U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

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Prisoners of Conscience Statement

The United States is pleased to join the 27 members of the European Union and 36 other countries in co-sponsoring a declaration at the United Nations on the plight of prisoners of conscience. The Prisoners of Conscience Declaration, which was entered into the United Nations record and circulated to all member states on June 17, calls on all nations to work for the freedom of prisoners of conscience throughout the world in accordance with the principles set forth sixty years ago in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. The declaration commits co-sponsor nations to work for the freedom of all individuals who have been imprisoned for peacefully exercising fundamental rights to gather in public and to speak and publish opinions, including opinions that are critical of governments. Co-sponsors of the declaration also commit themselves to making the release of such prisoners a key priority in their relations with other states.

We stand in solidarity with the courageous individuals around the globe who are imprisoned, often times in deplorable conditions, for exercising these inalienable rights, and we urge all United Nations Member States to work for the freedom of these individuals.

The full text of the Prisoner of Conscience Declaration will soon be available at http://www.un.org under document number A/62/858

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