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**2000 Annual Report on International Religious Freedom:
Romania**

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ROMANIA

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The status of respect for religious freedom has improved slightly during the period covered by this report; however, religious life continues to be ruled by old laws that reinforce government discrimination in favor of certain religious groups.

There are generally amicable relations among the different religious groups; however, the Romanian Orthodox Church has attacked the "aggressive proselytizing" of Protestant, neo-Protestant, and other religious groups, repeatedly described as "sects." Government registration and recognition requirements still pose obstacles to minority religions, and restitution of religious property remains a problem.

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the overall context of the promotion of human rights. The Embassy engaged actively in encouraging respect for religious freedom, pressing strongly with religious and political leaders for the withdrawal of the draft religion bill and the restitution of religious property.

Section I. Government Policies on Freedom of Religion**Legal/Policy Framework**

The Constitution provides for religious freedom, and the Government generally respects this right in practice; however, several minority religious groups continued to claim credibly that low-level government officials and Romanian Orthodox clergy impeded their efforts at proselytizing, as well as interfered with other religious activities.

Since the Government has not adopted a new law, the Communist era decree 177 of 1948 remains the law of the land, and it allows considerable state control over religious life. Technically, none of the articles of this law have been abrogated, but, according to the State Secretariat for Religious Denominations, a large number of its articles have been nullified in practice by the Constitution and a series of governmental decrees. Though several religious denominations and

religious associations confirmed that articles stipulating the State's interference with or control over religious life and activities have not been enforced, such provisions still exist in the law.

Under the provisions of Decree 177 of 1948, the Government recognizes 14 religions. In addition to this, a December 1989 decree reestablished the Greek Catholic Church, which had been dismantled by a Communist decree in 1948. Only the clergy of these 15 recognized religions are eligible to receive state support. Recognized religions have the right to establish schools, teach religion in public schools, receive funds to build churches, pay clergy salaries with state funds and subsidize their housing expenses, broadcast religious programming on radio and television, apply for broadcasting licenses for denominational frequencies, and enjoy tax-exempt status. The number of adherents each religion had in the last census (1992) determines the proportion of the budget each recognized religion receives. The Romanian Orthodox religion, in accordance with its size as recorded in the 1992 census, receives the largest share of governmental financial support. In addition mostly Orthodox religious leaders preside over state occasions. In 1999 the Government allocated funds amounting to almost 1 million dollars (approximately 15 billion lei) to the Roman Catholic Church and close to \$650,000 (over 9 billion lei) to the Greek Catholic Church (both budgetary and off-budget funds) for the construction of churches.

The Government requires religious groups to register. To be recognized as a religion, religious groups must register with the State Secretariat for Religious Denominations and present their statutes, organizational, leadership, and management diagrams, and the body of dogma and doctrines formally stated by a religion. According to Article 13 of Decree 177 of 1948, a religious group can acquire religion status by decree, issued at the Government's initiative, with the prior recommendation of the State Secretariat for Religious Denominations. Representatives of religious groups that sought recognition after 1990 allege that the registration process was arbitrary and unduly influenced by the Romanian Orthodox Church, and that they did not receive clear instructions concerning the requirements. The Organization of the Orthodox Believers of Old Rite, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Adventist Movement for Reform, the Baha'i Faith, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon) are some of the religious groups that have tried unsuccessfully to register as religions. The Baha'i Faith stated that it has never received any answer to its repeated requests to be registered as a religious denomination. Jehovah's Witnesses also complained that the State Secretariat for Religious Denominations consistently had refused to grant it status as a religion.

Not one religious group has succeeded in receiving religion status since 1990. The State Secretariat for Religious Denominations stated that this was due to the provisions of Article 13 of Decree 177 of 1948, which stipulates the recognition of religious denominations by a decree issued by the Presidium of the Grand National Assembly--a Communist body that passed laws but does not exist any more. Since no new legislation has been passed in this regard, the State Secretariat stated that the registration of any new religion is not possible.

