

# CANADA 2018 INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REPORT

## Executive Summary

The constitution guarantees freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief, opinion, expression, and the right to equal protection and benefit of the law without discrimination based on religion. The government does not require religious groups to register, but registered groups receive tax-exempt status. In June the Supreme Court held that the law societies of British Columbia and Ontario had the authority to refuse accreditation to a Christian law school that required students to sign a strict code of conduct. The court ruled it was permissible to limit religious freedom to ensure equal access for all students and the diversity of members of the bar. In January an Ontario court affirmed the constitutionality of provincial regulations requiring doctors to refer patients seeking services such as assisted death, abortion, or contraception to another practitioner in circumstances where the physicians object to providing the services on religious or moral grounds. In June a Quebec court indefinitely extended the suspension of the previous Quebec provincial government's prohibition of religious face coverings when providing or receiving provincial government services. In June the British Columbia Supreme Court sentenced two convicted polygamists to house arrest plus a year of probation and community service. The two men stated the conviction violated their religious beliefs. In November Prime Minister Justin Trudeau formally apologized for the government's 1939 decision to turn away a ship with more than 900 Jews fleeing the Nazis.

Reports continued of anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic activity, including cases of violence, hate speech, harassment, discrimination, and vandalism. According to Statistics Canada's hate crime statistics for 2017, the number of religiously motivated police-reported hate crimes was 83 percent higher than 2016, increasing to 842 cases. In 2017, the most recent year for which there were statistics, the B'nai Brith Canada League for Human Rights reported in its annual Audit of Anti-Semitic occurrences there were 16 cases of anti-Semitic violence nationwide and 327 reports of anti-Semitic vandalism. In July police arrested two men for a violent attack on a Muslim man. In January on the one-year anniversary of a shooting at a Quebec mosque, police investigated hate messages posted on the walls and door of an Ottawa mosque.

The Ambassador, embassy and consulate officials, and other U.S. government officials raised respect for religious freedom and diversity with the national and provincial governments. Embassy officials discussed strategies to combat

religious intolerance through engagement with religious leaders, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and religious minority groups. The embassy sponsored and participated in public programs and events encouraging interfaith dialogue and freedom of religion. In January the Winnipeg Consul General and consulate staff visited the Islamic Social Services Agency to promote interfaith dialogue and explore future opportunities for collaboration. The embassy amplified these activities through social media.

### **Section I. Religious Demography**

The U.S. government estimates the total population of Canada at 35.9 million (July 2018 estimate). According to the 2011 census, which has the most recent data available on religion, approximately 67 percent of the population self-identify as Christian. Roman Catholics constitute the largest Christian group (38 percent of the total population), followed by the United Church of Canada (6 percent), Anglican (5 percent), Baptist (1.9 percent), and Christian Orthodox (1.7 percent). Presbyterian, Lutheran, and Pentecostal groups each constitute less than 2 percent of the population. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Church of Jesus Christ) estimates its membership at 190,265. The Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (FLDS Church) estimates its membership at 1,000. Approximately 3 percent of the population is Muslim, and 1 percent is Jewish. Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, Scientologists, Baha'is, and adherents of Shintoism, Taoism, and aboriginal spirituality together constitute less than 4 percent of the population. Approximately 24 percent of the population lists no religious affiliation.

According to a survey released in September by the Angus Reid Institute, a public opinion research foundation, first- and second-generation Canadians were increasingly likely to follow a faith other than Christianity. According to the 2016 census, non-Caucasian, nonindigenous ethnic minorities constituted 22.3 percent of the overall population and adhered to a diverse range of religious practices. According to the 2016 census, which does not include religious affiliation, at least 20 percent of the country's population was foreign-born, the highest level since 1921. Approximately 1.2 million persons, or 3.5 percent of the population present in 2016, moved to the country between 2011 and 2016. Approximately 62 percent of these immigrants were from Asia and 13.4 percent from Africa; a significant percentage of those immigrants arrived from countries that generally adhere to religious beliefs different from the majority of native-born citizens.

