The Prisoners of Conscience Working Group is organized under the International Religious Freedom Roundtable hosted by Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Sam Brownback. We aim to advocate on behalf of prisoners of conscience suffering violations of their religious freedom throughout the world in order to improve their conditions of confinement and ultimately secure their release.

The best way you as a member of Congress can help is by adopting a prisoner of conscience.

Who are prisoners of conscience?

Within the context of religious freedom, prisoners of conscience are individuals imprisoned for the peaceful expression of their religious beliefs, and who have neither used nor advocated violence. These are men and women who have been targeted not for crimes, but for pursuing their right to believe or not to believe.

Adopting a prisoner of conscience.

When members of Congress adopt prisoners of conscience, the world listens. Congressional support has helped secure the release of prisoners in many cases, as well as improve the conditions under which prisoners are held. By working with the Prisoners of Conscience Working Group, you will be able to draw attention to the cases of individual prisoners and hold their governments accountable for severe violations of religious freedom.

What you can do.

The Prisoners of Conscience Working Group will assist you with advocacy at every step of the way when you adopt a prisoner of conscience so that your advocacy will be as easy and effective as possible. Tools for advocacy may include highlighting the prisoner on your Congressional website or on social media, raising the prisoner’s story during speeches, direct engagement with the foreign government, sponsoring relevant legislation, and other appropriate means. We highly encourage you to include the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission’s Defending Freedoms Project as a key part of your advocacy, and to consider the Prisoners of Conscience Working Group as a primary resource.

We encourage you to adopt a prisoner of conscience. You have the opportunity to give a voice to those suffering in silence. With your voice, freedom for the persecuted is possible.