's Special Envoy
for Freedom of Religion
or Belief from September
2019 to September 2020

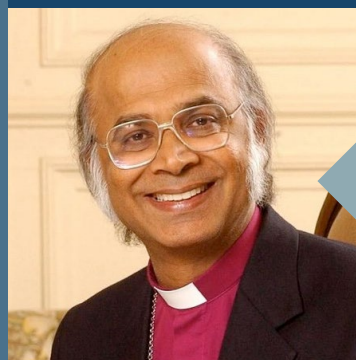
Graham B. Glover

Military Chaplain Fellow



Eric Patterson

RFI Executive Vice
President



Michael Nazir-Ali

A priest of the Ordinariate
for former Anglicans
within the Catholic
Church and President
of the Oxford Centre
for Training, Research,
Advocacy, and Dialogue



Stephen M. Rasche

More than 35 years of
experience in international
business and humanitarian
aid projects in high-risk
locales around the world and
author of *The Disappearing
People: The Tragic Fate
of Christians in the Middle
East*

William Saunders

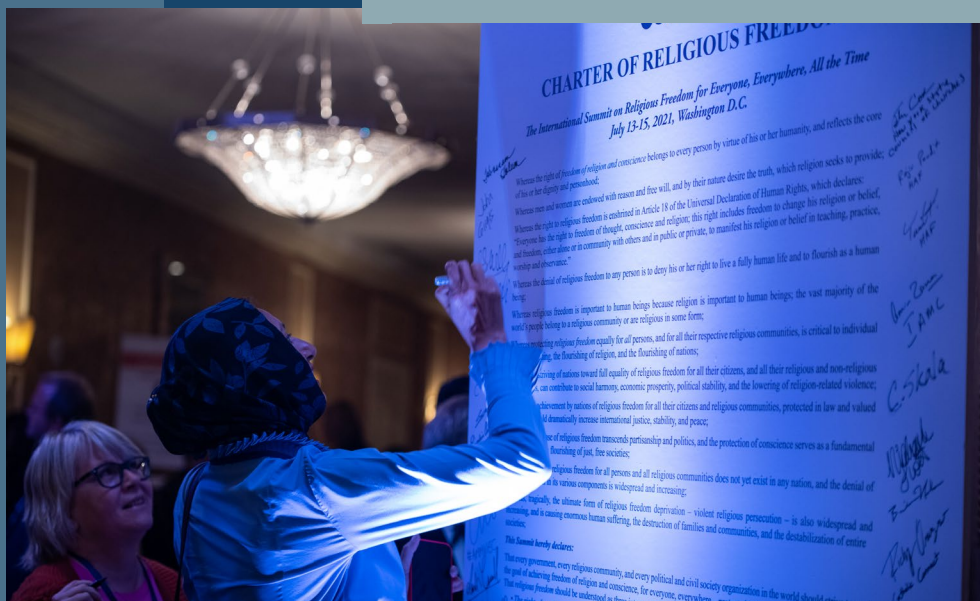
Law Fellow and Director
of the Program in Human
Rights, Institute for Human
Ecology, and Co-Director,
Center for Religious Liberty,
Columbus School of Law at
the Catholic University of
America



Todd Huizinga

RFI Senior Fellow for
Europe and U.S. diplomat
from 1992–2012





Team Overview

RFI's International Religious Freedom (IRF) Policy Action Team drives debate within Western democracies, especially in the United States and the United Kingdom, on why success in advancing religious freedom is in their respective national interests, and why their existing policies require reform. Led by RFI President Tom Farr, the IRF Policy Action Team fosters policy research and advocacy and trains diplomats, military chaplains, parliamentarians, and civil society leaders.

Achievements



Provided the Biden Administration with key recommendations on how to succeed in advancing religious freedom in U.S. foreign policy.



Added UK Member of Parliament Rehman Chishti as Senior Fellow for IRF Policy.



Played a formative role in the 2021 IRF Summit, which convened **more than 1,000 supporters of religious freedom** for joint deliberation and action.



Publicly supported the candidacy of Rashad Hussain as Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, and successfully urged key senators to support him.



