

TIER 2

COUNTRIES

-AFGHANISTAN

-AZERBAIJAN

-CUBA

-INDIA

-INDONESIA

-KAZAKHSTAN

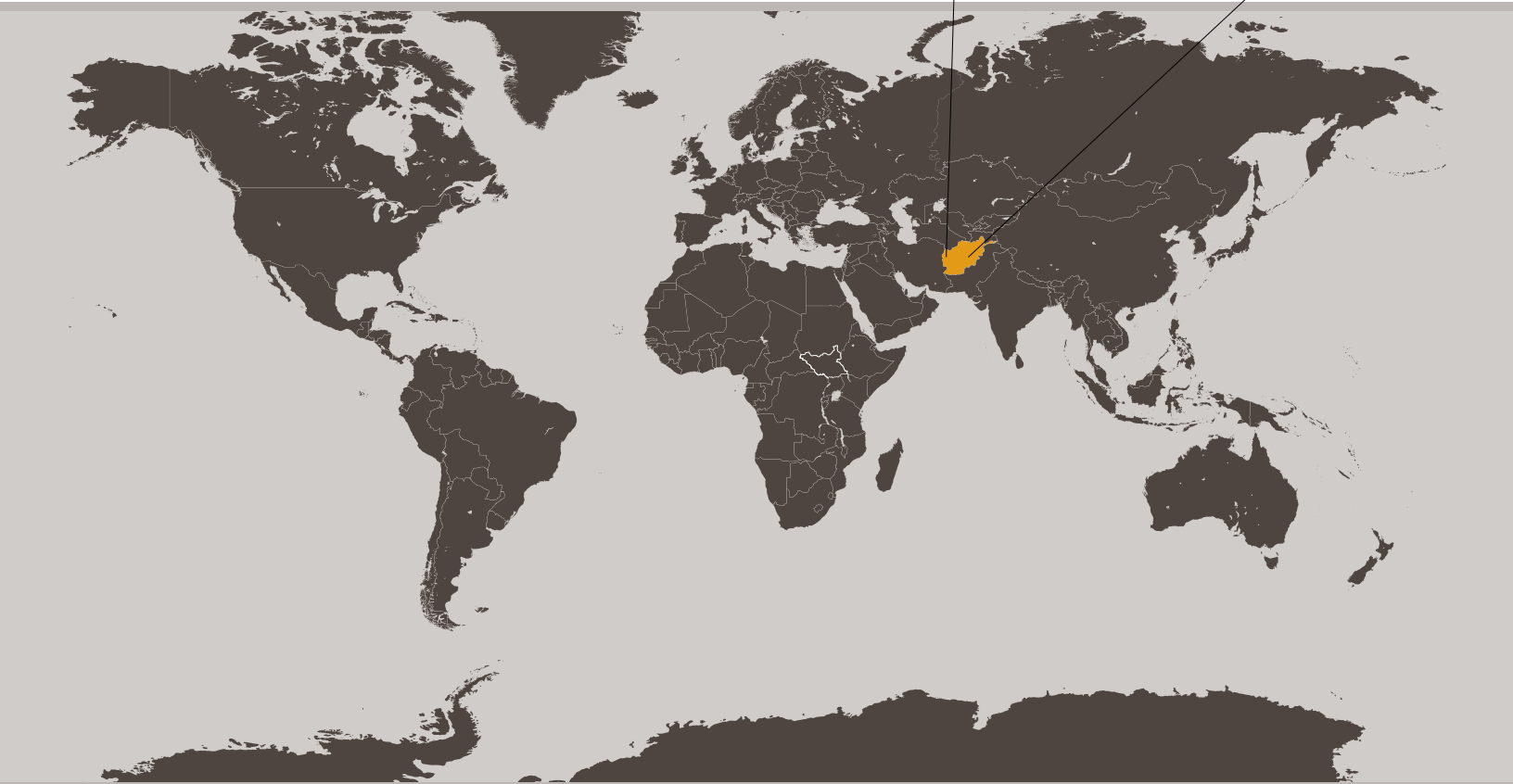
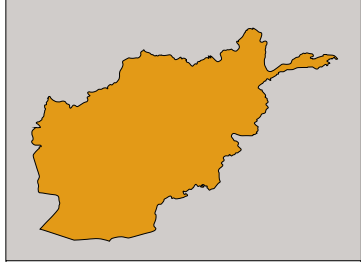
-LAOS

-MALAYSIA

-RUSSIA

-TURKEY

AFGHANISTAN



AFGHANISTAN

Key Findings

Afghanistan's overall stability and security has deteriorated significantly in the last year due to a resurgence of the Afghan Taliban and increased activity by other extremist groups, including the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and al-Qaeda. These groups' violent ideology and attacks threaten all Afghans, but the Shi'a Muslim, Hindu, and Sikh minorities are especially vulnerable, as are the tiny Christian and Baha'i communities. Extremist attacks on Shi'a Muslims increased in 2015. Despite a sustained international support effort, the Afghan government lacks the capacity to protect civilians from attacks. In addition, the country's constitution and other laws violate international standards for freedom of religion or belief. Based on these concerns, in 2016 USCIRF again places Afghanistan on Tier 2, where it has been since 2006.

Background

Afghanistan's population is estimated at 32.5 million. An estimated 84 to 89 percent is Sunni Muslim, and 10 to 15 percent is Shi'a Muslim. Sikh, Hindu, Christian, and other religious communities collectively comprise less than one percent. Although the population is religiously homogenous, it is ethnically diverse. According to U.S. government figures, Afghanistan's population is 42 percent Pashtun, 27 percent Tajik, nine percent Hazara, nine percent Uzbek, three percent Turkmen, two percent Baloch, and eight percent other groups.

Formed in September 2014, the national unity government, led by President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Abdullah Abdullah, has been unable to counter violent extremist groups that target the government, the military, civilians, and U.S. and NATO forces. Despite a prolonged international military effort, the Taliban has expanded its reach and power in Afghanistan. As of January 2016, the Taliban controlled around 30 percent of the country, more area than any

time since 2001. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Taliban attacks between August and October 2015 increased by 19 percent compared to the same period in 2014. The Afghan government's efforts against the Taliban have been hindered significantly by its own internal instability; a fragmented police, military, and intelligence force; corruption; and a weak economy.

In this context, Afghans from all faiths and ethnic groups increasingly are fleeing their homes and the country. OCHA reported that between January and November 2015, more than 300,000 Afghans were forcibly displaced, a 160 percent increase over the same period in 2014. In total, nearly one million Afghans are internally displaced within the country, and 2.6 million are refugees in the region and beyond. According to European Union figures, nearly 150,000 Afghans, mostly Hazara Shi'a Muslims, sought asylum in Europe in 2015. Afghans also are fleeing to other countries in South Asia, as well as Australia.

Religious Freedom Conditions 2015–2016

Constitutional and Legal Issues

The Afghan constitution fails to protect the individual right to freedom of religion or belief as guaranteed

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is no provision protecting freedom of religion or belief for Muslims. The constitution states that Islam is the state religion, and that no Afghan law can be contrary to the beliefs and provisions of Islam. This clause has been interpreted by the Afghan government and religious clerics in ways that limit religious freedom and freedom of expression. The country's penal code permits the courts to defer to Shari'ah law in cases involving matters that neither the penal code nor the constitution explicitly address, such as blasphemy, apostasy and conversion, resulting in those charges being punishable by death. State-backed religious leaders and the judicial system are empowered to interpret and enforce Islamic principles and Shari'ah law, leading at times to arbitrary and abusive interpretations of religious orthodoxy. A 2004 media law prohibits writings deemed un-Islamic, enabling the detention of journalists and others.

Conditions for Non-Muslims

Hindus and Sikhs continue to face discrimination, harassment, and at times violence, despite being allowed to practice their faith in places of public worship and being represented in parliament through presidential appointments. Decades of conflict and official and societal discrimination have diminished significantly these communities' numbers in Afghanistan. In January 2015, the non-governmental Afghanistan Sikh and Hindu Community Council reported that the

country continues to operate on the grounds of the Italian embassy. There were no reports of Afghan Christians arrested during the reporting period, but many reportedly have left for India. Afghanistan's tiny Baha'i community leads a covert existence. A 2007 ruling by the General Directorate of Fatwas and Accounts declared the Baha'i faith blasphemous and converts to it apostates.

Violence around Blasphemy Allegations

In March 2015, a mob in Kabul publicly and brutally murdered Farkhunda Malikzada, a young Muslim woman after a local religious leader falsely accused her of burning a Qur'an. Graphic video of the incident, which made worldwide headlines, showed some police attempting to help her, while others stood by as the crowd beat and kicked her, ran a car over her, and set her on fire. Although several religious leaders and government officials initially lauded the murder of an alleged blasphemer, within two days of her murder and following public protests demanding prosecutions, the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs announced she was innocent. Nearly 50 people, including 19 police officers, stood trial in May 2015. Of the civilians charged, four were sentenced to death, eight were sentenced to 16 years in prison, and 18 were found not guilty. Of the police officers, 11 were sentenced to one year in prison and eight were acquitted. In July 2015, an appeals court overturned the four death sentences, instead sentencing three of the men to 20 years in prison and one,

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Sikh population was fewer than 1,000 families and that Hindus had all but left the country. By contrast, 40 years ago an estimated 50,000 Sikh and Hindu families lived in Afghanistan. Only one of the eight Sikh *gurdwaras* in Kabul is operating.

The very small Christian population cannot worship openly and is at risk of attack by the Taliban and other extremists. In June 2014, the Taliban kidnapped Fr. Alexis Prem Kumar, who led Jesuit Refugee Services; he was released in February 2015. The one known church in the

who was under 18 years of age, to 10 years.

U.S. Policy

Afghanistan has been the focus of U.S. engagement in South Asia for over a decade. U.S. government efforts have focused on building a stable Afghanistan and fighting extremist groups. The United States brokered the solution to resolve Afghanistan's highly-contested 2014 presidential election, which led to the creation of the current government.

In 2015, U.S. and international forces in Afghanistan transitioned from a combat mission to a training mission, although U.S. forces are still authorized to conduct combat operations. President Barack Obama's original goal to shrink the force to around 5,000 by the end of 2015 was revised in October 2015, at President Ghani's request, largely due to the Taliban's resurgence. By the end of the reporting period, there were approximately 10,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan, who will remain in the country at least through 2016.

The Quadrilateral Coordination Group (the United States, Pakistan, China, and Afghanistan) are working to create a new framework for peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. A meeting between the two parties occurred in July 2015, but the effort collapsed after the belated news of the 2013 death of Taliban leader Mullah Muhammad Omar led to infighting within the Taliban. In January and February 2016, Ambassador Richard Olson, the U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, represented the United States in meetings with the Pakistani, Chinese, and Afghan governments. Other United States government officials have visited Afghanistan during the reporting period, including Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Tom Malinowski, who traveled to the country in April 2015. In March 2015, President Ghani and CEO Abdullah visited the United States. While in the United States, Ghani met with President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry, and addressed a joint session of the U.S. Congress.

Afghanistan's dependence on U.S. and foreign aid is unlikely to change in the near future. Through the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework, the United States and other international donors committed to provide Afghanistan \$16 billion in aid through 2015 and continue assistance at similar levels through 2017. According to a report from the United States Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, as of the end of 2015, the United States had appropriated approximately \$113.09 billion for relief and reconstruction in Afghanistan since FY2002, including \$68.44 billion for security, \$31.79 billion for governance and development, \$2.93 billion for humanitarian aid and \$9.94 billion for civilian operations. In FY2015, total USAID and Department of State humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan was \$182.9 million. In March 2015, Secretary Kerry

announced that the United States government will make up to \$800 million available to support a "New Development Partnership" to combat corruption, promote rule of law, strengthen women's rights, and enhance private sector growth in Afghanistan.

Recommendations

Recognizing that the Afghan government faces significant challenges in combating the Taliban and other violent extremist groups and generally lacks the capacity to protect religious and ethnic communities from violent attacks, USCIRF recommends that the U.S. government should:

- Raise directly with Afghanistan's president and CEO the importance of religious freedom, encourage Afghan government officials to publicly promote the right and work towards creating a civic space for diverse religious opinions on matters of religion and society in Afghanistan;
- Urge the government to reform the Afghan constitution and laws to comply with international standards of freedom of religion or belief, including by revoking the 2004 media law prohibiting writings deemed un-Islamic and the 2007 ruling that the Baha'i faith is blasphemous and converts to it are apostates;
- Revive the interagency U.S. government taskforce on religious freedom in Afghanistan and ensure religious freedom issues are properly integrated into the State and Defense Department strategies concerning Afghanistan;
- Include a special working group on religious freedom in U.S.-Afghan strategic dialogues and the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (the United States, Pakistan, China, and Afghanistan);
- Encourage the Afghan government to sponsor, with official and semi-official religious bodies, an initiative on interfaith dialogue that focuses on both intra-Islamic dialogue and engagement with different faiths; and
- Ensure that human rights concerns are integrated in the reconciliation process and that the parties to any peace agreement pledge to uphold both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Afghan constitution.