The Government registers religious groups that it does not recognize as "independent religions" either as religious and charitable foundations or as cultural associations. The State Secretariat for Religious Denominations reported that it has licensed 622 religious and charitable foundations, as well as cultural organizations, under Law 21 of 1924 on Juridical Entities, thereby entitling them to juridical status as well as to exemptions from income and customs taxes. According to Article 18 of Decree 177 of 1948 on Religion, religious and charitable foundations, to be recognized as juridical entities, must request and receive approval from the Government through the State Secretariat for Religious Denominations. After receiving the approval, such organizations have to apply for registration in local court, which has the final authority under the law to register religious organizations, but the courts frequently defer to the opinion of the State Secretariat for Religious Affairs. Several religious organizations have complained that, in most cases, the courts do not accept their registration without approval of the State Secretary of Religions. These organizations receive no financial support from the State, other than limited tax and import duty exemptions, and are not permitted to engage in profit-making activities. Moreover, religious groups registered as foundations or charitable organizations are allowed to rent or build office space only; they are not permitted to build churches or other buildings designated as houses of worship. According to the State Secretariat for Religious Denominations, such religious groups receive building permits only for halls of prayer because the legislation in force makes reference only to religions and does not include any provisions for religious associations. The differentiation between religions and religious associations with regard to the construction of places of worship appears to be an arbitrary decision by the State Secretariat for Religious Denominations.

A government decree on associations and foundations became effective on May 1, 2000. Upon its coming into effect, Law 21 of 1924 was abrogated. The new law eliminates, at least in theory, the bureaucratic obstacles in the registration process, which repeatedly have been criticized by religious groups as arbitrary and time-consuming. (Smaller religious groups also have criticized the State Secretariat for Religious Denominations for its obstructionist tactics in favor of the Romanian Orthodox Church.) It also removes the minimum requirement of members required to establish religious associations and foundations.

After almost a decade of discussion and multiple drafts, a bill on religious denominations was approved suddenly by the Government in September 1999 and submitted to Parliament. Since the bill dramatically differed from any version discussed with the religious denominations and would have strengthened government regulation of religious activity, it generated a wave of criticism. Most religious denominations, religious and human rights groups, and foreign observers called for the draft law's withdrawal. If enacted, the law effectively would have restricted freedom of religion, by imposing tough conditions on the registration of religious denominations and religious groups and strengthening the powers of the State Secretariat for Religious Denominations. The draft law would have declared the

Romanian Orthodox Church to be the national church. Confronted with strong criticism both domestically and abroad, the Government (headed by a new Prime Minister) in February 2000 decided to withdraw the bill and undertook to draft a new one based on democratic principles. However, completion of such a draft bill is not expected before the end of 2000.

Religious Demography

The Romanian Orthodox Church is the predominant religion in the country. The following are the number of believers in the historical religions (those recognized under the provisions of the 1948 decree), according to the disputed 1992 census: the Romanian Orthodox Church, 19,802,389 followers (86.8 percent of the population) including about 50,000 Serbs and Ukrainians; the Roman Catholic Church, 1,161,942 followers; the Catholic Church of Byzantine Rite (Greek Catholics or Uniates), 223,327 followers. The census was taken in an atmosphere of intimidation that equated Greek Catholics with Hungarians, not Romanians. The Greek Catholic Church estimates that its adherents number close to 750,000 members. (The country's Greek Catholics were members of the Orthodox Church who accepted the four principles that were required for union with Rome in 1697, but observed the Orthodox festivals and many traditions from their Orthodox past). Among the other recognized religions, the Old Style Orthodox Church has 32,228 members; the Old Rite Christian Church has 28,141 believers (of whom 3,711 are ethnic Romanian and 24,016 are ethnic Lippovans/Russians); the Reformed (Protestant) Church has 802,454 believers (of whom 765,370 are ethnic Hungarians); the Christian Evangelical Church has 49,963 believers; the Evangelical Augustinian Church has 39,119 followers (of whom 3,660 are Romanians and 27,313 are ethnic Germans); the Lutheran Evangelical Church Synod-Presbyterian has 21,221 members (of whom 12,842 are ethnic Hungarians); the Unitarian Church of Romania has 76,708 believers; the Baptist Church has 109,462 believers; the Apostolic Church of God (Pentecostal Church) has 220,824 believers (400,000, according to Pentecostal reports); the Seventh-Day Christian Adventist Church has 77,546 members; the Armenian Orthodox and Catholic Churches have 2,023; Judaism has 9,670 followers, according to the 1992 census (the Jewish Community Federation states there are about 12,000 members); and the number of Muslims is 55,928.

