

Tony Perkins Named Commissioner of Major Religious Freedom Org

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) today announced the appointment of Family Research Council (FRC) President Tony Perkins as the newest commissioner for the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, for a two-year term. Mr. Perkins will remain FRC president during his time with USCIRF. Majority Leader McConnell appointed Perkins to the independent, bipartisan U.S. federal government commission, which is tasked with reviewing “the facts and circumstances of religious freedom violations and makes policy recommendations to the president, the secretary of state, and Congress.”

USCIRF Commissioners are appointed by the president and the congressional leadership of both political parties.

In recent years Mr. Perkins has taken a direct and active role in advocating for religious minorities helping to bring national and international attention to their plight. He has testified before Congress on the topic of international religious freedom on multiple occasions.

FRC President Tony Perkins released the following statement:

“I am grateful to Majority Leader McConnell for appointing me to this prestigious position. From my post at USCIRF, I look forward to doing all that I can to ensure that our government is the single biggest defender of religious freedom internationally. One immediate step our government can take in this regard is to make sure that the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act is fully and properly implemented. As a commissioner, I also look forward to working with willing partners among those nations on USCIRF’s list of

'Countries of Particular Concern' to substantively address religious freedom concerns, including at the grassroots level, and assist them in being removed from the list. It is my hope that through the work of USCIRF, the world will become one step closer to recognizing the vital role religious freedom and the defense of religious minorities play in peace, security and human flourishing."

The Honorable Frank Wolf, arguably our nation's most prominent international religious freedom advocate, senior fellow of the 21st Century Wilberforce Initiative and former U.S. congressman from Virginia, offered the following praise: "I'm extremely pleased that Tony Perkins has been appointed to USCIRF. I wholeheartedly support him as a USCIRF Commissioner, in which role I fully believe he will advocate vigorously for those of all faiths as a matter of international religious freedom. This is a fantastic appointment."

Zuhdi Jasser, president and founder of the American Islamic Forum for Democracy (AIFD), said: "As a former member of USCIRF (2012-2016), and having worked with Tony Perkins for many years, I am confident that his clarity and courage in the advocacy of religious freedom and universal human rights will be an outstanding addition to the mission of USCIRF and its vitally important work across the world in these difficult times. Tony is an American patriot who will surely bring to USCIRF a wealth of experience, dedication and passion for international religious freedom issues."

Meriam Ibrahim is a Sudanese Christian who was sentenced to death for apostasy and spent months in a notoriously rank Sudanese prison with her toddler son and newborn daughter. She was released from imprisonment in July 2014, in part through the efforts of Perkins advocating on her behalf. She commented on his appointment to USCIRF: "I want to thank Tony Perkins for all of his efforts on my behalf and the persecuted around the world. If it wasn't for God, Tony and those working for religious freedom, I wouldn't be free today. I am excited that

Tony will be serving in this new role.”

Tina Ramirez, president of Hardwired, said: “Tony has been a great champion for persecuted believers around the world, using his voice to help bring freedom and dignity to people like Meriam Ibrahim of Sudan among many others. I am encouraged to hear that he will be joining the Commission and bringing his deep well of compassion and commitment for the persecuted and their freedom to it. His voice will help propel the Commission into a new season of growth and excellence.”