AZERBAIJAN

Key Findings

Despite Azerbaijan's strong tradition of societal religious tolerance, official respect for religious freedom further deteriorated in 2015, along with a sharp decline in respect for democratic norms. Over the past year, the government continued to levy penalties for violations of its repressive 2009 religion law, and also adopted new legal restrictions on religion. Peaceful religious believers, their defenders, and civil society activists were detained, fined, and jailed on various charges. Registration requests from religious groups were delayed or denied and religious groups closed. Based on these concerns, in 2016 USCIRF again places Azerbaijan on Tier 2, where it has been since 2013.

Background

Bordering Armenia, Georgia, Iran, and Turkey, Azerbaijan has a population of approximately nine million. According to the State Department, 96 percent of Azerbaijan's population is Muslim, about 65 percent Shi'a and 35 percent Sunni. The other four percent of the population includes: Russian Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox, and other Christians (including Lutherans, Roman Catholics, Baptists, Molokans, and Seventh-day Adventists); some 20,000 Jews; Baha'is; and non-believers. Among Muslims and Russian Orthodox, religious identity is often based on ethnicity. Shi'a Muslims, Sunni Muslims, Russian Orthodox, and Jews are officially seen as the country's "traditional" religious groups. Some 13 million ethnic Azeris also live in northern Iran.

Independent, pre-Soviet Azerbaijan (1920-1922) was the world's first Muslim-majority secular parliamentary republic with a good record of respect for religious freedom. After the USSR collapsed, Azerbaijan regained independence in 1991. The Nagorno-Karabakh War with Armenia ended in a 1994 cease-fire; Azerbaijan lost 16 percent of its land and gained 600,000 internally displaced persons. The Organization for Security

and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) Minsk Group, co-chaired by the United States, France, and Russia, mediates this conflict; clashes in September 2015 led to military fatalities.

The Aliev family, with roots in the Nakhichevan exclave, has dominated Azerbaijan's politics for decades. Heydar Aliev was the First Party Secretary of Soviet Azerbaijan from 1969 to 1982, and president of independent Azerbaijan from 1993 until his 2003 resignation. Aliev named his son, Ilham, as his party's sole candidate in a 2003 presidential election. Term limits were lifted in 2009 and Ilham Aliev has been president ever since. The Azerbaijani government is viewed as corrupt and increasingly authoritarian by human rights activists. Criticism of Azerbaijan's human rights record by UN human rights bodies, including the UN Committee against Torture, continued during the reporting period.

Azerbaijan's 2009 religion law is used to limit religious freedom and to justify fines, police raids, detentions, and imprisonment.

Azerbaijan's 2009 religion law is used to limit religious freedom and to justify fines, police raids, detentions, and imprisonment. The law's provisions include: compulsory state registration with complex and intrusive requirements; no appeal for registration denials; religious activities limited to a community's registered address; extensive state controls on the content, production, import, export, and dissemination of religious materials; and required state-approved religious education to preach, teach religion, or lead ceremonies. Individuals or groups violating the religion law are subject to administrative fines. In 2010, fines for

religious organizations increased 16-fold. In 2014, the parliament increased reporting requirements for civil society and religious groups to the State Committee for Work with Religious Organizations (SCWRO), purportedly to prevent the spread of religious extremism and foreign missionary activity.

In 2012, the Council of Europe's Venice Commission and the OSCE issued a legal opinion finding that Azerbaijan's religion law failed to meet its international human rights commitments. In 2014, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) found that the 2009 law gives authorities "unlimited discretionary power" to define and prosecute "illegal" religious

of worship and prohibit Azerbaijani citizens with foreign education and non-Azerbaijani citizens from leading Islamic rituals. Citizens who ignore that ban face a one-year prison term or a fine of US\$1,200-3,000; foreigners or stateless persons face jail terms of one to two years; those who belong to allegedly extremist groups or repeat offenders face two to five-year jail terms. The new extremism law grants officials wide powers over allegedly "extremist" activity. Under the amended citizenship law, citizenship can be stripped from those who are members of allegedly extremist religious groups. The administrative code now sets fines for parents who do not send their children to state schools.

In December 2015, President Aliiev signed into law amendments to the religion law, the criminal code, the administrative code, and the citizenship law, plus a new "religious extremism" law.

activity. The mandate of the OSCE office in Baku expired in December 2015; in a highly unusual move, Azerbaijan did not renew that mandate.

In late June-early July 2015, two USCIRF Commissioners and one staff member visited Baku to meet with government officials, members of various religious communities, and civil society activists.

Religious Freedom Conditions 2015–2016

New Legal Restrictions on Religion

Under religion law amendments adopted in October 2015, religious groups must file reports with the government on their activities and finances, and official religion specialists who evaluate materials and testify at trials must undergo additional state training. The commercial activity law also was amended to empower law enforcement bodies to regulate religious texts and materials. In December 2015, President Aliiev signed into law amendments to the religion law, the criminal code, the administrative code, and the citizenship law, plus a new "religious extremism" law. These amendments were made public only a few days before they were adopted in parliament, Forum 18 reported. The religion law amendments limit religious flags and slogans to places

Penalties for Religious Freedom Advocacy

The Azerbaijani NGO Legal Protection and Awareness Society Public Union (LPASPU) compiled a list of 40 Muslims jailed as of 2014 for the non-violent practice of their faith or advocacy for religious freedom. Most were sentenced for publicly protesting what is in effect a ban on headscarves in school. Eleven members of that group are still imprisoned; President Aliiev pardoned two in March 2015. The trial of lawyer Rasul Jafarov, the LPASPU leader, began in January 2015; although testimony did not support official charges of financial manipulations, he was sentenced to six and a half years in prison. In April 2015, Intigam Aliyev got a jail term of seven and a half years on false charges that included tax evasion; he has presented many religious freedom cases at the ECtHR. After the reporting period, human rights lawyers Jafarov and Aliyev were released under a presidential pardon, but that pardon did not extend to any religious prisoners. In September 2015, journalist Khadija Ismayilova received a prison term of seven and a half years for alleged embezzlement and tax evasion. Known for reporting on high-level corruption, she also advocated for religious freedom. Leila and Arif Yunus, noted human rights activists who also drew attention to religious freedom, were jailed in

August 2014. After being sentenced to eight and a half years in prison in August 2015, Leyla Yunus was released and her sentence suspended in December 2015 on the grounds of her deteriorating health. Arif was released for the same reason in November 2015, but neither are allowed to leave Baku.

Penalties for Religious Activity

Mubariz Qarayev, a Sunni Muslim imam from the Lezgin Mosque in Baku, was arrested in March 2015. The Lezgin Mosque is one of many Sunni Muslim mosques the government seeks to close. In October 2015, five Sunni Muslims (Ismail and his brother Zakariya Mam-madov, Shahin Hasanov, Eldeniz Hajiyevev, and Revan Sabzaliev) were convicted for reading the works of Turkish theologian Said Nursi; four of the five received five-year prison terms, and their lawyers were not allowed to attend the trial's final session.

In March 2015, the secret police arrested Shi'a Muslim Jeyhun Jafarov, the former host of a TV show about Islam; as of late January 2016, he was still jailed on treason charges. Nuhbala Rahimov, a Shi'a Muslim prayer leader from Rahima Hanum Mosque in Nardaran, was arrested in December 2015; at the end of the reporting period, he is in four months of pre-trial detention facing possible criminal charges.

the group is not known to use or advocate violence. The group's leader, Imam Taleh Bagirov, has served time in prison on drug charges that his supporters allege were imposed to punish his peaceful religious activities. In November 2015, Bagirov was visiting the Shi'a village of Nardaran when an assault by Interior Ministry forces resulted in the deaths of two police officers and at least five villagers. Police later detained 14 MUM members in Nardaran who face possible life terms. As of February 2016, a total of 60 MUM members reportedly were arrested. Among those arrested during the Nardaran raid was MUM leader Taleh Bagirov, who later sued the government for torture. In February 2016, Bagirov withdrew this complaint, reportedly to prevent further torture of other jailed Muslims.

Government Control through Registration

Registration is mandatory, and religious groups denied registration, or that refuse to register, are deemed "illegal." Members of unregistered religious communities often face raids, confiscation of religious texts, and other penalties. Yet even registered religious groups are allowed only to conduct activity at their legal address and are subject to other restrictions. In 2015, the SCWRO reported that 510 religious communities were registered in Azerbaijan: the 32 non-Muslim denominations

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In January 2016, a Baku court convicted Jehovah's Witnesses Irina Zakharchenko and Valida Jabrayilova for offering one religious pamphlet without an official permit but waived their fines. The two women had been detained for 20 months, including in a secret police investigation prison. The UN and USCIRF had expressed concern over the women's unjust detention and over Zakharchenko's precarious health.

The Muslim Unity Movement

The fundamentalist Shi'a Muslim Unity Movement (MUM) was formed in January 2015 and has been particularly targeted by the state as "terrorists," although

include nine Christian, six Jewish, one Krishna, and one Baha'i denomination. Baptist and Adventist leaders told USCIRF in June 2015 that their churches' rights were circumscribed because the state still had not granted them full registration.

Additional Restrictions on Muslims

Muslims in Azerbaijan are subject to special official restrictions. Police enforce a 2008 decree that does not allow public prayer outside of mosques. The state-backed Caucasus Muslim Board (CMB) dates to the Soviet era. All Muslim religious leaders are named by the CMB and must be citizens educated in Azerbaijan;

all mosques must belong to the CMB; and only citizens can establish Islamic communities. By 2014, all Islamic communities that did not belong to the CMB lacked legal status and were vulnerable to police action. In 2010, the Ministry of Education introduced a school uniform, in effect banning the Islamic headscarf. In 2013, that ban was extended to universities, leading to petitions and unauthorized protests. During the reporting period, authorities continued to raid meetings of Salafis and of readers of Said Nursi, as well as alleged followers of the Turkish Islamic leader Fethullah Gulen. According to the State Department, officials and educators lost their jobs if they were suspected of ties to the Gulen movement.

In 2015, the government and the CMB continued its campaign to close Sunni Muslim places of worship. The Lezgin Mosque – one of two Sunni Muslim mosques open in Baku – was again threatened with closure and its imam arrested in March 2015, as discussed above. But Shi'a mosques are far from exempt. After the November 2015 armed assault on the Shi'a village of Nardaran, at least four unregistered mosques were closed; officials said it is illegal for them to host prayers

services. As of January 2016, the Azeri government continued to deny their priests permits to re-enter the country. The government has not returned any confiscated religious facilities or provided compensation. Baku's renovated Armenian Apostolic Saint Gregory the Illuminator's Church is used by the Presidential Department of Administration Affairs. The Culture Ministry runs a concert hall in the confiscated Lutheran Church building in Baku; the rentals of that building officially are limited to registered religious groups and therefore exclude the Greater Grace Church. In 2015, Jehovah's Witnesses have faced detentions and fines for their religious practice and advocacy.

Status of Conscientious Objection

When Azerbaijan joined the Council of Europe in 2001 it promised to allow an alternative to military service, but has yet to enact such a law. While the constitution allows for alternative service, other laws set two-year prison terms for refusal of military service. Conscripted in October 2013, Jehovah's Witness Kamran Shikhaliev lost another court appeal in November 2015 against his term in a military discipline unit.

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and that these mosques must register and join the CMB, Forum 18 reported.

Status of Religious Minorities

Jewish communities have long lived in Azerbaijan, are well integrated into society, and have rarely faced anti-Semitism; Azerbaijan has close official relations with Israel. There is also a small Catholic community and a unique Udi Albanian church. All three small religious communities enjoy good relations with the government. Most Protestant denominations, however, do not have legal status, including Baptists, Seventh-day Adventists, and Pentecostals, as well as Jehovah's Witnesses. Two Georgian Orthodox communities are registered in the Gakh region, but cannot hold religious

Government Censorship of Religious Materials

Penalties for first-time violators of official restrictions and censorship of religious texts include up to two years in jail. A "conspiratorial" or organized group or a repeat offender faces a prison term of between two and five years. Followers of Turkish theologian Said Nursi and Jehovah's Witnesses continue to be detained and imprisoned for their alleged violations of Azerbaijan's laws on religious materials.

Situation in the Nakhichevan Exclave

Residents of the Nakhichevan exclave face more severe religious freedom restrictions than elsewhere in Azerbaijan. Local Sunni Muslims have nowhere to pray. In addition, up to 50 Shi'a mosques – particularly

those seen by officials as close to Iran – reportedly were closed. During Shi’a Muslim Ashura ceremonies, police prevented children and students from entering mosques. Many state employees reportedly are afraid to attend mosque services. The Baha’i, Adventist, and Hare Krishna faiths are banned in the exclave.

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U.S. Policy

The United States aims to encourage pro-Western democracy and to help build an open market economy in Azerbaijan. Other goals include promoting regional stability, primarily resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, enhancing energy security, and fostering economic and political reforms. U.S. companies cooperate in offshore oil development with Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan supports the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) operations in Afghanistan by participating in the Northern Distribution Network and counters transnational threats, especially from Iran. U.S. assistance helps build capacity for maritime counterterrorism operations, especially in its Caspian Sea area, and provides military security training courses. U.S. civil society assistance in Azerbaijan focuses on small grants for civil society and on civic dialogue.