### **Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom**

## Legal Framework

The constitution provides for freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief, opinion, and expression. Every individual is equal under the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law without discrimination based on religion. The law imposes “reasonable limits” on the exercise of these religious rights only where such restrictions can be “demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.” The law permits individuals to sue the government for “violations” of religious freedom. Federal and provincial human rights laws prohibit discrimination on the grounds of religion. Civil remedies include compensation and/or changes to the policy or practice responsible for the discrimination.

The law does not require religious groups to register, but the government grants tax-exempt status to religious groups that register as nonprofit organizations with the Charities Directorate of the Canada Revenue Agency. Nonprofit status provides such organizations with federal and provincial sales tax reductions, rebates, and exemptions. To gain and retain tax-exempt status, a group must be nonpolitical and undergo periodic audits. Charitable status also grants members of the clergy various federal benefits, including a housing deduction under the tax code, and expedited processing through the immigration system. The term “clergy” includes persons whose communities have licensed, ordained, or otherwise formally recognized them for their religious leadership and authority to perform spiritual duties and services within their religious organization. Individual citizens who donate to tax-exempt religious groups receive a federal tax receipt entitling them to federal income tax deductions.

The criminal code prohibits the practice of polygamy, which is an indictable offense subject to imprisonment of up to five years.

Government policy and practices regarding education, including regulation of religious schools, fall under the purview of the provincial, rather than federal, governments. Six of the 10 provinces provide full or partial funding to some religious schools.

Catholic and Protestant schools in Ontario, Alberta, and Saskatchewan retain the federal constitutionally protected right to public funding they gained when those provinces joined the federation. Other provinces either had no legally recognized denominational schools that qualified for such protection at the time of federation or accession, or they subsequently secured a federal constitutional amendment to

terminate religious education funding rights and introduce an exclusively secular publicly funded education system. Federal statutory protection for Catholic and Protestant publicly funded minority education exists in the Yukon, Nunavut, and Northwest Territories, which do not have provincial status. Constitutional or federal statutory protection for public funding of religious education does not extend to schools of other religious groups, although British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Quebec offer partial funding to religious schools of any faith that meet provincial scholastic criteria. The law permits parents to homeschool their children and to enroll them in private schools for religious reasons.

The country is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

### **Government Practices**

In June the federal Supreme Court held in a pair of companion cases that the law societies of British Columbia and Ontario had properly refused accreditation to a Christian law school, Trinity Western University (TWU), which planned to require its students to adhere to a code of conduct prohibiting them from engaging in sexual relations outside of heterosexual marriage. The law societies regarded the TWU policy as an inequitable barrier on entry to the law school. In one decision, the Supreme Court noted that “limits on religious freedom are often an unavoidable reality of a decision-maker’s pursuit of its statutory mandate in a multicultural and democratic society,” and that “religious freedom can be limited where an individual’s beliefs or practices harm or interfere with the rights of others.” In affirming the decisions of the law societies as reasonable, the court held that, “Given the significant benefits to the statutory objectives [of law societies, which the court found have an obligation to ensure equal access to legal education and a diverse bar, among other things] and the minor significance of the limitation on the *Charter* rights at issue [i.e., freedom of religion], and given the absence of any reasonable alternative that would reduce the impact on *Charter* protections while sufficiently furthering those objectives..., the decision made by [the law societies] represented a proportionate balance.” A self-described faith-based Christian think tank criticized the decisions as an impingement on public expressions of faith. Because the country’s law schools require the approval of provincial law societies to operate, the rulings prevented the law school from opening as planned in 2019. In August TWU eliminated its sexual code of conduct for all of its students, but it continued to make it mandatory for faculty, staff, and administrators. At the end of the year, it was unclear whether it would pursue accreditation again for its proposed law school.

