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## **KAZAKH FM PARTAKES IN MINISTERIAL TO ADVANCE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**

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Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kairat Abdrakhmanov participated in the first Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom initiated by US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo on July 26, 2018, the Kazakh MFA's press service reports. Related news Kazakh FM starts visit to U.S. EU, U.S. to strive for reforming WTO Kazakhstan's social devpt minister holds meetings with U.S. Congress members The event was attended by foreign ministers from more than 80 countries, as well as by over 170 civil society representatives and 100 religious leaders from around the globe. In his opening speech, US Vice President Mike Pence stated that ensuring religious freedom is one of the core priorities of the Trump Administration, as well as an essential focus area of the US state policy. In this vein, the United States intends to continue rendering assistance and support to the international community for protecting the rights of religious associations, minorities and faiths all over the earth. Secretary of State Pompeo said that in order to implement these goals, the US plans to launch a number of initiatives aimed at defending the rights and freedoms of believers. The Conference supported the US proposal to adopt the Potomac Declaration and the Potomac Plan of Action related to religious freedom. In his statement, Abdrakhmanov confirmed Kazakhstan's unwavering commitment to the principles of freedom of religion and the willingness of our country to support international efforts in this area. The foreign minister paid special attention to the fact that these initiatives were in tune with the idea of President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev on Islamic rapprochement proposed during the Summit of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in April 2016, as well as rapprochement of cultures, supported by the UN General Assembly in December 2012. The Kazakh side believes that the promotion of religious freedom also contributes to international stability and security. Central Asia, which seeks to serve as a regional model of peace, security, stability and sustainable development, is a good example of this. The minister briefed the Conference participants about the forthcoming sixth Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions to be held in Kazakhstan this October. It serves as a unique platform initiated by the President of Kazakhstan to keep a dialogue between religions, cultures and civilizations. Abdrakhmanov also exchanged views with the Secretary of State Pompeo, Senior Advisor to the US President Jared Kushner and held talks with the Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Alice Wells, with whom he discussed the state and prospects for the development of Kazakh-American relations. The foreign minister also visited the Atlantic Council - one of the leading think tanks, where he held a briefing on the main priorities of Kazakhstan's development and shared views on the topical issues on the international agenda.

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