According to the State Secretariat for Religious Denominations, most religions have followers dispersed throughout the country, but a few religious communities are concentrated in particular regions in the country: the Old Rite (Lippovans) in Moldavia and Dobrogea; the Muslims in the southeastern part of the country in the Dobrogea area; most of the Greek Catholics in Transylvania but also in Moldavia; Protestant and Catholic churches in Transylvania, but also around Bacau; the Orthodox or Greek Catholic ethnic Ukrainians in the northwest area; the Orthodox ethnic Serbs in Banat; and the Armenians in Moldavia and the south.

According to published sources, the following religious denominations

are also active in the country in the form of religious organizations: the Baha'i Faith, established in 1990; the Family (God's Children), established in 1990; the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons), which sent more than 100 missionaries to the country immediately after 1989; the Unification Church; the Methodist Church, established in 1990; Jehovah's Witnesses, established in 1990; the Presbyterian Church, established in 1995; Transcendental Meditation, legally registered in 1992; Hare Krishna; and Zen Buddhism.

According to a nationwide poll conducted in May 2000, 6 percent of those polled say that they go to church on a weekly basis; 25 percent claim to go several times per month; 28 percent attend services several times per year; 12 percent go only once a year or less; and 9 percent do not go to church at all.

In August 2000, the Government passed an ordinance on military clergy, according to which all recognized religious denominations are entitled to have military clergy, trained to render religious service to conscripts.

The State Secretariat for Religious Denominations stated that the Government does not have a policy of sponsoring or promoting interfaith programs.

Governmental Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Although protected in law, several minority religious denominations made credible complaints that low-level government officials and Romanian Orthodox clergy impeded their efforts to proselytize. Members of religious communities not officially recognized as religious denominations by the Government presented credible accusations that government officials discriminated against them during the period covered by this report. The Government denies these allegations. Although under the Constitution persons are legally free to speak about their religious beliefs, some low-level government officials strongly discourage proselytizing. Representatives of some religious groups recognized only as religious associations credibly claimed that local officials pressure them to refrain from speaking out. In some instances, local police and administrative authorities tacitly supported, which were at times violent, societal campaigns against proselytizing (see Section II). There seems to be no clear understanding of what activities constitute proselytizing.

Minority religious groups asserted that they have found central government and parliamentary officials more cooperative than local officials. They specifically reported that communication with the State Secretariat for Religious Denominations has improved in recent months.

According to the State Secretariat for Religious Denominations, about 1,000 missionaries per year who enter the country as tourists can renew their residence permits without special formalities. They require only a formal letter of request from the religious group for which they work. Over the past year the process has become smoother and faster. Most

religious groups said that they have not been faced with any problems other than minor delays in getting residence permit extensions for their missionaries. The State Secretariat for Religious Denominations differentiates between missionaries of religious denominations, who receive 1-year extensions, and those of religious organizations, who are granted only 6-month extensions, apparently because of a protocol between the State Secretariat for Religious Denominations and the Interior Ministry. However, minority religious groups, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, complained of receiving shorter-term extensions. There are penalties for any foreigner who stays over 30 days without a visa, but there is no evidence that these penalties were linked to religious activities.

Representatives of minority religious groups dispute the 1992 census results, claiming that census takers in some cases simply assigned an affiliation without inquiring about religious affiliation. Moreover, representatives of several minority religious groups complain that off-budget funds are allocated in many cases in a biased manner, mostly favoring the Orthodox Church. For example, minority religious groups complained that Orthodox churches were built in areas without Orthodox believers. According to the State Secretariat for Religious Denominations, off-budget funds are distributed depending on the needs of the various religious denominations.

The Government's approach to building places of worship by organized churches varies, depending upon whether the organized religion is one of the 15 recognized religions or not. The State Secretariat for Religious Denominations reported that, between January 1999 and April 2000, it granted 31 approvals to the Greek Catholic Church and 13 to the Roman Catholic Church for the construction of churches. Religious groups that are not among the 15 recognized religions receive approvals only for halls of prayer and not for places of worship. Several nonrecognized religious groups have made credible allegations that their efforts to acquire property, including getting building permits and other documents, have been delayed or impeded for lengthy periods of time by local officials. They believe these delays are encouraged by local Orthodox clergy. The new State Secretary for Religious Denominations, who took office in the fall of 1999, said that he had withdrawn an internal note issued by his predecessor, who had asked local authorities to deny building licenses to religious associations and foundations. As a result, it has been much easier to get licenses since then, though some religious groups still complain of delays.