In January the Ontario Superior Court found that Ontario doctors with a moral or religious objection to “the provision of abortions,” providing “medical assistance in dying,” or assisting patients with “other medical treatments such as contraception, fertility treatments, pre-natal screening and transgender treatments” must refer patients to another doctor who would be willing to do so. In two separate cases, medical professionals and affinity groups had challenged the province’s requirement that physicians opposing such treatment on moral or religious grounds make an “effective [active] referral” to another medical provider for patients who seek the service. Under Ontario’s regulations, physicians failing to make such referrals could face sanctions up to and including the loss of their medical license. The physicians said the requirement infringed on their rights to freedom of religion and conscience under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The court, however, found that “the limit on objecting religious physicians imposed by the effective referral requirements of the Policies has been demonstrated to be justified under section 1 of the *Charter*. The goal of ensuring access to healthcare, in particular equitable access to healthcare, is pressing and substantial.” The court also found that “the [referral] requirements impair the individual applicants’ right of religious freedom as little as reasonably possible in order to achieve the goal.” Federal law permits assisted death but specifies that doctors have the right to freedom of conscience and the right not to perform or assist in providing the procedure. Ontario is the only province requiring referral directly to another individual physician. In May the Court of Appeal for Ontario agreed to hear an appeal brought by the physicians. The case remained pending at the end of the year.

In April a Montreal city councillor proposed that the city alter its uniform policy to permit its police officers to wear religious symbols such as the turban and hijab in an effort to attract ethnically diverse applicants to the force. The mayor of Montreal signaled her approval for the policy change. The federal Supreme Court ruled in 1996 that uniform modifications such as the one proposed by the Montreal councillor were permissible. Toronto police approved the wearing of turbans by Sikhs in 1986 and approved hijabs for Muslim women in 2011. In advance of a provincial election, the Coalition Avenir Quebec (CAQ) political party opposed the proposed rule change in Montreal and made its opposition part of the party’s election platform.

In June the Quebec Superior Court extended an injunction against a 2017 Quebec law banning individuals from wearing religious face coverings when providing or receiving government services. The court ruled that implementation of the law

would cause “irreparable harm to Muslim women.” In his ruling, the judge noted that sections of the legislation also appeared to violate Canadian and Quebec charters of rights that guarantee freedom of conscience and religion. Civil liberty and Muslim advocacy groups filed a constitutional challenge to the law in 2017 and requested an injunction to suspend implementation of the law. In December 2017, a Quebec Superior Court justice issued a temporary stay against implementation of the law, which the June ruling extended indefinitely pending a ruling in the case.

The CAQ made a ban on the wearing of religious symbols part of its election platform and won provincial elections in October in Quebec. On October 2, the then premier-designate of Quebec stated that, once in office, he planned to circumvent the injunction by invoking the federal constitution’s “notwithstanding” clause. The “notwithstanding clause” allows provincial governments to override specific rights in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms for five years.

In February the Quebec Appeal Court upheld the right of the provincial legislature to forbid individuals from entering the premises with a kirpan (sword or small dagger carried by Sikhs). The court ruled that the Quebec National Assembly had the right to establish its own rules in accordance with parliamentary privilege, which includes the right to “exclude strangers.” The presiding justice stated he made “no comment whether the assembly’s exercise of the privilege to exclude the kirpan is a wise decision.”

In June the British Columbia Supreme Court sentenced two convicted polygamists to house arrest, one year of probation, and community service. The two men, Winston Blackmore and James Oler, were practicing members of The FLDS Church. They challenged the 2017 convictions on the grounds the convictions violated their constitutional right to freedom of religion. In March the court found their prosecution for polygamy did not impermissibly infringe on their charter rights to religious freedom and freedom of expression, and rejected their appeal.

In September the Ontario elementary teachers union asked the courts to stop the provincial government from reverting to what it said was an outdated sex education curriculum and from implementing a “snitch line” for parents to anonymously report their concerns about sex education to the government. The newer version of the sex education curriculum preferred by the teachers contains references to sexting, same-sex relationships, gender identity, and masturbation, topics some religious groups opposed. After he took office in June, the new

premier suspended the new curriculum and required schools to revert to the former curriculum, which contained fewer controversial topics.

In September Quebec began teaching sex education, consistent with the curriculum taught in British Columbia and Alberta, to children as young as kindergarten. The Quebec Catholic Parents Association criticized the inclusion of sex education, stating the curriculum was inconsistent with Catholic teaching, particularly because of the Church's emphasis on marriage as being a union between a man and a woman. Participation in the sexual education curriculum is compulsory for all students except for a few specific circumstances, such as for children who have experienced a significant trauma.