In February 2015, the United States announced the start of an ongoing U.S.-Azerbaijani dialogue on civil society and democracy to run in parallel with Council of Europe initiatives. On religious freedom, according to the State Department, the U.S. ambassador and other embassy officials discussed registration issues and obstacles to the importation and publication of religious literature with government officials, and met with religious groups. In December 2015, U.S. Congressman and Chair of the Congressional Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki Commission) Chris Smith introduced the Azerbaijan Democracy Act of 2015. This bill, if enacted, would deny U.S. visas to those senior Azerbaijani government officials who have committed severe human rights abuses.

Recommendations

In order to promote freedom of religion or belief in Azerbaijan, USCIRF recommends that the U.S. government should:

- Urge the Azerbaijani government to reform its religion law to bring it into conformity with recommendations by the Council of Europe’s Venice Commission and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in 2012;
- Urge the Azerbaijani government to cease detaining or imprisoning members of religious groups for peaceful religious activity, religious affiliation, or religious freedom advocacy;
- Ensure that the U.S. Embassy in Azerbaijan maintains appropriate contacts with human rights activists, including at the ambassadorial level;
- Press the government of Azerbaijan to provide every prisoner regular access to his or her family, human rights monitors, adequate medical care, and a lawyer, as specified in international human rights instruments;
- Encourage scrutiny of Azerbaijan’s violations of international religious freedom and related norms at the UN and OSCE, and urge the OSCE to engage these issues publicly;
- Urge the Azerbaijani government to agree to visits by the UN Special Rapporteurs on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Independence of the Judiciary, and Torture; set specific visit dates; and provide the necessary conditions for such visits;
- Press the government of Azerbaijan to allow religious groups to operate freely without registration, including amending the religion law’s registration requirements;
- Specify freedom of religion or belief as a grants category and area of activity in the Democracy and Conflict Mitigation program of the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Democracy Commission Small Grants program administered by the U.S. Embassy, and encourage the publicly-funded National Endowment for Democracy to make grants for civil society

programs on tolerance and freedom of religion or belief; and

- Increase U.S. government-funded radio and Internet programs, particularly in the Azeri language on issues such as religious freedom, including its role in U.S. foreign policy.

Additional Statement by Commissioners Daniel Mark and Katrina Lantos Swett:

We agree with what is written in the chapter on Azerbaijan. We write in order to provide some more context, especially in light of what was learned during the Commissioner-led delegation to Azerbaijan in 2015. This may help explain why Azerbaijan belongs on Tier 2 alongside other countries that might strike some as far more egregious violators of religious freedom.

Azerbaijan, as the chapter notes at the outset, has a long history of religious tolerance among its government and its people. Religious freedom in Azerbaijan has roots going back to its pre-Soviet days. Though Soviet repression of religion must be unequivocally condemned, it also had the result of reinforcing the secular character of the nation, leaving Azerbaijan without an indigenous brand of fundamentalist Islam that infects other countries.

Currently, Azerbaijan has religious tolerance for some minority communities, particularly those with a long history in the country, including Russian Orthodox, Catholics, and Jews. The freedom with which those faith communities live is remarkable and perhaps unique among Muslim-majority countries. It is all the more noteworthy given the conditions elsewhere in Central Asia as well as in the Middle East. Nevertheless, the government's role in restricting religious freedom must not be overlooked.

First, the government regulates all religious communities, requiring registration, limiting activities to specific location, and controlling the importation and production of religious publications, among other violations. USCIRF continues to oppose such regulation of religious communities and activities in many countries. Such regulation of religion is wrong whether it is applied to all religious groups equally or to some groups selectively.

Second, in its effort to prevent the spread of Islamist extremism, the government represses Muslim worship

and other religious practice, such as through the closing of mosques and the imprisonment of imams. Even though official concerns about the infiltration of Islamism into Azerbaijan may be warranted to some extent, it is critical that the government not cast too wide a net, deeming all fervent expressions of Muslim faith to be a threat. As religious observance among Muslims grows in Azerbaijan, there is no easy solution for balancing between preserving religious freedom and combating extremism, but the government's efforts must in any case be more carefully calibrated.

Third, while the government has good relations with some religious minorities, other communities, especially those newer to Azerbaijan, are unnecessarily oppressed. The government seems unprepared to allow society to make room for Baptists, Seventh-day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and other small Protestant minorities. The government is wrong to see these groups as any sort of threat to the security of the state or the stability of the social fabric.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that the placement of Azerbaijan on Tier 2 points to a worry about the overall trajectory of religious freedom in Azerbaijan. The increasing restrictiveness toward religion, coupled with what appears to be diminishing respect for human rights more broadly, bodes poorly for the future of freedom in general and religious freedom in particular in Azerbaijan. During the USCIRF visit to Azerbaijan, many rightfully expressed pride in the country's tradition of religious tolerance. The placement of Azerbaijan on Tier 2 hopefully serves as an "early" warning sign to encourage change before conditions further deteriorate.



CUBA

Key Findings

During the reporting period, religious freedom conditions in Cuba deteriorated due to increased government actions and threats to close, demolish, or confiscate church properties. In addition, the Cuban government continues to harass religious leaders and laity, interfere in religious groups' internal affairs, and prevent democracy and human rights activists from participating in religious activities. Despite constitutional protections for religious freedom, the Cuban government actively limits, controls, and monitors religious practice through a restrictive system of laws and policies and government-authorized surveillance and harassment. Based on these concerns, USCIRF again places Cuba on Tier 2 in 2016. Cuba has been on USCIRF's Tier 2 since 2004.

50. An unknown number of Greek and Russian Orthodox Christians, Buddhists, and Baha'is also live in Cuba.

While the Cuban constitution guarantees freedom of religion or belief, this protection is limited by other constitutional and legal provisions. Article 8 affirms that "the State recognizes, respects, and guarantees religious freedom," and article 55 further guarantees the right to "... change religious beliefs or not have any, and to profess, within the confines of the law, the religious worship of his/her preference." However, article 62 qualifies that all rights can be limited based on the "aims of the socialist State and the nation's determination to build socialism and communism..." The Cuban Penal Code's Abuse of Liberty of Worship clause permits the imprisonment of any person who the government determines abuses constitutional religious freedom protections by placing religious beliefs in conflict with other state goals.

While the Cuban constitution guarantees freedom of religion or belief, this protection is limited by other constitutional and legal provisions.

Background

Religious adherence continues to grow in Cuba, although there are no reliable statistics of Cubans' religious affiliations. Sixty to 70 percent of the population is estimated to be Roman Catholic and five percent Protestant. According to the State Department, various religious communities approximate their membership numbers as follows: Assemblies of God, 110,000; the four Baptist conventions, 100,000; Jehovah's Witnesses, 96,000; Methodists, 36,000; Seventh-day Adventists, 35,000; Anglicans, 22,500; Presbyterians, 15,500; Muslims, 2,000-3,000; Jews, 1,500; Quakers, 300; and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons),

The Cuban government controls religious activities through the Office of Religious Affairs (ORA) of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party and the Ministry of Justice. The government requires religious communities to register with the Ministry of Justice, including the disclosure of funding sources and locations for activities and certification that they are not duplicating the activities of other registered religious communities. The ORA has final authority over registration decisions. Currently, 54 religious communities are registered. Only registered religious communities are allowed to receive foreign visitors, import religious materials, meet in approved houses of worship, and apply to travel abroad for religious purposes. Local Communist

Party officials must approve all religious activities of registered groups other than regular worship services, such as repairing or building houses of worship and holding processions or events outside religious buildings. The government also restricts religious practices by denying some religious communities access to state media to air services, limiting exit visas, requiring the registration of publications, limiting the entry of foreign religious workers, and restricting bank accounts to one per denomination or religious association. Further, the ORA continues to pressure denominations to make their internal governing structures, statutes and constitutions more hierarchical, which aids government efforts to control religious communities.

In 2005, the Cuban government implemented a new law to increase oversight over house churches. Known as Directive 43 and Resolution 46, the law requires all house churches to register and submit to the government detailed information on their membership, the house church's inhabitants, and the schedule of services. It permits no more than three meetings to be held per week, bars foreign citizens from participating in services without government permission, and requires house churches of the same denomination to be at least two kilometers apart.

from February to August 2015 without trial for "illegal religious activities" for leading an unregistered church.

The government also used a new legal decree to expropriate church properties and require them to pay rent to the government. In January 2015, the Cuban government announced Legal Decree 322, the General Law on Housing, purportedly to regulate private properties and zoning laws. However, Cuban authorities used Legal Decree 322 to expropriate 15 Methodist churches, as well as other churches of various denominations in the more politically-active eastern part of the country.

Continued Targeting and Harassment of Independent Religious Communities

The government continued to harass the Apostolic Reformation and the Eastern and Western Baptist Conventions. These independent, vocal, and large religious communities are resistant to government interference. As in past reporting periods, the Apostolic Reformation has been targeted for government harassment including: short-term arrests of leaders; government-organized mob attacks; confiscations, destruction of, or threats to destroy church property; harassment and surveillance of church members and their relatives;

During the reporting period, the Cuban government increasingly targeted houses of worship with closure, confiscation, and destruction.

Religious Freedom Conditions 2015–2016

Threats to Houses of Worship

During the reporting period, the Cuban government increasingly targeted houses of worship with closure, confiscation, and destruction. Since 2005, authorities rarely enforced the registration requirement for house churches and infrequently registered house churches that did submit applications; this changed in 2015. In the most egregious example, the government designated 2,000 Assemblies of God churches as illegal and ordered their closure, confiscation, or demolition, although these actions have not been taken. Also, Protestant Pastor Jesús Noel Carballeda was imprisoned

finances on churches; and threats to leaders and members of loss of employment, housing, or educational opportunities. Of particular concern is the ongoing harassment of Apostolic Reformation Reverend Yiorvis Bravo Denis and government efforts to seize his family home and church, the latter serving as the religious community's headquarters. Both the Eastern and the Western Baptist Conventions continued to report surveillance and harassment by state officials, including receiving death threats and being victims of "acts of repudiation" (demonstrations against them by government supporters). The two denominations also reported threats of church destruction or confiscation.

Denial of Religious Freedom for Democracy and Human Rights Activists

As in previous reporting periods, the Cuban government continued to deny democracy and human rights activists their constitutional rights to freedom of religion or belief. More than 100 separate incidents were reported in 2015 of Ladies in White members and other human rights and democracy activists being prevented from attending Sunday Masses. In the majority of cases, these individuals were detained on their way to Mass and released hours later. Individuals reported being beaten and harassed during their detentions. In a new development, they also reported being prevented from attending Bible study groups and prayer meetings. More than 150 democracy and human rights activists were detained during Pope Francis' trip to Cuba in September, preventing them from attending the pontiff's Mass. Further, church leaders reported pressure from government officials to expel or shun such activists. Religious leaders who did not comply were threatened with church confiscation or destruction.

were dominated by the U.S. trade sanctions and travel embargo on Cuba imposed in 1960 and reinforced by the 1996 Helms-Burton Act. The U.S. government's imprisonment of five Cubans arrested in 1998 for spying (known as the "Cuban Five"), and Cuba's detention of USAID contractor Alan Gross, also significantly hampered the relationship.

Since December 2014, the United States and Cuba re-established embassies in each other's capitals. The United States also removed Cuba from the State Sponsor of Terrorism list; eased restrictions on authorized travel to Cuba; and increased remittance levels, the import of Cuban products, the export of U.S. telecommunications equipment, and U.S.-led training opportunities for and exportation and/or sale of goods and services to Cuban private businesses and farmers. U.S. institutions were permitted to open banking accounts with Cuban financial institutions and U.S. credit and debit cards were permitted to be used in Cuba. Also Secretary of State John Kerry traveled to Cuba in July to re-open the U.S. Embassy; he was the first Secretary of State to travel

. . . the Cuban government continued to deny democracy and human rights activists their constitutional rights to freedom of religion or belief.

Positive Developments

As in previous years, positive developments continue for the Catholic Church and other religious communities, such as the Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian-Reformed Church. These religious denominations continued to report increased opportunities to repair houses of worship, receive exit visas, import religious materials, receive contributions from co-religionists outside Cuba, and conduct charitable, educational, and community service projects.

U.S. Policy

In December 2014, President Barack Obama announced a "New Course on Cuba," starting a process of normalizing diplomatic relations between the countries and significantly lifting trade and travel restrictions. For decades, U.S.-Cuban policies and relations

to the country in 70 years. The White House announced in February 2016 that President Obama would travel to Cuba March 21-22, the first sitting president to do so since 1928.