In July 1999, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Seventh-Day Adventist high school students, who did not show up at one of the graduation exams because it was scheduled on a Saturday. Consequently they were entitled to take the exam in question on a different date and without paying a fee. In March 2000, the Supreme Court also issued two rulings that called for the official recognition of the status of Jehovah's Witnesses as a religious denomination. The law does not prohibit or punish assembly for peaceful religious activities. However, several different nonrecognized religious groups complained that on various occasions local authorities and Orthodox priests prevented religious

activities from taking place, even when they had been issued permits. The Evangelical Alliance mentioned incidents in particular in rural areas in Iasi and Vaslui counties, but also in Braila and Arges counties, where a movie about Jesus could not be shown in several villages (Sipote, Vladeni, Tufesti, Insuratei, and Dobresti) because of violent incidents, allegedly instigated by Orthodox priests supported by the police, who reportedly asserted that prior approval by the Orthodox priest and the local police was required for such activities.

The Government permits but does not require religious instruction in public schools. While the law permits instruction according to the faith of students' parents, some parents who practice minority religions complain that they have been unable to have classes offered in their faith in public schools. Teachers of religion are permitted to teach only those students who adhere to the same religion as the teacher.

Religious leaders occasionally play a role in politics. In particular, many Orthodox leaders make public appearances alongside prominent political figures on various occasions.

There is no law establishing procedures for restituting religious or communal property. Some of the properties in these categories, which were seized by the Communist regime, were returned to former owners as a result of government decrees or agreement of local religious leaders. However, in many cases religious minorities have not succeeded in regaining actual possession of the properties. In fact many of the properties returned by decree house state offices, schools, or hospitals that would require relocation, and resolving this issue has delayed restitution of the property to rightful owners.

The Greek Catholic community has been less successful than any other group in regaining its properties. The Greek Catholic Church was the second largest denomination (about 1.5 million adherents out of a population of about 15 million) in 1948 when Communist authorities outlawed it and dictated its forced merger with the Romanian Orthodox Church. The latter received most of the former Greek Catholic properties, including over 2,600 churches and other facilities. The Greek Catholic Church made little progress in recovering its former properties. Of the 2,600 former Greek Catholic churches and other facilities that were transferred to the Orthodox Church by the Communist regime, only a handful have been returned. According to the State Secretariat for Religious Denominations, the Greek Catholic Church has received 142 (the Greek Catholics claim they have received only 136) of the churches transferred by the Communists to the Orthodox Church. The Greek Catholic Church has very few places of worship. Many followers still are compelled to hold services in public places or parks (260 such cases, according to Greek Catholic reports) because most of the former Greek Catholic churches have not been returned. In 1992 the Government adopted a decree that listed 80 properties owned by the Greek Catholic Church to be returned. Only between 60 and 65 of them have been returned to date (the worst situation is in Maramures county and Bucharest.) In some cases, Orthodox priests whose families had been Greek Catholics converted back to Greek Catholicism and brought their

parishes and churches back with them to the Greek Catholic Church. In several counties, in particular in Transylvania, local Orthodox leaders have given up smaller country churches voluntarily. For example, in the Diocese of Lugoj in the southwestern part of the country, local Orthodox Church representatives have reached agreement on the return of an estimated 160 of 2,600 churches; however, for the most part the Orthodox have refused to return to the Greek Catholics those churches that they acquired during the Communist era (Orthodox Archbishop of Timisoara Nicolae Corneanu was responsible for returning some of the churches, including the cathedral in Lugoj, to the Greek Catholic Church. However, due to his actions, the Orthodox Holy Synod marginalized Archbishop Corneanu, and his fellow clergymen criticized him.)