Coordinated departure from Afghanistan of **more than two dozen Christian refugees** whose lives were endangered by the Taliban's return to power by drawing on relationships with U.S. and UK officials as well as faith-based partners in the region.



Provided **23 military programs** in 2021–2022, including a highly attended monthly briefing on “Religion & Religious Freedom in Eurasia” to the U.S. European Command led by RFI Senior Fellow Todd Huizinga.

Key Initiative

At the request of the Pentagon, RFI organized and shaped the **2022 International Military Chiefs of Chaplains Conference**. RFI Chaplain Fellow Major Graham Glover led the effort. RFI President Tom Farr gave the keynote address and Executive Vice President Eric Patterson delivered a major speech at the conference.

Successes To Build On

RFI has longstanding relationships with current and former U.S. and UK foreign policy officials and remains a trusted advisor to key government offices responsible for international religious freedom policy. The work of this Action Team relies on the credibility RFI maintains as a foremost expert in this field. RFI continues to attract leading figures such as Michael Nazir-Ali, who joined RFI in April 2022 as a Senior Fellow for International Religious Freedom Policy, and Stephen M. Rasche, who joined in January 2022 as Senior Fellow for International Religious Freedom in Conflict Regions.

Testimonials

“This conference was simply amazing, and I am grateful to RFI for the materials, speeches, and introductions to key religious freedom experts.”

— Senior European
Military Chaplain

“I have written two religious freedom laws in the last couple of years, and who did I turn to? RFI leadership. The expertise they bring is unparalleled.”

— U.S. Congressman
Chris Smith (NJ-04)



Above: RFI President Tom Farr testifying before the U.S. House of Representatives on religious persecution in China.

Below: Former RFI Military Chaplain Fellow Rev. Daniel L. Mode addresses Chiefs of Chaplains (U.S. Army, Navy, and Air Force) and RFI leadership on the intersection of national security and religious freedom.



Freedom of Religious Institutions in Society Project

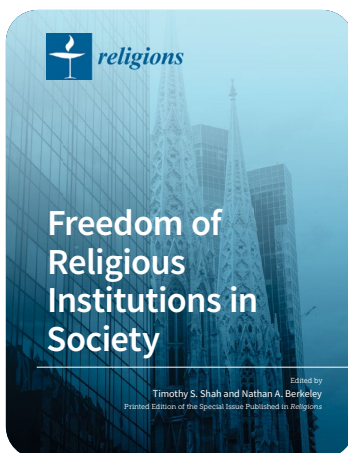
Project Overview

RFI's Freedom of Religious Institutions in Society (FORIS) Project was a 3-year, \$1.7 million initiative funded by the John Templeton Foundation to lead a first-of-its-kind international inquiry into the meaning and value of institutional religious freedom. Begun in 2019, FORIS distinguished individual from institutional religious freedom, exploring the right of houses of worship, religious charities, and other faith-based organizations to remain faithful to their core convictions in their internal and external practices. These associations make indispensable contributions to the common good because of, not despite, their religious character. FORIS also examined the deep connections between protecting institutional religious freedom and fostering social stability, economic dynamism, secure democracy, robust civil society, and just governance.

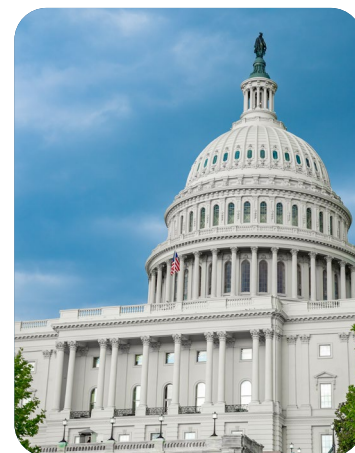
Achievements



Five FORIS scholars led an RFI event at the IRF Summit titled, "Neutralizing the Harm of Blasphemy Laws: A Religious Freedom Problem."



Led a series of meetings with U.S. officials, the British Ambassador to the United States, and NGO leaders to discuss the importance of institutional religious freedom. RFI provided FORIS policy reports and recommended policy changes to protect religious institutions.



