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CSW Welcomes Call for Stronger Action to Protect Religious Freedom

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) welcomes a new report by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on International Religious Freedom, which calls on the government to redouble its efforts to ensure that people around the world are free to follow the religion or belief of their choice.

The report has been written by prominent academics from leading UK universities and draws on testimony delivered to MPs and Peers by representatives from a range of organizations, including CSW, as well as leading Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Sikh and Hindu groups.

The chairman of the Parliamentary Group, Baroness Berridge, calls for the UK to use its influence to further the protection of religious freedom worldwide, which can help to bolster stability in some of the most dangerous places in the world and ultimately protect national security.

After analyzing the state of religious freedom in the world today and the avenues available to protect it, the report makes specific recommendations. These include the appointment of a roving Ambassador for Religious Freedom, and taking steps to ensure that overseas organizations funded by the Department for International Development have a proper understanding of freedom of religion and belief.

Baroness Berridge, Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on International Religious Freedom, said, "This is the most exhaustive report ever produced by a Parliamentary group on the rise of a very disturbing trend of religious persecution. It is a basic human right that any man or woman should be able to follow the religion of their choice, change their religion, or eschew religion altogether. We look forward to hearing the Government's response to these recommendations, and assisting in any way we can to achieve them."

The APPG report comes days after the European Union (EU) published new [Guidelines on Freedom of Religion or Belief](#), aimed at enabling the EU to have a systematic, coordinated approach to addressing violations of this right and preventing future incidents around the world.

CSW's Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, "We welcome the Parliamentary Group's engagement with the issues affecting international religious freedom. We hope the government

will engage fully with the recommendations in this report and seek to defend and promote the right to freedom of religion or belief as part of its wider human rights agenda.”