

# Trump urged to appoint ambassador-at-large for global religious freedom

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FALLS CHURCH, Va.—The 21st Century Wilberforce Initiative is calling on President-elect Donald Trump to appoint an ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom in his first 100 days in office.

In an [open letter](#), the human rights and religious liberty organization also urges Trump to maintain the position of [special adviser for religious minorities](#) in the Near East and South/Central Asia.

The [21st Century Wilberforce Initiative](#) released the letter, dated Jan. 25, 2017, on Nov. 29 to allow people concerned about global religious liberty issues to endorse it [online](#).

## **Standing with religious minorities**

“We stand in solidarity with the many religious and ethnic minorities around the world facing persecution for their deeply held religious beliefs or commitment to no belief,” says the letter from Randel Everett, president of the 21st Century Wilberforce Initiative and former executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Everett cites a Pew Research Center finding that three-fourths of the world’s population live in places with high or very high persecution.

“People of all faiths—Christians, Muslims, Jews and Hindus included—face persecution that at times manifests itself both as heavy-handed government restrictions that try to control people and violent social hostilities that

undermine the rule of law,” the letter continues.

### **Examples of persecution**

The letter cites multiple examples of persecution, including the continued [genocide](#) of Christians and others in Syria by the Islamic State, increased anti-Semitism throughout Europe, blasphemy laws, tightened control over Tibetan Buddhists, attacks on secular bloggers in Bangladesh, Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar who are displaced and denied citizenship in their own country, and [minorities in Nigeria](#) who face famine created by Boko Haram.

“By nominating a new ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom in your first 100 days and maintaining the position of special adviser for religious minorities in the Near East and South/Central Asia, you not only signal your commitment to people of faith and freedom of conscience, you also do so in a way that requires no new taxes and no new legislation while strengthening what has been a highly effective office,” the letter to Trump states.

“As the first nation to constitutionally guarantee religious freedom, the United States has a great history of standing for this ‘first freedom’ around the world, a right closely tied to other human rights, economics and security. Your swift action in this regard would extend American leadership in this most critical of issues at this most pressing of times.”