

**From:** Rebecca Chalif  
**Sent:** Fri, 27 Jan 2023 20:27:51 +0000  
**To:** Jessica Jennings  
**Cc:** Maany Peyvan; Adam Siegel; Shejal Pulivarti  
**Subject:** Re: Media Request: Power & International Religious Freedom Summit

share what you and Adam come up with?

On Fri, Jan 27, 2023 at 2:46 PM Jessica Jennings <[jejjennings@usaid.gov](mailto:jejjennings@usaid.gov)> wrote:  
Flagging this. Going to find out deadline to respond.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Creede Newton** (b)(6) [redacted]@splcenter.org>  
Date: Fri, Jan 27, 2023 at 2:35 PM  
Subject: Media Request: Power & International Religious Freedom Summit  
To: [press@usaid.gov](mailto:press@usaid.gov) <[press@usaid.gov](mailto:press@usaid.gov)>

Greetings,

Hope you're well. I'm Creede Newton, a journalist with the Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Project. We plan to publish a short article on Monday detailing some of the positions of individuals and organizations set to participate in this year's International Religious Freedom Summit. We will highlight the positions of the Family Research Council (FRC) and the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF).

In 2011, FRC President Tony Perkins called the It Gets Better Project's videos, which feature celebrities that offer encouraging messages to LBGQT youth, "disgusting. And it's part of a concerted effort to persuade kids that homosexuality is okay and actually to recruit them into that lifestyle."

The It Gets Better Project began in 2004. Its goal is to help prevent suicide among LGBTQ youth. LGBTQ youth are four times more likely to die by suicide than their peers, according to research cited by the Trevor Project, an LGBTQ advocaacy organization.

In 2018, Perks said "if you are a male — genetically you are a male, biologically you're a male — and you say, 'Well, I'm not a male. I'm a female.' I mean, what's to keep you from saying that you're an animal?"

The ADR has defended state-enforced sterilization for transgender teens and its former president Alan Sears co-authored a 2003 book that claimed gay people promote pedophilia. Sears was the ADF president until 2017.

It seems the FRC and ADR both take positions in opposition to the stated goals of USAID. The agency says “it advances the human rights of LGBTQI+ people and works to protect LGBTQI+ people from violence, discrimination, stigma, and criminalization around the world.”

Does the agency wish to respond as to why Administrator Samantha Power has agreed to speak alongside Perkins at an event that partnered with the ADR?

Thanks and hope to hear from you soon.

Regards,



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Jessica L. Jennings  
Spokesperson I Press Director  
(b)(6) (mobile)

**From:** Rebecca Chalif  
**Sent:** Fri, 27 Jan 2023 18:01:57 +0000  
**To:** Melissa Hooper  
**Cc:** Adam Phillips; Public Engagement  
**Subject:** Re: Ambassador Power's upcoming panel at IRF Summit

thanks appreciate that. Let's reply respectfully and happy to look at their materials but I think this had already been discussed internally.

On Fri, Jan 27, 2023 at 12:55 PM Melissa Hooper <[mhooper@usaid.gov](mailto:mhooper@usaid.gov)> wrote:  
Thanks Rebecca, I also want to apologize. I feel a bit catfished since my contact approached me with a specific point that sounded like it would be helpful, but I see now that the conversation has morphed into a broader and less helpful discussion.

I'll be careful in initiating conversations like this in the future - and apprise Jeanne Neal of this as well!

Melissa

On Fri, Jan 27, 2023 at 12:53 PM Rebecca Chalif <[rchalif@usaid.gov](mailto:rchalif@usaid.gov)> wrote:  
Melissa, adding Adam here who is point on this event to read this feedback. Adam, imagine this is all well known info and was considered in taking the meeting?

On Fri, Jan 27, 2023 at 9:42 AM Michael Lieberman <[\(b\)\(6\)@splcenter.org](mailto:(b)(6)@splcenter.org)> wrote:

**Susan,**

**Thanks for connecting us.**

**Good morning USAID staffers,**

**Thanks for being open to a discussion with us about Ambassador Power's IRF Summit conversation with Ambassador Hussain next Wednesday.**

**In short, we are concerned that high government officials, diplomats, and celebrities who attend the IRF Summit risk further mainstreaming the anti-LGBTQ movement and legitimizing their exportation of an exclusionary right-wing "religious freedom" to the world. Some prominent speakers and organizations involved with the Summit have used religious rhetoric to advocate criminalization and even the death penalty for LGBTQ people.**

**We'd like to provide background for you that would enable Ambassador Power and Ambassador Hussain to affirmatively distance themselves, in their**

conversation, from the dangerous, virulently anti-LGBTQ rhetoric that is promoted by some of the Summit speakers, sponsors, and coordinating organizations. We would also encourage them to find opportunities to speak out strongly against using religious freedom as a mask for bigotry and religious discrimination against minority religions and LGBTQ community members.

Would it be possible to arrange a call for our subject matter experts to provide more background?

Let me know if that can work and I will help coordinate from our end.

Thanks.

Michael



**Michael Lieberman** he/him/his  
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**From:** Susan Corke (b)(6)@splcenter.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 25, 2023 8:20 PM  
**To:** Melissa Hooper <mhooper@usaid.gov>; Rebecca Chalif <rchalif@usaid.gov>  
**Cc:** Fayrouz Saad <fsaad@usaid.gov>; Sara Reef <sreef@usaid.gov>; Rachel Carroll Rivas (b)(6)@splcenter.org>; Michael Lieberman (b)(6)@splcenter.org>; RG Cravens (b)(6)@splcenter.org>; Lisa Borden (b)(6)@splcenter.org>  
**Subject:** Re: Connecting Rebecca and Susan/SPLC re SP's panel at IRF Summit

Thank you, Melissa, for the introduction. Rebecca, Sara and Fayrouz, it is nice to meet you! I am copying a few folks from our Research and Policy teams.

I direct SPLC's work on hate and extremism and previously worked with Melissa at Human Rights First on antisemitism and extremism issues. While in that job, I had the honor of speaking at the **United Nations'** High Level Forum on Global Antisemitism at the invitation of Ambassador Powers. I know she is a strong advocate against hate and extremism and for inclusive, civil society coalitions.

We have several concerns about this Summit, in particular that some of the featured speakers belong to SPLC-designated hate groups and are well known for their anti-LGBTQ beliefs.

Would you have some time this week to discuss with us? We realize at this point the event is close and speakers are likely locked in, but we hope that there will be strong counter messages against such hateful beliefs.

Thank you,

Susan



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**From:** Melissa Hooper <[mhooper@usaid.gov](mailto:mhooper@usaid.gov)>  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 25, 2023 at 11:20 AM  
**To:** Rebecca Chalif <[rchalif@usaid.gov](mailto:rchalif@usaid.gov)>, Susan Corke (b)(6)@splcenter.org  
**Cc:** Fayrouz Saad <[fsaad@usaid.gov](mailto:fsaad@usaid.gov)>, Sara Reef <[sreef@usaid.gov](mailto:sreef@usaid.gov)>  
**Subject:** Connecting Rebecca and Susan/SPLC re SP's panel at IRF Summit

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Hi Rebecca and Susan,

I'm connecting you in light of SPLC's concerns regarding A/AID Power's co-panelists at the IRF Summit next week.

Susan, I have copied Rebecca's other team members to keep them in the loop. Thank you for raising this!

Very best,

Melissa

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**Melissa Hooper** (she/her)

Senior Advisor, Rule of Law, Anticorruption and Human Rights

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