This was the third time the Obama Administration eased U.S. sanctions on Cuba. In April 2009, the President lifted restrictions on the number of times Cubans in the United States can travel to Cuba and the amount of money they can send to relatives in the country. On the same day, President Obama also announced that the United States would begin issuing licenses for companies to provide cellular telephone and television services in Cuba. In March 2010, President Obama announced that technology companies would be permitted to export Internet services to Cuba to increase freedom of expression and allow human rights activists to collect and share information.

Recommendations

As part of the U.S.-Cuba ongoing discussions, the U.S. government should take significant action to convey that the change in policy does not diminish the Cuban government's need to improve religious freedom conditions on the island. As such, USCIRF recommends that the U.S. government should:

and materials with, and interact with co-religionists in the United States;

- Reinvigorate the U.S.-Cuba human rights dialogue and include religious freedom in the discussions;
- Use appropriated funds to advance Internet freedom and protect Cuban activists by supporting the devel-

As part of the U.S.-Cuba ongoing discussions, the U.S. government should take significant action to convey that the change in policy does not diminish the Cuban government's need to improve religious freedom conditions on the island.

- Press the Cuban government to:
 - stop arrests and harassment of religious leaders;
 - end the practice of preventing democracy and human rights activists from attending religious services;
 - cease interference with religious activities and religious communities' internal affairs;
 - allow unregistered religious groups to operate freely and legally and revise government policies that restrict religious services in homes or other personal property;
 - lift restrictions on the building or repairing of houses of worship, holding of religious processions, importation of religious materials, and admittance of religious leaders; and
 - hold accountable police and other security personnel for actions that violate the human rights of religious practitioners;
 - Encourage Cuban authorities to extend an official invitation for unrestricted visits by the U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, USCIRF, and the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief;
 - Increase opportunities for Cuban religious leaders from both registered and unregistered religious communities to travel to, exchange aid
- opment and accessibility of new technologies and programs to counter censorship and to facilitate the free flow of information in and out of Cuba; and
- Encourage international partners, including key Latin American and European countries and regional blocs, to ensure that violations of freedom of religion or belief and related human rights are part of all formal and informal multilateral or bilateral discussions with Cuba.



INDIA

Key Findings

In 2015, religious tolerance deteriorated and religious freedom violations increased in India. Minority communities, especially Christians, Muslims, and Sikhs, experienced numerous incidents of intimidation, harassment, and violence, largely at the hands of Hindu nationalist groups. Members of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) tacitly supported these groups and used religiously-divisive language to further inflame tensions. These issues, combined with longstanding problems of police bias and judicial inadequacies, have created a pervasive climate of impunity, where religious minority communities feel increasingly insecure, with no recourse when religiously-motivated crimes occur. In the last year, “higher caste” individuals and local political leaders also prevented Hindus considered part of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Dalits) from entering religious temples. Additionally, the national government or state governments applied several laws to restrict religious conversion, cow slaughter, and foreign funding of NGOs. Moreover, an Indian constitutional provision deeming Sikhs, Buddhists, and Jains to be Hindus contradicts international standards of freedom of religion or belief. Based on these concerns, USCIRF again places India on Tier 2, where it has been since 2009. However, USCIRF notes that India is on a negative trajectory in terms of religious freedom. USCIRF will continue to monitor the situation closely during the year ahead to determine if India should be recommended to the U.S. State Department for designation as a “country of particular concern,” or CPC, under the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) for systematic, ongoing, egregious violations of religious freedom.

Background

India is the world’s largest democracy with about 1.26 billion people, or about a one-sixth of the total world

population. Nearly 80 percent of the population is Hindu (nearly one billion adherents); more than 14 percent is Muslim (roughly 172 million adherents, the third largest Muslim population in the world); 2.3 percent is Christian (over 25 million adherents); 1.7 percent is Sikh (20 million adherents); less than one percent is Buddhist (eight million adherents); less than one percent is Jain (five million adherents); and about one percent adhere to other faiths or profess no religion (eight million people). India is a multi-religious, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural country and a secular democracy. Despite these positive characteristics, however, the Indian government has long struggled to maintain religious and communal harmony, protect minority communities from abuses, and provide justice when crimes occur.

USCIRF will continue to monitor the situation closely during the year ahead to determine if India should be recommended to the U.S. State Department for designation as a “country of particular concern,” or CPC. . . .

The country has experienced periodic outbreaks of large-scale communal violence against religious minorities, including in Uttar Pradesh in 2013, Odisha in 2007-2008, Gujarat in 2002, and Delhi in 1984. In 2013, in Muzaffarnagar district, Uttar Pradesh, violence between Hindus and Muslims left more than 40 people dead, at least a dozen women and girls raped, and upwards of 50,000 displaced, many of whom still have not returned to their homes. In Odisha in 2007-2008, violence between Hindus and Christians killed nearly 40 people, destroyed churches and homes, and

displaced nearly 10,000. In Gujarat in 2002, violence between Hindus and Muslims left between 1,200-2,500 Muslims dead, destroyed homes, and forced 100,000 people to flee. The 1984 anti-Sikhs riots resulted in deaths of more than 3,000 Sikhs. India established special structures, such as Fast-Track Courts, Special Investigative Teams (SITs), and independent commissions, to investigate and adjudicate crimes stemming from these incidents. However, their impact has been hindered by limited capacity, an antiquated judiciary, inconsistent use, political corruption, and religious bias, particularly at the state and local levels. Many cases stemming from these incidents are still pending in the India court system.

these communities report that targeting of them has increased under the BJP government. Christian-affiliated NGOs and religious leaders report that Christians are particularly at risk in states that have adopted “Freedom of Religion Act(s),” commonly referred to as anti-conversion laws. Sikh communities, who have long pursued justice for the 1984 violence or advocated for Sikhism to be recognized as separate from Hinduism, also have been targeted by the Indian government for years. Muslim communities report that since the 2008 and 2010 terrorist attacks in India, Muslims have faced undue scrutiny and arbitrary arrests and detentions, which the government justifies as necessary to counter terrorism.

Since the BJP assumed power, religious minority communities have been subject to derogatory comments by BJP politicians and numerous violent attacks and forced conversions by affiliated Hindu nationalist groups. . . .

Minority religious leaders and laity, including from the Muslim, Christian, and Sikh communities, and non-government organizations (NGOs), attribute India’s recent decline in religious freedom and communal harmony to religiously-divisive campaigning in advance of the country’s 2014 general election and the BJP’s victory in that election. Since the BJP assumed power, religious minority communities have been subject to derogatory comments by BJP politicians and numerous violent attacks and forced conversions by affiliated Hindu nationalist groups, such as Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Sangh Parivar, and Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP). The BJP is a Hindu nationalist party that was founded in collaboration with the RSS, and the two maintain close ties at the highest levels. These groups subscribe to the ideology of *Hindutva* (“Hinduness”), which seeks to make India a Hindu state based on Hinduism and Hindu values. The BJP officially adopted the *Hindutva* ideology and agenda in 1998.

While Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, and other minority communities recognize that religious freedom issues in India predate the current government,

A USCIRF delegation planned to visit India in March 2016, but the Indian government failed to issue visas to the group, in effect a denial.

Religious Freedom Conditions 2015–2016 **Violations against Muslims**

During the past year, the Muslim community in India reported increased harassment, violence, and targeted hate campaigns. Muslims often are accused of being terrorists; spying for Pakistan; forcibly kidnapping, converting, and marrying Hindu women; and disrespecting Hinduism by slaughtering cows. The Muslim community reports that these abuses come from Hindu nationalists, including local and state politicians, and the national government has failed to address these problems and, at times, contributes to them. Members of the BJP and RSS have stoked religious tensions by claiming that Muslim population growth is an attempt to diminish the Hindu majority. For example, high-ranking BJP parliamentarians, such as Yogi Adityanath and Sakshi Maharaj, reportedly called for laws to control the Muslim population. In a February 2015 video of a Sangh Parivar meeting, participants called for “corner[ing]

Muslims and destroy[ing] the demons;" several BJP state and national political leaders are visible in the video, including sitting on the dais. Muslims indicate that they rarely report abuses because of societal and police bias, and police intimidation by the RSS. Additionally, Muslim community leaders and members report that mosques are monitored and young boys and men are detained regularly and indiscriminately and held without charges on the pretext of countering terrorism.

two years have used alleged violations of beef ban laws to inflame Hindus to violently attack Indian Muslims.

Violations against Christians

Christian communities, across many denominations, reported numerous, and increased, incidents of harassment and attacks in the last year, which they attribute to Hindu nationalist groups with the BJP's tacit support. In early 2016, an advocacy group

Christian communities, across many denominations, reported numerous, and increased, incidents of harassment and attacks in the last year, which they attribute to Hindu nationalist groups with the BJP's tacit support.

Restrictions on Cow Slaughter

Article 48 of the Indian constitution and most Indian states (24 out of 29, as of 2015) significantly restrict or ban cow slaughter, which is required for Muslims during Eid al-Adha (Festival of the Sacrifice). The application of these provisions also economically marginalizes Muslims and Dalits (who adhere to various religious faiths); many members of these communities work in the beef industry, including slaughter for consumption, hauling items, and producing leather goods. Under state criminal laws, individuals can face up to 10 years in jail or a fine of up to 10,000 rupees (US\$150) for the slaughter or possession of cows or bulls or the consumption of beef, and mere accusations of violations can lead to violence. For example, in September 2015, in Bisahra village, Uttar Pradesh, a mob of nearly 1,000 people killed Mohammad Akhlaq for allegedly killing a cow, and seriously injured his son. Eight people were arrested and charged with murder and rioting, but no additional information was available by the end of the reporting period. In October 2015, in Indian-administered Kashmir, Zahid Rasool Bhat was set ablaze and later died of his injuries for allegedly transporting cows to be slaughtered. Five people were arrested for murder, rioting, conspiracy, and the use of explosives. A state government spokesman said a fast-track court would be established. According to members of the Muslim community, members of the BJP and the RSS over the last

reported that there were at least 365 major attacks on Christians and their institutions during 2015, compared to 120 in 2014; these incidents affected more than 8,000 Christians. For example, in November 2015, Hindu nationalists severely beat 40 Christians worshipping in a private home in Telangana state, killing one woman's unborn child. In February 2016, a mob of 35 people beat Father Jose Kannumkuzhy of the Ramanathapuram Syro-Malabar diocese and three lay church officials in Tamil Nadu state. Reportedly, local police seldom provide protection, refuse to accept complaints, rarely investigate, and sometimes encourage Christians to move or hide their religion.

In 2015, local governments appeared to capitulate to demands for or compel accusations of "forced conversation" made by the RSS to curtail the activities of Christian groups, leading to government-sanctioned restrictions. For example, in February 2016, the Dahar village council in Madhya Pradesh state issued a 5,000 rupees fine (US\$75) to the local Christian community for "breaching peace and harmony," after local RSS members claimed that they were trying to convert Hindus. In May 2015, authorities in Dhar District, Madhya Pradesh, banned on "law and order" grounds a Pentecostal meeting that occurs annually. The community reported that they sought and were issued the appropriate permits, which were revoked later due to what the community believes was RSS pressure. According to human rights

groups, over 50 villages in the Bastar District of Chhattisgarh State effectively banned all non-Hindu rites, meetings, and practices. In October 2015, the state's Supreme Court lifted the ban, noting that it violated the fundamental right to preach and propagate religion. However, reports continue that Christians in the area are still subjected to social boycotts; denied food, clean water, and employment; and physically attacked or forced to convert to Hinduism.

members of the ruling BJP party, including the party's president Amit Shah, called for a nationwide anti-conversion law.

Hindu Nationalist Groups and Forced Conversions

In December 2014, Hindu nationalist groups announced plans to "reconvert" thousands of Christian and Muslims families to Hinduism as part of a so-called *Ghar Wapsi* (returning home) program. In

Observers note that [anti-conversion] laws create a hostile, and on occasion violent, environment for religious minority communities because they do not require any evidence to support accusations of wrongdoing.

Anti-Conversion Laws

Six Indian states – Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, and Odisha – have so-called "Freedom of Religion Act(s)," commonly referred to as anti-conversion laws. Rajasthan state's parliament also passed an anti-conversion bill, but it was never signed by the state's Chief Minister. These laws, based on concerns about unethical conversion tactics, generally require government officials to assess the legality of conversions out of Hinduism only, and provide for fines and imprisonment for anyone who uses force, fraud, or "inducement" to convert another. While the laws purportedly protect religious minorities from forced conversions, they are one-sided, only concerned about conversions away from Hinduism but not towards Hinduism. Observers note that these laws create a hostile, and on occasion violent, environment for religious minority communities because they do not require any evidence to support accusations of wrongdoing. For example, in January 2016, police detained 15 Christians in Karnataka state after members of two Hindu nationalists groups, Bajrang Sal and VHP, alleged that the church leaders were forcibly converting Hindus; they were released later without charge. In December 2015, eight Christians were acquitted of forced conversion in Puttar town, in Dakshina Kannada district, Karnataka state. They originally were charged in 2007, and were released until the hearing. In 2015, high-ranking

advance of the program, the Hindu groups sought to raise money for their campaign, noting that it cost nearly 200,000 rupees (US\$3,200) per Christian and 500,000 rupees (US\$8,000) per Muslim. After domestic and international outcry, the RSS postponed their plans. Nevertheless, smaller-scale forced conversions of members of India's religious minority communities were reported in 2015. For example, in July 2015, 15 Dalit Christians reportedly were forced to "reconvert" in Kerala. In addition, in February 2016, the RSS reportedly placed signs in train stations throughout India that said Christians had to leave India or convert to Hinduism or they will be killed by 2021.

