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Members of the IPPFoRB Network
Via e-mail: network@ippforb.com

Dear Friend:

I am writing to update you on the status of Canada's Office of Religious Freedom.

As you may be aware, the funding and mandate of the Office, and that of Ambassador Andrew Bennett, is set to expire on the 31st of March. The Government of Canada's 2016-2017 budget plan, tabled today, makes no mention of the Office or its renewal.

Our Official Opposition brought forward a motion in the House of Commons highlighting its good work, value for money and how it has improved Canada's reputation on the international stage. The motion also called on the government to extend the mandate of the Office. Unfortunately, the current government defeated the motion 225-90. The government has indicated that it would prefer to pursue a broader human rights focus rather than dealing specifically with religious freedom initiatives in areas of concern.

There is now a large void we will need to fill in defence of religious freedom around the world. I truly appreciate your partnership in tackling these issues and look forward to working with you going forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

David Anderson, MP
Cypress Hills – Grasslands
Official Opposition Critic for Human Rights and Religious Freedom