A governmental decree in 1990 called for the creation of a joint Orthodox and Greek Catholic committee to decide the fate of churches that had belonged to the Greek Catholic Church before 1948. However, the Government has not enforced this decree, and the Orthodox Church has resisted efforts to resolve the issue. The committee did not meet until October 1998 and had three more meetings in 1999. The courts generally refuse to consider Greek Catholic lawsuits seeking restitution, citing the 1990 decree establishing the joint committee to resolve the issue. However, the Orthodox Church consistently has resisted efforts to resolve the issue in that forum. From its initial property list of 2,600 seized properties, the Greek Catholic Church has scaled back the properties that it is asking back to fewer than 300--all of them churches--yet the only thing agreed upon at the joint committee meetings has been the date for the next meeting. Restitution of the existing churches is important to both sides because local residents, who prize tradition, are likely to attend the church no matter whether it is Greek Catholic or Orthodox. Thus the number of believers and share of the state budget allocation for religions is at stake. At the most recent meeting of the joint committee in November 1999, the Orthodox Church proposed to help the Uniates build new churches. However, such support has been almost nonexistent, according to Uniate reports. Since July 1999, the Greek Catholic Church has recovered fewer than 10 of its former churches (in Cluj, Blaj, and Oradea). A new meeting of the committee was scheduled for September 2000.

The historical Hungarian churches, including the Roman Catholic as well as the Protestant churches (Reformed, Evangelical, and Unitarian), have not received their properties back from the Government. Churches from these denominations were not seized by the Communist regime, just closed. However, the Communist regime confiscated many of their secular properties, which still are used for public schools, post offices, and student dormitories. Of the about 1,400 to 1,450 buildings reclaimed by the Hungarian churches, it has been able to take possession of only about 10. The Catholic Church of Romanian Language is in a similar situation.

The Jewish community reported in May 2000 that 21 of its properties had been returned by government decrees. However, the Jewish community has taken actual possession of only 5 of them, the rest

having been restituted merely on paper so far.

Several religious communities have regained ownership of some of their schools, hospitals, residences, and other properties. In some cases this proved to be a disadvantage since the rightful owner could not take possession of the property because it was being used by the State, in which situation the owner receives minimal or no rent but has to pay taxes as the property owner instead. For example, this was the case of the former Reformed College restituted to the Reformed Church in Cluj by government decree in 1999. The building currently is used as a high school, which does not pay any rent, and the Reformed Church has not been able to occupy the property. Compensation to any kind of former owner for properties that are not returned must be established by law; this issue remains with Parliament.

On June 22, 2000, the Government passed an emergency ordinance to allow restitution of 10 unspecified buildings (not churches) to each bishopric of each religious denomination from which property was seized during the Communist period. This ordinance requires a commission be established to determine which properties will be restored, a process that is expected to take time.

According to Law 1/2000 adopted by Parliament in December 1999 and signed into law in January 2000, religious denominations are entitled to claim between 10 and 100 hectares (25 to 250 acres) of farmland (depending on the type of religious unit--parish, eparchy, bishopric, etc.) and up to 30 hectares (75 acres) of forestland from properties seized by the Communists. This is the first law that establishes a systematic procedure for churches to claim land.

The Hungarian churches repeatedly have expressed dissatisfaction with the Government's failure to allow by law the establishment of confessional schools subsidized by the State.

There were no reports of religious detainees or prisoners.

Improvements in Respect for Religious Freedom

The status of respect for religious freedom improved slightly during the period covered by this report. Parliament passed a law entitling religious denominations to reclaim back farm and forestland, and the Government took steps to allow restitution of 10 unspecified buildings (not churches) to each bishopric. A government decree somewhat reduced the bureaucratic procedures required for the registration of religious associations and foundations. Two decisions by the State Secretariat for Religious Denominations have contributed somewhat to speeding up the process of granting visa extensions for religious workers and relaxed the policy of issuing construction licenses for religious associations and foundations.

Jehovah's Witnesses and the Seventh-Day Adventists reported three court rulings upholding their rights to build places of worship and practice their faith, which apparently represent small steps toward

increased religious freedom.

Forced Religious Conversion of Minor U.S. Citizens There were no reports of the forced religious conversion of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the Government's refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

Section II. Societal Attitudes

There are generally amicable relations among the different religious groups. However, the Romanian Orthodox Church has attacked the "aggressive proselytizing" of Protestant and other religious groups repeatedly (see Section I). Some prominent members of society publicly criticized proselytizing.