In May the assistant deputy minister responsible for the Alberta Children's Services Child Intervention Division notified an evangelical Christian couple that the province had reversed its initial denial of the couple's adoption application. According to the Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms (JCCF), which represented the couple, the initial decision was based on the couple's religious beliefs. The JCCF noted that the couple began the adoption process in 2016 and decided they wanted to adopt an older child. In March 2017, the entity conducting their home study informed them in writing that it was not recommending them for adoption. The couple also received a copy of a home study report recommending the denial of the application because they would be unable to "help" a child with "sexual identity issues." In May 2017, the couple met with Alberta Child and Family Services (CFS) staff. According to JCCF, a CFS supervisor told the couple that CFS considered the couple's religious beliefs regarding sexuality to be a "rejection" of children with LGBTI sexual identities. The representative confirmed the denial of the adoption application. The JCCF filed an application on behalf of the couple for judicial review of the adoption decision. The legal challenge stated the province's rejection of the couple's application was unreasonable, arbitrary, and violated the couple's right to religious freedom under the constitution and the Alberta Human Rights Act. After the JCCF filed the legal challenge, the government of Alberta reversed its decision. It subsequently issued a statement that it "respects the rights and freedoms afforded to all Albertans under the Charter, including freedom of belief as well as equality rights. Families are not denied adoptions based on religious beliefs, and a diversity of belief systems can be found in the Alberta families and homes that have been approved to adopt a child."

Starting in January the federal government implemented a new requirement for applicants to the federal Canada Summer Jobs program, which subsidizes the cost

to private businesses and NGOs to hire students for summer work. For the first time, organizations were required to attest that their core mandate and the job for which they planned to use the federal funds respected the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, as well as other rights and associated case law. The attestation included language that such rights “include reproductive rights, and the right to be free from discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, race, national or ethnic origin, color, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression.” Some faith groups refused to sign, stating that the attestation would violate their beliefs and that it was discriminatory and violated their constitutional rights to freedom of religion and freedom of expression. At least 90 faith leaders issued a letter urging the government to drop the attestation. While the government rejected the applications of at least 1,400 private business and NGOs after they declined to sign the attestation, the government did approve the funding requests of a number of Catholic organizations. The employment minister stated the attestation was intended to single out job activities inconsistent with a citizen’s rights and not with the overall beliefs of organizations. She said an organization refusing to hire LGBTI individuals would not be eligible for funding; however, a religious-based group that might oppose abortion, but also served meals to the homeless, could hire students to plan and serve meals. A Toronto right-to-life group filed suit in federal court, seeking to enjoin the attestation. In June an Ontario cement company challenged the attestation in court. In July three Alberta companies also applied for judicial review.

In December the federal government made changes to the 2019 summer jobs application’s attestation, with new language focusing on activities the funds cannot be used for, rather than on the values of any given organization. Media reporting indicated there were approximately nine court challenges to the 2018 summer jobs application language pending at year’s end.

In January a Saskatchewan court ordered the government of Saskatchewan and the provincial Catholic School Boards Association to pay 960,000 Canadian dollars (\$705,000) toward the opposing public school board’s costs related to a decade-long case over whether the province could fund non-Catholic students to attend Catholic schools. The court ruled in 2017 that providing funding for non-Catholic students discriminated against secular schools and those of other religious groups in favor of Catholic education; it ordered the province to stop funding those students by the end of June. In June the Court of Appeals for Saskatchewan stayed the imposition of the funding order pending resolution of the appeals. At year’s end, appeals were pending regarding both the court’s substantive ruling and the assessment of costs.



In May the federal Supreme Court declined to intervene in a religious congregation's internal decision-making process. In a 9-0 decision, the court stated Alberta courts had no jurisdiction to review a Jehovah's Witnesses congregation's decision to "shun" (effectively bar) a member over his alleged drunkenness and verbal abuse. The individual had sued the Church in 2016, on the grounds his "disfellowship" was procedurally unfair and adversely affected his civil and property rights as a real estate agent whose clientele was largely composed of members of his former religious community. In its ruling, the high court found that no legal rights were at stake in the case, given the lack of a contractual relationship between the parties. The court also noted the purpose of judicial review was to ensure the legality of state decision making, which was not implicated in this case involving two private parties' actions.