Article 25 of the Constitution

Article 25 of India's constitution states that "Hindus shall be construed as including a reference to persons professing the Sikh, Jain or Buddhist religion, and the reference to Hindu religious institutions shall be construed accordingly." The lack of recognition of Sikhism, Jainism, and Buddhism as distinct religions subjects members of these faiths to Hindu Personal Status Laws. Since members of these groups are considered Hindus, they are forced to register their marriages, inherit their properties, and adopt children by classifying themselves as Hindus. Additionally, since they are considered Hindu by law, they are denied access to social services or employment and educational preferences available to other religious minority communities.

Violations against Sikhs

In addition to the violations resulting from Article 25, Sikhs often are harassed and pressured to reject religious practices and beliefs that are distinct to Sikhism, such as wearing Sikh dress and unshorn hair, and carrying religious items, including the *kirpan*. The Sikh community also reports that the Indian government ignores their religious freedom concerns by targeting Sikhs under the country's sedition law regardless of whether they in fact support the Khalistan movement (a political movement seeking full legal recognition of Sikhism and a Sikh state in the Punjab). For example, in October 2015, Sikhs protested in Chandigarh, Punjab state after pages from the Sikh Holy Scripture (Guru Granth Sahib) were found desecrated. Police officers opened fire at the unarmed protestors, killing two and injuring 70 others, and several Sikh protesters were arrested under the sedition law.

Christians and Muslims, do not qualify for the official reserves for jobs or school placement available to Hindu Dalits, putting these groups at a significant economic and social advancement disadvantage.

Foreign (Contribution) Regulation Act

The 2010 Foreign (Contribution) Regulation Act regulates the inflow and use of money received from foreign individuals, associations, and companies that may be "detrimental to the international interest." In April 2015, the Ministry of Home Affairs revoked the licenses of nearly 9,000 charitable organizations. The Ministry stated that the revocations were for non-compliance with the Act's reporting requirements, but numerous religious and non-religious NGOs claimed that they were in retaliation for highlighting the government's poor record on human trafficking, labor conditions, religious freedom and other human rights, environmental, and food

In several cases, Hindu Dalits were prohibited from entering temples, by "higher caste" individuals or local political leaders.

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Dalits)

Dalits, or individuals within the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, officially are estimated at over 200 million people, although this only includes Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, and Jain Dalits since the Indian government does not view non-Hindus (as it defines that term) as Dalits. In January 2016, Rita Izsák-Ndiaye, the UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, reported that crimes against Dalits in India appeared to have increased in 2015. Hindu Dalits also faced religious discrimination in 2015. In several cases, Hindu Dalits were prohibited from entering temples, by "higher caste" individuals or local political leaders. For example, in seven villages in Tirupur district, Tamil Nadu state, Dalits reportedly were not permitted to enter or worship at temples because their entrance would "unsanctify" the temples. A district court case challenging this prohibition is pending. As of June 2015, reportedly there were 13 cases in eight districts in the state of Gujarat over the last five years where Dalits were forbidden from entering temples. Additionally, non-Hindu Dalits, especially

issues. Among the affected organizations were Christian NGOs that receive money from foreign co-religionists to build or fund schools, orphanages, and churches, and human rights activists and their funders. For example, two NGOs, the Sabrang Trust and Citizens for Justice and Peace (CJP), which run conflict-resolution programs and fight court cases stemming from the 2002 Gujarat riots, had their registrations revoked. Additionally, the U.S.-based Ford Foundation, which partially funds the Sabrang Trust and CJP, was put on a "watch list" when the Ministry of Home Affairs accused it of "abetting communal disharmony."

Communal Violence

The states of Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Odisha, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan tend to have the greatest number of incidents of religiously-motivated attacks and communal violence, as well as the largest religious minority populations. According to India's Union Home Ministry, in 2015, India experienced a

17% increase in communal violence, when compared to the previous year. In 2015, there were 751 reported incidents of communal violence, up from 644 in 2014. In 2015, 97 people were killed, and 2,246 people injured. Uttar Pradesh had 155 incidents, including 22 deaths and 419 injured. Other states that had significant numbers of communal violence incidents in 2015 were Bihar (71), Maharashtra (105), Madhya Pradesh (92), Karnataka (105), and Gujarat (55). Religious minority communities, especially Muslims, claim that the government often categorizes attacks against them as communal violence, to whitewash the religiously-motivated nature of the violence.

government to review several incidents that occurred during the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. Reportedly, the SIT has not released any reports on their investigations, nor filed any new cases.

U.S. Policy

India and the United States have increased ties over the last several decades, with India now described as a “strategic” and “natural” partner of the United States. In 2009, then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton launched the U.S.-India Strategic Dialogue, through which the countries discuss a wide range of bilateral, global, and regional issues, such as economic development,

The Indian courts are still adjudicating cases stemming from large-scale Hindu-Muslim communal violence in Uttar Pradesh (2013) and Gujarat (2002); Hindu-Christian communal violence in Odisha (2007–2008); and Hindu-Sikh communal violence in Delhi (1984).

Redress for Past Large-Scale Violence

The Indian courts are still adjudicating cases stemming from large-scale Hindu-Muslim communal violence in Uttar Pradesh (2013) and Gujarat (2002); Hindu-Christian communal violence in Odisha (2007-2008); and Hindu-Sikh communal violence in Delhi (1984). NGOs, religious leaders, and human rights activists allege religious bias and corruption in these investigations and adjudications. Additionally, religious minority communities claim that eye-witnesses often are intimidated not to testify, especially when local political, religious, or societal leaders have been implicated in cases. In February 2016, the first major verdict of the 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots acquitted 10 people charged with arson and murder for lack of evidence. Six rape cases registered with police are pending in the courts or are still being investigated. In August 2015, the Indian government gave a 15,000 rupee (US\$225) compensation to 12 victims of the Odisha violence; other court cases are still pending. Court cases connected to the Gujarat violence also are ongoing. However, there have been numerous credible reports that the government targets lawyers and activists for their work in seeking justice. In February 2015, a new SIT was formed by the Indian

business and trade, education, technology, counter-terrorism, and the environment. Issues related to religious freedom have not been included in any dialogues. In 2015, the relationship with India expanded to become the U.S.-India Strategic and Commercial Dialogue.

As part of the initiative to build ties between the United States and India, the Obama Administration has made significant overtures to the Indian government. The first state visit President Barack Obama hosted after taking office was for then-Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in November 2009. In November 2010, President Obama made a three-day state visit to India, and he returned in January 2015 to be the chief guest at India’s annual Republic Day festivities, becoming the first U.S. President to travel to India twice.

During his 2015 visit, and again in February 2015 at the U.S. National Prayer Breakfast, President Obama made notable remarks on India’s religious freedom concerns. In his speech at a town hall event in New Delhi, and again a few weeks later at the Prayer Breakfast, President Obama underscored the importance of religious freedom to India’s success, urging the country not to be “splintered along the lines of religious faith” and stated that India is a place where “. . . religious faiths of all

types have, on occasion, been targeted by other people of faith, simply due to their heritage and their beliefs - acts of intolerance that would have shocked [Mahatma] Gandhiji, the person who helped to liberate that nation.”

In mid-February 2015, at an event honoring Indian Catholic saints, Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated publicly, for the first time, that his government “will ensure that there is complete freedom of faith and that everyone has the undeniable right to retain or adopt the religion of his or her choice without coercion or undue influence.” This statement is notable given longstanding allegations that, as Chief Minister of Gujarat in 2002, he was complicit in anti-Muslim riots that occurred in that state.

In March 2016, USCIRF sought to visit India due to longstanding and increasing concerns about religious freedom conditions in the country. USCIRF had the full support of the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi. The Indian government, however, failed to issue visas to the USCIRF delegation, in effect a denial. State Department Spokesman, John Kirby, in response to a reporter’s question, stated that the Department was “disappointed by this news.” The Indian government also failed to issue visas to USCIRF in 2001 and 2009.

Recommendations

Since 2004, the United States and India have pursued a strategic relationship based on shared concerns about energy, security, and the growing threat of terrorism, as well as shared values of democracy and the rule of law. As part of this important relationship, USCIRF recommends that the U.S. government should:

- Integrate concern for religious freedom into bilateral contacts with India, including the framework of future Strategic Dialogues, at both the federal and provincial level, and encourage the strengthening of the capacity of state and central police to implement effective measures to prohibit and punish cases of religious violence and protect victims and witnesses;
- Increase the U.S. Embassy’s attention to issues of religious freedom and related human rights, including through visits by the Ambassador and other officials to areas where communal and religiously-motivated

violence has occurred or is likely to occur and meetings with religious communities, local governmental leaders, and police;

- Press the Indian government to allow USCIRF to visit the country, and urge the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Religious Freedom or Belief to visit India;
- Urge India to boost training on human rights and religious freedom standards and practices for the police and judiciary, particularly in states and areas with a history or likelihood of religious and communal violence;
- Urge the central Indian government to press states that have adopted anti-conversion laws to repeal or amend them to conform with internationally-recognized human rights standards; make clear U.S. opposition to laws that restrict freedom of thought and association; and
- Urge the Indian government to publicly rebuke government officials and religious leaders that make derogatory statements about religious communities.



INDONESIA

Key Findings

Incidents of discrimination against religious minorities and attacks on religious properties continue to occur in Indonesia, typically isolated incidents localized in certain provinces. Radical groups perpetrate many of these attacks and influence the responses of local government officials when violence occurs. These groups target non-Muslims, such as Christians, and non-Sunni Muslims whose practice of Islam falls outside what the groups deem acceptable. Encouragingly, in 2015, President Joko Widodo, Religious Affairs Minister Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, and other government officials regularly spoke out against religious-based violence. While such statements are in stark contrast to the previous administration's open support for radical groups, the longstanding policies and practices that motivate and provide cover for radical groups' actions against religious communities remain in place and continue to mar Indonesia's prospects for genuine religious freedom. Based on these concerns, in 2016 USCIRF again places Indonesia on Tier 2, where it has been since 2003.

Background

Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim-majority country: more than 87 percent of the nearly 256 million population identify as Muslim. While the vast majority of Indonesia's Muslims are Sunni, up to three million are Shi'a and up to 400,000 Ahmadi. Christians represent seven percent of the population, Catholics nearly three percent, and Hindus nearly two percent. However, in some areas of the country, Christians or Hindus comprise the majority. Indonesia recognizes six religions: Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism. Smaller segments of the population practice unrecognized faiths, such as Sikhs, Jews, Baha'is, and Falun Gong.

President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo and his administration have demonstrated a more inclusive approach

toward religious communities, which has helped mitigate some religious-based violence. The government is working on a religious protection bill that is expected to address issues such as houses of worship and the treatment of non-recognized religious groups. Those familiar with drafts of the bill, including Indonesia's independent National Human Rights Commission, Komnas HAM, have raised concerns it includes problematic language from existing policies and regulations. In the meantime, existing discriminatory policies are still in place.

... the Setara Institute calculated a 33 percent increase in incidents of violence over the previous year, many committed by police.

Komnas HAM and local non-governmental organizations assessed significant increases in religious freedom violations and violence in 2015. For example, the Setara Institute calculated a 33 percent increase in incidents of violence over the previous year, many committed by police. Violations rarely are investigated and attackers, whether police or radical mob groups, continue their abuses with relative impunity.

In August 2015, a USCIRF Commissioner-led delegation visited Indonesia, meeting in the capital, Jakarta, and the city of Bogor in West Java with government officials, representatives from multiple religions and faiths, Muslim organizations, and civil society organizations. The delegation raised specific cases of religious-based violence and discussed policies to protect religious freedom. Government officials described their efforts to promote understanding across faiths, support religious education, and teach local officials about religious regulations. Government officials acknowledged to USCIRF

that some groups and individuals, such as the Indonesian Council of Ulema (MUI) and the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), target Muslims they perceive to be practicing Islam in unacceptable ways.

Religious Freedom Conditions 2015–2016

General Conditions

During USCIRF's visit to Indonesia, several interlocutors noted that their religious communities experienced challenges in certain parts of the country but otherwise spoke of generally fair conditions for religious freedom. Individuals of many faiths – even beyond the six officially recognized religions – have the flexibility to practice, worship, and teach freely. Some religiously diverse neighborhoods have long traditions of interfaith interaction and cooperation. Komnas HAM has expanded its investigations into religious freedom violations, and has noted the difficulties in preventing local officials from discriminating against religious minorities and reminding them of their responsibility to follow national laws and policies.