There is no law against proselytizing. However, the dominant Orthodox Church repeatedly and publicly has criticized what it described as proselytizing by various religious groups. Proselytizing that involves denigrating established churches is perceived as provocative. There seems to be no clear understanding of what activities constitute proselytizing. This sometimes has led to conflicts. According to the Jehovah's Witnesses, the local Orthodox clergy in Mizil (Prahova county), with the tacit support of the local police and administration, started a campaign at the beginning of 2000 aimed at barring activity by Jehovah's Witnesses. Anti-Jehovah's Witnesses flyers were spread in the town, denouncing it as a fanatic and criminal sect, and Jehovah's Witnesses repeatedly were harassed and assaulted, allegedly at the instigation of an Orthodox youth league tied to the Orthodox Church.

In addition, the dialog between the Orthodox and the Greek Catholic churches has not eliminated disputes at the local level and has led to little real progress in solving the problem of the restitution of the Uniate assets (see Section I).

Disputes between Greek Catholics and Orthodox believers over church possession in several localities occasionally became heated during the period covered by this report. In Ardud the Orthodox Church first reached agreement to share the local church with the Greek Orthodox community in the same town, but subsequently changed its mind and the lock on the church door. Eventually, the Uniates decided to build a new church. In Bicsad the Uniates obtained a government decision allowing them to take possession of a former Greek Catholic monastery, but they were stopped by agitated local residents led by Orthodox priests. In Sercaia the Greek Catholic Church regained its former church after a series of violent incidents, with Orthodox believers allegedly instigated by the local Orthodox priest. In Dumbraveni the Orthodox Church's opposition to a court-ordered proposal to share the local church has forced the Uniates to hold their religious services in a high school.

The centuries-long domination of the Orthodox Church, and its status as the majority religion, has resulted in the Orthodox Church's reluctance

(in particular at the local level and with the more or less direct support of low-level officials) to accept the existence of other religions (especially new ones.) Consequently, actions by other religious groups to attract believers are perceived by the Orthodox Church as attempts to diminish the number of its followers (see Section I). Due to its broad range of influence, few politicians dare to sponsor bills and measures that would oppose the Orthodox Church. According to minority religious groups, the population is receptive to minority Christian confessions; it is the Orthodox clergy that was at the root of isolated mob incidents.

Most mainstream politicians have criticized publicly anti-Semitism, racism, and xenophobia. However, the fringe press continued to publish anti-Semitic harangues.

In October 1999, a court sentenced Mihai Bogdan Antonescu, editor of the weekly *Atac la Persoana*, to a 2-year suspended sentence for publishing articles that were intended to spread intolerance toward Jews. The Jewish Community Federation reported that Jewish cemeteries were desecrated in 10 localities in 1999. The perpetrators have not been identified in any of these cases, but are believed to have been local hooligans, rather than an organized anti-Semitic movement. In April 2000, a letter warning about the danger of the expansion of the Legionnaire Movement, sent to the President, government officials, and Parliament by the Jewish Community Federation failed to generate any reaction by any of the addressees. However, the Jewish Community Federation praised the local authorities in Timișoara and Iasi for taking a prompt stand against anti-Semitic graffiti in February 2000.

Section III. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. Embassy discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the overall context of the promotion of human rights. The Embassy also maintains close contact with a broad range of religious groups in the country. Embassy staff, including the human rights officer, political counselor, and the Ambassador, met with religious leaders and government officials who work on religious affairs in Bucharest and in other cities.

In addition, embassy staff members are in frequent contact with numerous nongovernmental organizations that monitor developments in the country's religious life. U.S. officials have lobbied consistently in government circles for fair treatment on property restitution issues, including religious and communal properties. The Embassy has a core group of officials who focus on fostering good ethnic relations, including relations between religious groups.

The U.S. Embassy took an active stand against the reactionary religion bill approved by the Cabinet and sent to Parliament in September 1999. Embassy staff lobbied heads of all the major political parties, key government officials including the Prime Minister, and members of the relevant parliamentary committees. In addition, the Embassy encouraged other western embassies and religious groups in the country

to engage in parallel lobbying actions. The Secretary of State also raised the issue during Romanian Foreign Minister Petre Roman's visit to the United States. The bill was eventually withdrawn in February 2000.

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