Convened a series of meetings with U.S. officials (e.g., in Congressional and State Department offices), the British Ambassador to the United States, and NGO leaders to discuss a range of issues pertinent to FORIS. During these meetings, RFI distributed copies of FORIS policy reports, highlighted select policy recommendations, and discussed other matters pertinent to the project.

Key Initiative

In 2021, the final year of the FORIS Project, RFI published five major reports authored by FORIS scholars:



- *America's International Religious Freedom Policy Must Account for Competing Local Definitions of Religion and the Common Good*
- *The Intersection of Blasphemy Laws & Institutional Religious Freedom: Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Turkey*
- *Western Societies Need Proactive Policies to Protect Institutional Religious Freedom*
- *Institutional Religious Freedom and the Common Good: Significance, Challenges, and Policy Implications*
- *Why People Need Religious Institutions and Why Religious Institutions Need Freedom*

Looking Ahead

FORIS resources point to the critical importance of religious institutions in the United States and around the world. Faith institutions are inescapably visible and public in nature. They are a little-acknowledged agent of religious freedom but are often attacked. For example, Christian congregations in Algeria, U.S. religious adoption agencies, and Hindu temples in India, are highly vulnerable, and will remain so for the foreseeable future. Two ongoing RFI initiatives, in particular, draw from FORIS. First, the **Medical Conscience Rights Initiative** aims to protect the free exercise rights of religious healthcare practitioners

as well as faith-based hospitals, clinics, medical associations, and health insurance providers. Second, the **RFI Crisis Toolkit for Religious Institutions** applies FORIS principles by strengthening religious institutions seeking to remain faithful to their religious convictions amid growing threats in the United States. Other RFI efforts will draw upon FORIS's rich scholarship and resources.

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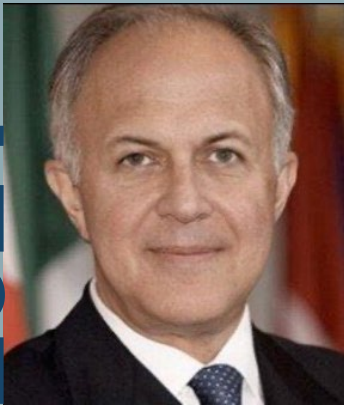


Sarah Hibbs
Events and Office Manager

Defender of Religious Freedom Awards Recipients

RFI's Defender of Religious Freedom Award is given annually to an individual who, from within his or her own faith tradition, defends religious freedom for everyone, everywhere. Past awardees include:

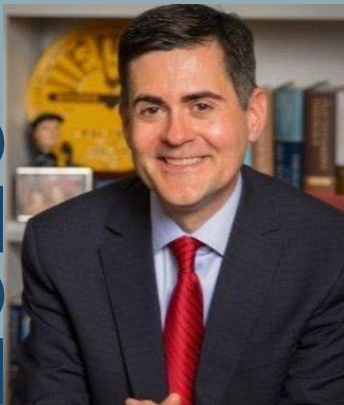
2021



Carl A. Anderson

Former Supreme Knight for the
Knights of Columbus

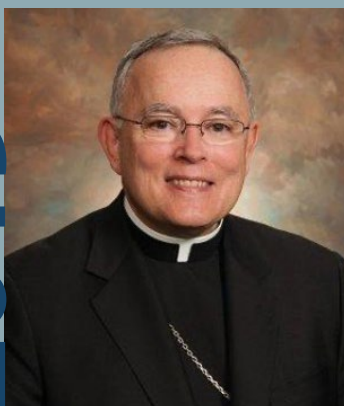
2020



Russell D. Moore

Former President, Ethics and
Religious Liberty Commission
and current Public Theologian at
Christianity Today.

2019



Charles J. Chaput

Archbishop of Philadelphia



Kristen K. Waggoner, General Counsel of Alliance Defending Freedom, Carl A. Anderson, former Supreme Knight for the Knights of Columbus, and Tom Farr, RFI President



Remarks by 2021 award recipient Carl A. Anderson

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