Forced Closures of and Violence against Religious Properties

In some parts of the country, local governments commonly restrict or prevent religious practice pursuant to government policy, specifically the 2006 Joint Regulation on Houses of Worship, which requires permits for houses of worship. Under the 2006 Regulation, obtaining a permit requires: a list of 90 congregation members; signatures from 60 local households of a different faith; recommendations from the local religious affairs office and local Religious Harmony Forum (FKUB); and approval from the sub-district head. The Regulation provides local governments the latitude to deny permits to smaller congregations and the authority to close or tear down houses of worship built prior to 2006. Komnas HAM and local NGOs have raised concerns about the violence and conflict caused by the 2006 Regulation.

For example, in October 2015, protestors in Aceh Singkil District in the province of Aceh demanded the local government close 10 churches without permits. Perceiving the government to be acting too slowly, a reported mob of hundreds attacked and set fire to two of the churches; one man was killed. The next day on Twitter, President Jokowi urged an end to the violence,

stating that violence harms diversity. Although the government deployed additional police and military troops in the area, thousands of mostly Christian residents fled the province. Due to the lack of permits, the authorities tore down several of the churches. In July, hardliner groups and local Muslim residents also protested several churches in Yogyakarta over alleged permit issues.

Similarly, local officials closed the Indonesian Christian Church (GKI) Yasmin in Bogor, West Java after hardliners pressured the local government to suspend the church's permit in 2008. Despite a 2010 Supreme Court ruling ordering the church be reopened, it remains closed. In 2015, the city revealed plans to relocate the church, which the congregation rejected because they had not been consulted. At Christmas, the GKI Yasmin church joined with fellow West Java church, the Filadelfia Batak Church (HKBP) closed by the Bekasi city government in 2011, in holding outdoor services across from the Presidential Palace in Jakarta.

Christian churches are not the only houses of worship targeted. In July 2015, a crowd of approximately 200 people threw rocks and set fire to a mosque in Tolikara, Papua when local Muslims gathered to perform Idul Fitri prayers. The fire spread to several nearby shops and forced the evacuation of approximately 200 local residents.

. . . a reported mob of hundreds attacked and set fire to two of the churches [in Aceh Singkil District]; one man was killed.

Ahmadis

The government's 2008 Joint Ministerial Decree bans Ahmadis from spreading their faith, and the MUI issued a *fatwa* (religious edict) declaring the Ahmadiyya faith to be deviant and heretical. Over the years, some religious leaders and entire provinces have expanded restrictions on Ahmadis, banning all Ahmadiyya activities; some Ahmadiyya mosques have been closed as a result. While meeting USCIRF, Ahmadis described facing challenges in some parts of the country in building new mosques and obtaining ID cards. They also reported being blocked

by mobs during Friday prayers and poor responsiveness from local police, including inaction against harassment and attacks. However, Ahmadis expressed optimism in the Jokowi government, citing its openness to speak with members of their community.

Beginning in June 2015, protestors in South Jakarta, some belonging to FPI, prevented Ahmadis from performing Friday prayers at the An Nur Mosque on two non-successive Fridays, and on July 8 the mosque was sealed. Jakarta Governor Basuki “Ahok” Purnama ordered the mosque reopened, but it remained closed at the end of the reporting period. Basuki’s support is a welcome development, including his decision to allow Ahmadis in the area to worship from home. Meanwhile, Ahmadis in other parts of the country also experience restrictions and abuses. A total of 118 Ahmadis remain internally displaced in Mataram, West Nusa Tenggara after sectarian violence forced their eviction more than nine years ago.

Shi’a Muslims

Like Ahmadis, Shi’a Muslims are viewed as practicing a “deviant” or “heretical” form of Islam. Throughout 2015, conservatives and hardliners within the Sunni majority, including those affiliated with the Anti-Shi’a National Alliance, continued to harass and threaten Shi’a Muslims. Shi’a Muslims who spoke with the USCIRF delegation during its visit reported that members of their community face discrimination in civil service positions and accusations of blasphemy. However, they noted few

In October 2015, Bogor Mayor Bima Arya Sugiarto banned the Shi’a Muslim commemoration of Ashura.

restrictions establishing mosques, although Shi’a Muslims in Indonesia generally do not seek to build their own mosques. Approximately 300 Shi’a Muslims from East Java have been displaced since 2012 after a mob attacked their village and forced them from their homes. In October 2015, Bogor Mayor Bima Arya Sugiarto banned the Shi’a Muslim commemoration of Ashura. Protestors in Bandung interrupted Ashura celebrations as well.

Baha’is

Indonesia’s Baha’i community still experiences government discrimination because of their faith. Despite Religious Affairs Minister Lukman’s 2014 statement that the Baha’i faith should be recognized as a religion protected by the constitution, the government has not changed official policy. Baha’i followers are not able to obtain state recognition of civil marriages, have limited educational opportunities, and must state a faith other than their own on their ID cards. Only recently have some Baha’is been allowed to leave blank the religion field on their ID cards. Although some schools now allow Baha’is to provide their own religious education, Baha’i instruction is not part of the official curriculum on religion set by the national standards board, and some Baha’i students instead are forced to study Protestantism or Catholicism.

Constitutional Court Fails to Protect Interfaith Marriage

In June 2015, the Constitutional Court ruled against a request for judicial review of the 1974 Marriage Act to fully legalize interfaith marriages. Some government officials and religious leaders interpret Article 2(1) of the Act in a way that prevents couples of different faiths from obtaining marriage licenses or having their marriages officially recognized unless one spouse changes religions. Government officials, including Religious Affairs Minister Lukman, lauded the Court’s decision for protecting religion; Lukman said interfaith marriage is not possible.

Blasphemy Law

Government officials told USCIRF that the laws criminalizing blasphemy and other forms of perceived religious insults are in place to protect citizens from violence. One official admitted the government “limits speech in order to prevent societal chaos.” Interlocutors told USCIRF that blasphemy cases are now typically tried under criminal defamation laws rather than the 1965 Blasphemy Law. Other interlocutors noted that the Blasphemy Law, whether directly in use or not, provides the majority the right to persecute the minority, particularly at the regional and local level where pressure from intolerant, hardline groups can be most severe.

Responses to Terrorism and Perceived Threats to Islam

Indonesia's experience with and fear of terrorism shape the government's position on certain freedoms, including religious freedom. The government has struggled to respond to a secretive religious sect known as the Fajar Nusantara Movement, or Gafatar. On January 19, 2016, a mob set fire to houses belonging to former Gafatar members in West Kalimantan; in total, several thousand residents fled or were evacuated. The government and Muslim leaders are suspicious of the group – believed to combine aspects of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism – although no link to terrorism has been proven. In February 2016, the MUI issued a *fatwa* pronouncing the group to be heretical, and the government announced plans to “re-educate” the members so they better understand “real Islam.” On January 14, 2016, terrorists affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) detonated bombs and opened fire in Jakarta, Indonesia's capital, killing eight people, including four of the terrorists. The police have since arrested or detained several dozen other suspected terrorists linked to the attack. In response, the government revised the 2003 Anti-Terrorism Law to expand police capabilities to prevent attacks and detain suspected terrorists, but human rights advocates criticized the draft for curtailing rights and opening the door to abuse of power; the revisions were still pending in parliament at the end of the reporting period.

Barack Obama. The two presidents released a joint statement agreeing to enhance the U.S.-Indonesia Comprehensive Partnership and further cooperate on key issues of bilateral interest, including: maritime affairs, defense, economic growth and development, energy development and energy security, and people-to-people contacts. A new Ministerial Strategic Dialogue was established, reflecting both countries' intent to deepen the bilateral relationship at all levels. In a speech during the visit, President Jokowi welcomed U.S. engagement in East Asia and announced Indonesia's intention to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership regional free trade agreement.

Although the Comprehensive Partnership facilitates multiple avenues for bilateral engagement, human rights have not been featured prominently despite cooperation between the two countries on broader issues, such as democracy and civil society. While in Malaysia, attending the November 2015 Association of Southeast Asian Nations Summit, President Obama praised Indonesia for representing tolerance and peace.

Following the Southeast Asia refugee and migration crisis in 2015, in which thousands of Rohingya Muslims left Burma and Bangladesh by sea for other countries, Indonesia sheltered at least 1,800 Rohingya Muslims, most of whom were from Burma. The vast majority resided in makeshift camps in Aceh Province. In May 2015, both Indonesia and Malaysia agreed to provide

Although the Comprehensive Partnership facilitates multiple avenues for bilateral engagement, human rights have not been featured prominently despite cooperation between the two countries on broader issues, such as democracy and civil society.

U.S. Policy

In a region plagued by democratic backsliding, stalled reforms, and the lingering vestiges of military or authoritarian control, Indonesia has made more democratic progress than its neighbors, serving as a role model in the region. Thus, the bilateral U.S.-Indonesia relationship carries strategic significance.

In October 2015, President Jokowi made his first official visit to the United States and met with President

temporary shelter to thousands of refugees for up to one year to allow time for resettlement to third countries. Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration Anne Richard visited Aceh in June 2015. By early 2016, countries in the region, including Indonesia, had convened two iterations of the “Special Meeting on Irregular Migration in the Indian Ocean,” to discuss how to assist individuals fleeing and the root causes of their movement. However, reports indicate that many of

the Rohingya Muslims from Bangladesh were repatriated to that country and those from Burma have left the Aceh camps, likely to make their way to Malaysia.

Recommendations

Indonesia's democratic success makes it an important partner for U.S. engagement and leadership in the Asia Pacific, a collaboration that will strengthen if Indonesia becomes a beacon not just of democracy, but of protecting human rights pursuant to international standards, including freedom of religion or belief. The United States must encourage the Indonesian government to prevent radical hardliners from shaping religious policies and take other measures to protect followers of all faiths. In addition, USCIRF recommends that the U.S. government should:

- Urge the Indonesian government, at central, provincial, and local levels, to comply with the Indonesian constitution and international human rights standards by:
 - overturning the 2008 Joint Ministerial Decree on the Ahmadiyya community and any provincial bans on Ahmadiyya religious practice;
 - amending or repealing Article 156(a) of the Penal Code and releasing anyone sentenced for “deviancy,” “denigrating religion,” or “blasphemy;” and
 - amending the 2006 Joint Regulation on Houses of Worship to allow religious communities the right to build and maintain their places of worship free from discrimination and threats;
- Offer technical assistance to the Indonesian government as it drafts legislation protecting religious freedom, as appropriate;
- Create specific bilateral working groups as part of the Comprehensive Partnership meetings with Indonesia to discuss human rights, religious freedom, and rule of law issues and establish concrete measures to address them;
- Raise in public and private with Indonesian officials the need to protect Indonesia's tradition of religious tolerance and pluralism by investigating, arresting, and prosecuting individuals or groups who

discriminate or commit acts of violence against religious communities;

- Prioritize funding for governmental, civil society, and media programs that promote religious freedom, counter extremism, build interfaith alliances, expand the reporting ability of human rights defenders, train government and religious officials to mediate sectarian disputes, and build capacity for legal reform advocates, judicial officials, and parliamentarians to better fulfill Indonesia's obligations under international human rights law; and
- Help to train Indonesian police and counter-terrorism officials, at all levels, to better address sectarian conflict, religion-related violence and terrorism, including violence against places of worship, through practices consistent with international human rights standards, while ensuring those officers have not been implicated in past human rights abuses pursuant to Leahy Amendment vetting procedures.



KAZAKHSTAN

Key Findings

Although the government of Kazakhstan promotes religious freedom for “traditional” religious groups at the international level, domestic religious freedom conditions further deteriorated in 2015. The country’s restrictive 2011 religion law bans unregistered religious activity and has been enforced through the closing of religious groups, police raids, detentions, and fines. The law’s onerous registration requirements have led to a sharp drop in the number of registered religious groups, both Muslim and Protestant. Based on these concerns, USCIRF again places Kazakhstan on Tier 2 in 2016, where it has been since 2013.

Background

Kazakhstan’s population is estimated at 17.7 million. About 65 percent are Muslim, mostly following the Hanafi school of Sunni Islam; Russian Orthodox are estimated at 25 percent; and other groups are under five percent, including Jews, Roman and Greek Catholics, various Protestant denominations, and others. During the Soviet period, many non-Kazakhs (mostly Russians) moved to Kazakhstan to expand agricultural output and eventually outnumbered native Kazakhs. After the country’s independence, many non-Kazakhs emigrated and official repatriation, mainly of ethnic Kazakhs from China, resulted in an increase of about one million ethnic Kazakhs.

high membership thresholds and bans unregistered religious activity; it restricts areas of permitted religious activity and teaching, distribution of religious materials, and training of clergy; and it sets new penalties for alleged violations. While the religion law declares that all religions are equal under the law, its preamble “recognizes the historical role of Hanafi Islam and Orthodox Christianity,” suggesting preferred official status. The government also supports “anti-sect centers” that promote intolerance against certain religious minorities. Religious groups are subject to police and secret police surveillance, but many members of vulnerable groups hesitate to discuss this issue out of fear of state reprisals.