In January the House of Commons released a report titled "Taking Action Against Systemic Racism and Religious Discrimination Including Islamophobia." The report was the result of a March 2017 private motion by a Liberal Party Member of Parliament condemning Islamophobia and all forms of systemic racism and religious discrimination, and which had directed a House of Commons committee to study the issue. When it passed, the motion drew criticism from some who said it singled out discrimination against Islam at the expense of other faiths. The report, however, contained only two recommendations related to anti-Islamic sentiment and focused more broadly on racism and religious discrimination. The two recommendations were that January 29 "be designated as a National Day of Remembrance and Action on Islamophobia and other forms of religious discrimination," and that the government should "actively condemn systemic racism and religious discrimination including Islamophobia." According to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, the report was intended as a mechanism for developing suggestions on how the government could reduce or eliminate racism and religious discrimination. The report was advisory and nonbinding. It made 30 recommendations but did not call for the passage of any new laws. In June the government issued a formal response recognizing the importance of combating all forms of systemic or institutional racism and religious discrimination, and affirming its commitment to advancing religious freedom in the pursuit of a more equitable and inclusive society.

On January 27, Prime Minister Trudeau issued a statement for International Holocaust Memorial Day, stating, "We must never forget humanity's capacity for deliberate evil and destruction, and the dangers of anti-Semitism, indifference, and silence in the face of atrocity." On April 11, the prime minister issued a statement

for Holocaust Memorial Day that reiterated the government's commitment to fighting anti-Semitism, racism, and all other forms of discrimination.

On January 29, Prime Minister Trudeau issued a statement on the first anniversary of the 2017 fatal shooting at the Centre Culturel Islamique de Quebec. In his statement, he noted, "The Government of Canada stands in solidarity with Canada's Muslim community. We will continue to fight Islamophobia and take action against it and all other forms of hatred and discrimination, and defend the diversity that makes Canada strong." Later that evening, the prime minister attended a vigil at the center and delivered additional remarks.

In November the federal government officially apologized to passengers, their families, and Jewish communities in Canada and around the world for the government's 1939 decision to turn away 907 Jewish refugees on the *MS St. Louis*, who were fleeing the Nazis. Cuba and the United States had previously turned away the ship, and it returned to Europe after Canada also rejected it. Upon its return, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, France, and Belgium accepted approximately half the passengers. Approximately 500 passengers returned to Germany; 254 of these passengers died in concentration and internment camps. Prime Minister Trudeau apologized for the *St. Louis* decision and for the country's anti-Semitic immigration policy that led to the occurrence. He extended his apology to Jewish victims of the Holocaust, to members of the country's Jewish community, and to all others who "paid the price of Canada's inaction."

In January the government submitted its first Country Report to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). The report covered the period 2011-17 and contained information on activities related to Holocaust education, remembrance, research, and Holocaust denial, and its relationship to anti-Semitism. The report said the government would continue to work closely with IHRA to promote Holocaust awareness and to further the global fight against anti-Semitism.

### **Section III. Status of Societal Respect for Religious Freedom**

During the year, there were reports of various acts directed at religious groups, in particular anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim actions, including physical violence, vandalism, hate speech, violence, and harassment. In November Statistics Canada released hate crime statistics for 2017. It reported the number of religiously motivated police-reported hate crimes was 83 percent higher in 2017 than 2016, reaching a total of 842. Hate crimes targeting Muslims increased 151 percent

(349), and hate crimes targeting Jews were up 63 percent (360). Statistics Canada reported hate crimes against Catholics and other religious groups also increased.

In March a defendant pled guilty to the 2017 killings of six men at the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec, according to media reports. The defendant said he planned the assault after hearing news that Canada was prepared to accept more refugees from Muslim countries. He said he believed that Muslims posed a threat to his family's safety. In June government prosecutors recommended the country's longest sentence in history, 150 years, but the court had not yet handed down the sentence as of the end of the year.

In July two men attacked a Muslim man in Mississauga, Ontario, as the man and his family were leaving a picnic. According to media reports, the assailants yelled religious and ethnic slurs at the family, before punching the victim in the face and kicking him when he fell to the ground. The victim suffered facial fractures and required surgery to stop brain hemorrhaging. Police investigated the case as a hate crime and arrested two men for assault. The case was pending as of the end of the year.

