

stand together

A shared project for Christian minorities



## **#StandTogether to Defend International Religious Freedom**

**U.S. Embassy to the Holy See. Rome, April 3, 2019.**

The U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See, **Callista Gingrich**, and the Vatican Secretary of State, **Cardinal Parolin**, participated in a forum organized by the #StandTogether project and the U.S. Embassy.



Cardinal Parolin regrets that religious freedom continues to be threatened and that, therefore, the situation for many believers is far from improving. “A brief consideration of the numerous violations of religious liberty on the global stage and the appalling number of innocent persons that suffer persecution, because of their beliefs, including many Christians, should leave no doubt in our minds that we are dealing with an aggressive attack that strikes at the very core of the enjoyment of fundamental human rights.”

The Vatican Secretary of State also recalled the violation of religious freedom threatens the common good. “Despite so many efforts to promote and reinforce the fundamental human right of religious freedom, we are actually witnessing a continued deterioration, we might say even an assault, of this inalienable right in many parts of the world.”

The U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See, Callista Gingrich, highlight that the symposium “comes at an urgent time. Unfortunately, for millions around the world, religious freedom is currently under threat or restricted entirely. All of us across governments, civil society, faith organizations, and media must work together to advance and defend this cause.”

<https://www.romereports.com/en/2019/04/03/cardinal-parolin-religious-freedom-aggressively-attacks-fundamental-rights/>

The same event allowed presentations by the prefect of the Vatican Dicastery for Communication, **Paolo Ruffini**; the president of the Italian Aid of the Church in Need, **Alessandro Monteduro**, and the chairman of the #StandTogether project, **Roberto Fontolan**. All of them participated in a round table discussion focused on persecuted Christians' presence in the media. This forum was moderated by the Special Advisor for Religious Minorities in the U.S., **Knox Thames**.







We had another round table with the executive Secretary of the International Union of Superiors General (UISG), **Sr. Pat Murray**; the professor of Law & Religion, University of Milan and Catholic University of Leuven, **Dr. Silvio Ferrari**, and **Msgr. Khaled Akasheh**, Secretary Holy See Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. The moderator was the Special Advisor for Religious Minorities, U.S. Dept. of State, **Knox Thames**.

The event was well-attended by ambassadors to the Holy See, journalists and experts on the issue.

The fact that the U.S. Embassy hosted the event and the Vatican Secretary of State spoke demonstrated the importance of this topic. The aim of raising awareness about persecuted Christians among top representatives to the Vatican was a complete success.