Under the 2011 law’s complex registration rules, all religious organizations had to re-register by October 2012. Groups had to register with national, regional, and/or local Ministry of Justice authorities, with varying membership numbers needed for registration (50 at the local level; 500 in at least two regions on the regional level; 5,000 in each region on the national level). Many previously-registered groups could not meet the new thresholds and the country’s total number of registered religious groups fell sharply. Of the 48 “non-traditional” religious organizations, only 16 were re-registered. The 11,000 members of the Union of Evangelical Christian Baptists refuse to register as a matter of conscience. By 2013, only Muslim groups affiliated with the state-backed Muslim Board were

Religious groups are subject to police and secret police surveillance. . . .

Before its 2011 religion law, Kazakhstan was seen as one of the most liberal post-Soviet Central Asian states in regard to freedom of religion or belief. The religion law, however, sets complex registration requirements with

registered. Shi’a and Ahmadi Muslims were denied legal status, as were mosques attended mainly by particular ethnic groups. Catholic communities were exempt from registration due to a government agreement with the Holy See.

Observers view the two-year-long criminal prosecution that began in May 2013 of retired Presbyterian Pastor Kashkumbayev of Astana's registered Grace Church and the severe harassment of his family a symbol of the country's steep decline of respect for religious freedom. In a return to Soviet-style methods, during one month of his imprisonment, Pastor Kashkumbayev was forcibly injected with psychotropic drugs.

In July 2014, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev amended the country's administrative and criminal implementation codes. The new administrative articles largely maintain the previous penalties for alleged violations in regard to religion or belief, while the new criminal provisions place restrictions on convicts. The amended codes took effect on January 1, 2015.

The UN Special Rapporteurs on Freedom of Religion or Belief and Freedom of Assembly and Association visited Kazakhstan in 2014 and 2015, respectively. The Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief expressed concern "that non-registered religious groups can hardly exercise any collective religious functions in Kazakhstan." The Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Assembly and Association noted that, although the right to freedom of association is constitutionally guaranteed, "a web of laws and practice limit the real world freedom . . . [including] of religious associations to operate."

Since 2004, the Kazakh government has sponsored and hosted the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, a major international inter-faith meeting. In June 2015, Kazakhstan hosted the fifth session of that Congress.

register the Tatar-Bashkir community in the city of Petropavl and, in late 2015, attempted, but failed, to auction that community's mosque to a registered entity.

Penalties for Unregistered Religious Activity

The most frequent violations of the 2011 religion law that result in fines are for distributing religious texts without a license, discussing religion without the required "missionary" registration, and holding unregistered worship meetings. There are 25 Council of Churches Baptists who refuse to pay fines for unregistered religious activity and are on the Justice Ministry's list of debtors unable to leave Kazakhstan. Jehovah's Witnesses also have been prosecuted for committing this "offense." In December 2015, courts upheld large fines against two female Jehovah's Witnesses, including a 74-year-old pensioner, for talking about their faith.

Treatment of Protestants

In December 2015, a court in Astana sentenced Seventh-day Adventist Yklas Kabduakasov to two years in a labor camp, increasing the penalty from the seven years of house arrest a lower court had imposed the previous month. According to Forum 18 News Service, the 54-year-old father of eight was convicted of "incitement to religious violence" for discussing his faith. In January 2016, police in Aktau raided a worship meeting of the New Life Pentecostal Church, which has been a frequent target of official harassment. The two local pastors were ordered to bring church documents to police. In July 2015, police raided a children's summer camp near Almaty run by the registered Baptist Church in

Criminal charges of extremism are regularly brought against various individuals for peaceful religious activity.

Religious Freedom Conditions 2015–2016

Registration Issues

According to reports, Kazakh officials continued to obstruct activities of unregistered religious groups, such as a Protestant church in Atyrau, and of certain registered communities including the registered Hare Krishna group in Kostanai. Kazakh officials continued to refuse to

Kapshagai. Videos of the police raid were given to local media outlets, which repeated the official accusation that camp organizers were "illegally" teaching religion.

Extremism Charges

Criminal charges of extremism are regularly brought against various individuals for peaceful religious

activity. Court hearings on whether materials are “extremist” are not announced. There is an extensive list of banned texts on government websites. In 2015, extremism charges remained pending against atheist writer Aleksandr Kharlamov, who was detained for five months in 2013, including one month of psychiatric exams. The Muslim missionary movement *Tabligh Jamaat* was banned in 2013, and trials of alleged members are closed. Forum 18 reported in February 2016 that 25 individuals were known to have been convicted for alleged *Tabligh Jamaat* membership since December 2014. Thirteen of these were given prison terms, and the other 12 given sentences of restricted freedom. Three more individuals were on trial and one more in pre-trial detention as of the end of the reporting period.

Increased Government Control of Muslims

The Muslim Board, which is closely tied to the Kazakh government, oversees mosque construction, theological exams and background checks for aspiring imams, and *hajj* travel. Reportedly, the Muslim Board requires mosques aligned with it to transfer one-third of their incomes for its use and pressures non-aligned imams and congregations to join or face mosque closures. Increased official surveillance of mosques has fueled official discrimination and popular resentment, particularly in western Kazakhstan. Since the passage of the 2011 religion law, Kazakh officials have closed prayer rooms in many public buildings, such as colleges, prisons, hospitals, and airports. In July 2015, the Shymkent city administration and the local secret police closed the Muslim prayer room at a city market. Nazarbayev University in Astana no longer allows prayer rooms; students are told that they can only pray alone in their dormitory rooms. In June 2015, three Turkish academics at the Ahmet Yesevi University in Turkestan were fined and later deported from Kazakhstan on accusations of “illegal missionary activity” for allegedly teaching about Sufi Islam.

Restrictions on Religious Materials

The government censors all religious texts and restricts where religious materials may be sold. Under the religion law’s strict rules, only Hanafi Sunni Muslim materials can be sold, and only in a few bookshops. Even

some booksellers with official permits prefer not to sell religious texts to avoid trouble with the state. The import of 14 Jehovah’s Witnesses’ texts have been banned due to court rulings that they “reject fundamental teachings of Christianity.” In April 2015, an Administrative Court in Oral fined Eldar Sundetkaliyev one month’s average wages for selling a computer program on Muslim prayer that the government deemed Salafist. In February and May 2015, police in Kyzylorda raided two bookstores suspected of selling Muslim religious texts, including the Qur’an, without official permits and in May and September, the booksellers reportedly were each fined over four and a half months’ official minimum wage and banned from selling books for three months. Council of Churches member Nikolai Novikov faced a possible three-year jail term for failing to pay a 2013 fine for publicly offering uncensored religious texts, but after international protests, the criminal case against him reportedly will be dropped. Along with dozens of Council of Churches Baptists with unpaid fines, Novikov is on the Justice Ministry’s list of those subject to an international travel ban.

The government censors all religious texts and restricts where [they] may be sold.

U.S. Policy

After the Soviet Union’s collapse, the United States was the first country to recognize Kazakhstan’s independence, and is now the largest direct foreign investor in Kazakhstan’s economy. Key bilateral issues include regional security, including efforts to stabilize Afghanistan, and nuclear nonproliferation. Kazakhstan plays a leading role in nuclear security; in 1991, President Nazarbayev closed down the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. Kazakhstan is a candidate for a non-permanent seat (allocated to the Asia-Pacific group) on the United Nations Security Council for 2017-18.

In September 2015, President Obama met with Kazakh President Nazarbayev. In November 2015, the United States and all five post-Soviet Central Asian states (C5+1) signed a Joint Declaration of Partnership

and Cooperation declaring their commitment to greater cooperation, including holding regular meetings, protecting human rights, developing democratic institutions and practices, and strengthening civil society through respect for recognized norms and principles of international law.

The United States and Kazakhstan discuss numerous bilateral issues – such as regional cooperation, democratic reform, rule of law, human rights, civil society, economic development, energy, science, technology, and people-to-people contacts – through the U.S.-Kazakh Strategic Partnership Dialogue (SPD), which was set up in 2012. There are working groups on this range of issues. The fourth U.S.-Kazakhstan SPD was held in Kazakhstan during Secretary of State John Kerry’s November 2015 visit to that country. Both sides expressed optimism that the newly launched C5+1 framework would contribute to stability and development in Central Asia and pledged to deepen cooperation in countering the threats of terrorism and violent extremism. The United States thanked Kazakhstan for hosting a regional conference on countering violent extremism in June 2015. Kazakhstan and the United States also have entered into a five-year plan to strengthen military cooperation through capacity-building programs. In February 2015, Kazakhstan and the United States also signed a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty.

[The United States and Kazakhstan] expressed optimism that the newly launched C5+1 framework would contribute to stability and development in Central Asia. . . .

USAID’s programs in Kazakhstan helps support civil society, increases access to information, strengthens citizen initiative groups, promote an independent judiciary, and encourage human rights protection. USAID also assists in forming civil society partnerships with the Kazakh government to implement reforms, including human rights and the rule of law.

Recommendations for U.S. Policy

USCIRF recommends that the U.S. government should:

- Urge the Kazakh government to adopt the recommendations of the UN Special Rapporteurs on Freedom of Religion or Belief and on Freedom of Association and Assembly issued after their visits to Kazakhstan regarding legal reform and changes in enforcement policies;
- Call on the Kazakh government to invite to the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions a representative array of religious communities peacefully residing in Kazakhstan, including minority religious groups;
- Urge the Kazakh government to agree to visits by the three OSCE Personal Representatives on Tolerance, set a specific date for a joint visit, and provide the full and necessary conditions for such visits;
- Ensure that the Strategic Partnership Dialogue includes discussion of concerns about freedom of religion or belief;
- Advocate for the release of prisoners of conscience in U.S. public statements and private interactions with the Kazakh government, and press the Kazakh government to ensure that every prisoner has greater access to his or her family, human rights monitors, adequate medical care, and a lawyer;
- Ensure that the U.S. Embassy, including at the ambassadorial level, maintains active contacts with human rights activists; and
- Encourage the Broadcasting Board of Governors to ensure continued U.S. funding for RFE/RL’s Uzbek Service website, Muslims and Democracy, and consider translating this material into Kazakh.



LAOS

Key Findings

Although the Lao government, along with other bodies, widely disseminates religious policies, poor implementation and enforcement continue to result in ongoing abuses against religious minority groups, abuses that are most prominent in remote, rural areas. Lao government offices, largely at the village and district level, along with other official bodies, inconsistently interpret and apply religious regulations, contributing to violations of religious freedom, particularly against religious minority groups such as Christians. In many parts of the country, religious freedom conditions are generally free, especially for the majority Buddhist community. However, the restrictions that some groups face in some provinces reflect shortcomings in the current regulations governing religion, as well as some local officials' lack of understanding in implementing these policies. In some instances, local officials' actions are based on suspicion of Christians, whom many in government believe are too closely linked to foreigners, particularly the West and the United States. In fact, due to the government's targeting, some among the Christian community believe the government views them as "enemies of the state." Christians who also are ethnic minorities

tions may influence how USCIRF will report on Laos in future annual reports.

Background

The government recognizes four religions: Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and the Baha'i faith. In addition to being the most widely practiced religion in Laos, Buddhism is interwoven into many aspects of Lao culture, providing the faith an extra degree of prominence within and protection from the government. Administration of religion falls under the purview of two bodies: the Lao Front for National Construction (LFNC), a mass organization of political and social entities that disseminates and explains the government's religion policies, and the Ministry of Home Affairs, which has authority to grant permissions for activities or establish new houses of worship.

More than 66 percent of the country's nearly seven million population practice Buddhism. Another 1.5 percent practice Christianity (which includes Catholicism), while an estimated 31 percent follow some other religion or belief, such as animism or ancestor worship. Smaller segments of the population practice Islam and the Baha'i faith.

. . . Buddhism is interwoven into many aspects of Lao culture, providing the faith an extra degree of prominence within and protection from the government.

feel especially targeted and often experience greater incidences of discrimination and harassment. Based on these concerns, in 2016 USCIRF again places Laos on Tier 2, where it has been since 2009. Positive developments in religious freedom conditions stemming from the Lao government's efforts to revise religious regula-

In February 2016, USCIRF staff conducted a joint visit to Laos with staff from the State Department's Office of International Religious Freedom, traveling to the capital, Vientiane, and the provinces of Savannakhet, Khammouane, and Xiengkhuang. The delegation raised specific cases of religious freedom violations with the Lao government and the LFNC at both the central

and provincial levels. Although government officials said that the constitution and the 2002 Prime Minister's Decree on the Administration and Protection of Religious Activities, also known as Decree 92, guarantee freedom of religion or belief in Laos, other interlocutors reported that the government does not protect religious freedom in practice.

In conversations with USCIRF, provincial officials accused Christians of being uncooperative for declining to participate in village activities, some of which are part of Buddhist cultural traditions, and of lying to lure new followers to the faith. And despite Decree 92's protections for the practice and sharing of Christianity, some local officials detain Christians in order to provide them "guidance" and "education" about how to follow religious regulations, and some still use forced renunciations of faith and forced evictions as a means to threaten and intimidate Christians.

