



SENATOR THE HON BOB CARR

MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
CANBERRA

19 JUL 2013

The Hon John Murphy MP  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Petitions  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Murphy

I refer to your letter of June 3, 2013, informing me of the petition regarding freedom of religion, and in particular, persecution of Christians. I have noted the petition and passed it to the relevant area in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for information.

Let me assure you that Australia considers freedom of religion or belief to be a core human right, which must be respected in all countries in accordance with international human rights law and norms.

Australia actively raises human rights, including concerns about freedom of religion, in bilateral and multilateral fora. We also engage in dialogue with international experts, including the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, in order to foster a better international understanding of the importance of these rights. We have co-sponsored United Nations General Assembly and Human Rights Council resolutions condemning religious intolerance and have ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 18 of which guarantees freedom of religion and belief. We also regularly raise freedom of religion and belief during the United Nations Universal Periodic Review process.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely

Bob Carr