In February an Ontario Jewish community center received anti-Semitic hate mail similar to messages sent to several local synagogues in late 2017. The flyers said it was "Expulsion History Month," asked "how many times have you been expelled?" and called to "Expel the Jews to the Lake of Fire!" Police launched an investigation but made no arrests as of the end of the year.

In January on the one-year anniversary of a fatal Quebec mosque shooting, worshippers arriving at an Ottawa mosque found hate messages bearing white supremacist slogans and pictures of Hitler posted on the mosque door and walls, according to media reports. One of the posters bore the phrase, "There is no god but Hitler, and we are his prophets." Police investigated the hate messages but made no arrests as of the end of the year.

In 2017, the most recent year for which there were statistics, the B'nai Brith Canada League for Human Rights reported 16 cases of anti-Semitic violence. There were 327 reports of vandalism, including the painting of swastikas on buildings, up 107 percent from 2016, accounting for 19 percent of all anti-Semitic reported cases; other categories included harassment and violence. The league received 1,752 reports of anti-Semitic cases in 2017, compared with 1,728 cases in 2016. Approximately 80 percent of the occurrences (1,409) involved harassment.

The greatest number of reports (808) came from Ontario, where 13 of the cases involving violence occurred.

Media reported in April that residents of the Ontario town of Puslinch petitioned a provincial court to intervene in the proposed renaming of a street in their town called “Swastika Trail,” according to media reports. A group of residents launched a campaign in the fall of 2017 to change the name, based on its link to Hitler, the Nazi party, and white supremacy. Others objected, on the basis that they would incur personal expense to change the address on all of their personal documentation, and also on the grounds that the street was named in the 1920s, when they said the swastika was linked to peace. A local association sponsored a vote, and residents voted by a slim margin to keep the name. Two residents who supported the name change then sought judicial review; the case was pending at year’s end.

According to media reports, in January the Royal Canadian Legion in Tignish, Prince Edward Island, asked two Sikh men to remove their head coverings when entering Legion premises. The men explained they were wearing the items for religious reasons; they said authorities told them they must follow the Legion’s rules, regardless of their religious beliefs. Other patrons of the Legion reportedly told them they were not welcome in Canada and should return to their “own countries.” The president of the Tignish Legion subsequently apologized and committed to providing additional training and education for his staff to prevent similar occurrences from happening in the future.

According to an Angus Reid Institute survey, approximately 40 percent of the first- and second-generation respondents said Canada more fully respected religious freedom than did their home country; approximately 40 percent said it was at a similar level.

Numerous interfaith and ecumenical organizations at the national, provincial, and local levels continued to sponsor programs to foster respect for religious diversity, tolerance, and equal treatment for all religious groups. The groups included the Canadian Council of Churches, United Church of Canada, Catholic Church, the Salvation Army, other Protestant communities, as well as Jewish and Muslim associations. The Canadian Interfaith Conversation is a collaboration of 41 faith communities and faith-based organizations that collectively “advocate[s] for religion in a pluralistic society and in Canadian public life.” It spotlighted religious inclusion events held across the country throughout the year on its website.

#### **Section IV. U.S. Government Policy and Engagement**

The Ambassador, embassy and consulate officials, and other U.S. government officials raised respect for religious freedom and diversity with the national and provincial governments. Embassy and other U.S. government officials met with representatives from Global Affairs Canada's Office of Diversity and Inclusion to discuss issues of religious freedom in the country, including issues raised in this report.

Embassy and consulate officials conducted outreach to religious leaders, NGOs, and religious groups to discuss strategies for combating religious intolerance. In January the Winnipeg Consul General and consulate staff visited the Islamic Social Services Agency to discuss interfaith dialogue and future opportunities for collaboration. In March Toronto consulate staff attended an event sponsored by the Association of Progressive Muslims Canada that focused in part on promoting interfaith and intercommunity dialogue. The embassy and consulates amplified these events through social media and used their social media platforms to boost religious tolerance messages from senior Department of State officials in Washington.