Religious Freedom Conditions 2015–2016

General Conditions

During its February 2016 trip, USCIRF learned from several religious groups that their relations with the government have improved over the years, allowing them more space in which to practice their faith. Many admitted that misunderstandings – on both the government's and religious groups' sides – sometimes lead to challenges at the local level, though generally any confusion is resolved without incident. Religious groups often invite those of other faiths to attend religious ceremonies and celebrations.

This goodwill gesture often helps relations with local officials, but some local officials remain suspicious of religious activities.

The ambiguous relationship and roles of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the LFNC in administering and implementing religious policy creates confusion and misunderstanding, particularly at the local level. For example, while some religious groups in some areas are able to practice without registration, others face difficulties with local officials. One provincial Ministry official said that registration requirements may not apply to a temple or church if it was built long ago and congregants have longstanding practices, but the same would not hold true for a new temple or church. Some religious groups told USCIRF that they regularly communicate with both bodies, not out of necessity but out of an abundance of caution.

Central government officials have acknowledged that religious groups generally act in the interest of the people, promoting values such as harmony, unity, fairness, and justice. However, religious groups largely are required to operate within the government's parameters. In practice, local government officials have additional latitude to determine whether a particular group's or individual's practice is consistent with rules and regulations. For example, local authorities reportedly confiscated Bibles in two villages in Nakai District, Khammouane Province; the Bibles belonged to members of the government-recognized Laos Evangelical Church.

. . . while some religious groups in some areas are able to practice without registration, others face difficulties with local officials.

The government generally permits religious organizations to conduct charitable work, but usually requires coordination with officials to ensure that the activities align with local development plans and benefit all community members. Religious leaders sometimes willingly submit notice of religious activities, such as schedules of services, to government authorities for their information, but not to seek approval.

Legal Restrictions on Religious Practice and Activities

Decree 92 is the set of regulations currently in place to manage religious practice in the country. The Decree requires LFNC approval for religious organizations' registration. The provincial-level LFNC bodies, along with local and provincial government officials, must approve a number of religious activities, such as building houses of

worship and appointing religious personnel. Critics note several underlying weaknesses in Decree 92, such as: 1) outright denials or non-responses to registration applications from certain groups, particularly Protestant groups not willing to join the government-recognized Laos Evangelical Church or Seventh-day Adventist Church; 2) cumbersome approval processes involving long waits and unanswered requests; and 3) confusion about the requirements to qualify for registration. Misinterpretation and poor implementation at the local, district, and provincial levels amplify these challenges.

Over the last several years, the Lao government initiated revisions to Decree 92. In a positive step, the government solicited input on revisions from a number of key interlocutors across the country, including some religious organizations. One religious group informed USCIRF that they urged the government to allow more people to openly practice from home. Lao government officials also indicated they have consulted with Vietnam on the Decree 92 revisions and have plans to consult other countries.

location, government officials monitor Christians and their activities, often ban them from government jobs or limit their ability to be promoted, question churches about their membership, and reportedly prevent some Christians from applying for passports. The government only recognizes three Christian groups – the Laos Evangelical Church, the Catholic Church, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Some Christians practice underground as families; typically the government does not restrict this practice but has been known to pressure these groups to join a recognized church. Some Christians believe that most arrests of Christians directly relate to their religion, whereas in their view Buddhists rarely get arrested in connection with their faith.

Christians of various denominations also experience pressure to renounce their faith, either from local officials or from members of the community, including threats of expulsion from villages. For refusing to renounce their faith, Christians also experience restricted access to hospitals and schools. The

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Those familiar with the proposed changes report that the revised Decree 92 will transfer more responsibilities from the LFNC to the Ministry of Home Affairs, though details are limited about how this shift may unfold in practice. Unless the division of labor is made clear to religious groups and local Ministry and LFNC branches, the current confusion hampering religious policy likely will continue. One religious leader noted that revisions to Decree 92 will be most effective if the central government implements the new policies at the local level, but that in practice much will depend on specific local officials.

Abuses against Minorities

Christians continue to experience the most government restrictions and discrimination. Depending on

government at times discriminates against certain groups, including ethnic Hmong, particularly if they are Christian.

Christians in Savannakhet Province face particular challenges from local officials who either improperly interpret the central government's regulations or discriminate against Christians out of fear, prejudice, or ignorance. Three churches in Xayaburi District closed by local officials in 2011 and 2012 remained off-limits to parishioners, except for some Christmas services. The churches reportedly have tried to obtain registration approval to re-open, but local officials told USCIRF the closures instead had to do with land usage and other administrative issues unrelated to the practice of their faith, meaning that registration would not solve the dispute. In another example, in February

2015, a provincial court in Savannakhet convicted and sentenced to nine months in prison five Christians charged with practicing medicine without a license in connection with the 2014 death of a Christian woman. The five Christians denied the charges, stating that they prayed at the woman's side. They were released in March 2015, but still had to pay fines. One of the Christians, Mr. Tiang Kwentianthong, died in September 2015 from diabetes-related complications; his supporters claim that the denial of necessary medical care while he was in prison contributed to his death. The remaining four filed appeals with the court, which remained pending at the end of the reporting period.

In September 2015, local authorities in Khammouane Province "held" two Christians for spreading their faith during their visit to a Christian family. (Officials from the Ministry of Home Affairs provincial office disputed media reports the two men had been arrested or even detained, arguing instead they had been held and then released.) Earlier in the year, police detained four Christians in Nakai District, also in Khammouane Province, and threatened them with jail time if they refused to renounce their faith; police

U.S. Policy

August 2015 marked the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the United States and Laos. Although the bilateral relationship continues to strengthen, the scars from the United States' heavy bombing campaign in Laos between 1964 and 1973 run deep. Another remnant from that period is the Lao government's mistreatment of ethnic Hmong, many of whom the United States trained and armed during the Vietnam War in an effort to prevent a communist takeover.

Despite this legacy, U.S.-Laos direct engagement is increasing. Moreover, Laos' 2016 Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) chairmanship means more frequent U.S. high-level visits to the country. In January 2016, Secretary Kerry visited Laos, meeting with Prime Minister Thongsing Thammavong. Secretary Kerry will travel to Laos again in July 2016 for the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting, while President Barack Obama is scheduled to visit in September 2016 for the ASEAN Summit. A gathering of civil society organizations that usually meets on the sidelines of the annual summit, known as the ASEAN People's Forum, will not be held in Laos, but in Timor-Leste, which is not an ASEAN

To date, the United States has resettled approximately 250,000 Hmong refugees and continues to encourage Laos to improve transparency about the conditions of those forcibly returned from Thailand.

reportedly banned Christian activities in the district. Other reports from Khammouane Province suggest local authorities regularly threaten Christians, pressuring them to renounce their faith and confiscating religious materials.

Also in September 2015, Pastor Singkeaw Wongkongpheng from Na-ang Village in Luang Prabang Province died of stab wounds after being attacked in his home. Over the years, local officials reportedly pressured Pastor Singkeaw to stop preaching and spreading Christianity. According to some reports, one of the attackers belonged to the Luang Prabang provincial police.

member. Both the Lao government and the involved civil society organizations prevented the gathering from being held in Laos.

The United States supports a number of initiatives in Laos: health, nutrition, the environment, education, wildlife and human trafficking, energy, disposal of unexploded ordnance, and several projects relating to the Mekong, including the Lower Mekong Initiative, among others. The year 2015 marked the 40th anniversary of Hmong refugee displacement and resettlement in the United States. In 1975, the United States began transporting Hmong out of Laos and Thailand where many Hmong had already fled. To date, the United States has resettled approximately 250,000 Hmong

refugees and continues to encourage Laos to improve transparency about the conditions of those forcibly returned from Thailand.

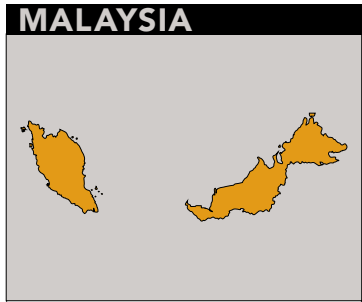
In December 2015, on the third anniversary of civil society leader Sombath Somphone's disappearance, the Department of State issued a press statement expressing concern for his well-being and calling on the Lao government "to conduct a thorough and transparent investigation." Concern for his whereabouts contributed to civil society's decision to hold the ASEAN People's Forum outside of Laos.

Recommendations

From 2000 to 2003, USCIRF recommended Laos be designated as a "country of particular concern," or CPC based on its egregious, ongoing, and systematic violations of religious freedom. That the country improved conditions meriting progress to USCIRF's Tier 2 (Watch List) demonstrates that such progress on religious freedom can have significant impact. At this critical juncture in the bilateral relationship, the United States should engage Laos on religious freedom and related human rights and encourage additional improvements, particularly with respect to the proposed revisions to Decree 92 to ensure its policies align with international human rights standards. Accordingly, USCIRF recommends that the U.S. government should:

- Initiate a formal human rights mechanism, similar to existing U.S. human rights dialogues with Burma and Vietnam and the European Union's Working Group on Human Rights and Governance with Laos, to regularly and consistently address with the Lao government issues such as ethnic and religious discrimination, torture and other forms of ill-treatment in prisons, unlawful arrests and detentions, the lack of due process and an independent judiciary, and revising Decree 92 in accordance with international standards;
- Continue to engage the Lao government on specific cases of religious freedom violations, including but not limited to forced evictions and/or forced renunciations of faith, and emphasize the importance of consistent implementation, enforcement, and interpretation of the rule of law by officials at all levels of government and law enforcement authorities;

- Support technical assistance programs that reinforce the goals of protecting religious freedom, human rights defenders, and ethnic minorities, including: rule of law programs and legal exchanges that focus on revising Decree 92; training for Lao police and security forces, provincial and local officials, and lawyers and judges in human rights, the rule of law, and religious freedom and tolerance; and capacity-building for Lao civil society groups carrying out charitable, medical, and developmental activities;
- Ensure that Lao police and security officials participating in training or technical assistance programs are thoroughly vetted pursuant to the Leahy Amendment to confirm that they are not implicated in human rights abuses, and deny U.S. training, visas, or assistance to any unit or personnel found to have engaged in a consistent pattern of violations of human rights, including religious freedom;
- Continue to inquire consistently into the whereabouts of Sombath Somphone given that the Lao government's inability to provide any information from its investigation into his disappearance is emblematic of its overall approach to human rights, civil society, and individual rights; and
- Encourage the Broadcasting Board of Governors to provide adequate funding for the Voice of America and Radio Free Asia Lao language broadcasts, and increase efforts to provide access to uncensored Internet, and other information, into Laos.



MALAYSIA

Key Findings

In 2015, many in the Malaysian government, political parties, and religious leadership prioritized the Muslim faith and Malay identity in a manner that threatens religious freedom. Whether cracking down on religious activity, expression, or dissent, these individuals and groups sought to expand the scope of Islam through law and practice and punish anyone perceived to criticize their politically-driven agenda. This occurred through arrests under the Sedition Act, which was strengthened in 2015, efforts to expand Islamic punishments under Shari'ah law, legal ambiguity between civil and Shari'ah courts, and the political manipulation of Islam. Moreover, the government continues to ban several so-called "deviant" religious groups, such as the Shi'a Muslim, Ahmadiyya Muslim, Baha'i, and Al-Arqam communities. Collectively, these trends have resulted in diminished legal protections for ethnic and religious minorities, non-Muslims and non-Sunni Muslims alike. Based on these concerns, in 2016 USCIRF again places Malaysia on Tier 2, where it has been since 2014. USCIRF will continue to monitor the situation closely to determine if these troubling developments warrant a change in Malaysia's status during the year ahead.

segments of the population are Sikhs, Baha'is, and animists. Religious groups deemed "deviant," such as the Shi'a Muslim, Ahmadiyya Muslim, Baha'i, and Al-Arqam groups, are banned. The government or state-level Shari'ah courts can force individuals considered to have strayed from Sunni Islam, including those from "deviant" sects or converts from Islam, into detention-like camps known as "rehabilitation" centers and/or criminally prosecute them for apostasy, which is subject to prison terms or fines.

Ethnic and religious identity is central to Malaysian politics, contributing to an entrenched system of government that advantages the ruling party and the Sunni Muslim Malay majority at the expense of ethnic and religious minorities. Although Malaysia is officially secular, the state implements an increasingly exclusive brand of Islam that is based, in part, on the constitutional establishment of Islam as the official religion. To stave off perceived political threats and be seen as protecting Islam, Prime Minister Najib Razak and the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition crack down on individuals who express dissent or criticism, accusing them of attacking Islam.

Over time, political opponents and members of civil society have criticized the government more

Although Malaysia is officially secular, the state implements and increasingly exclusive brand of Islam . . .

Background

More than 61 percent of the country's 30.5 million population are Muslim, while nearly 20 percent are Buddhist, more than nine percent Christian, and more than six percent Hindu; approximately one percent or less apiece practice Confucianism, Taoism, or other faiths. Smaller

openly, often through social media, calling for less corruption and more transparency. The most well-known expression of this growing discontent is the *Bersih* ("clean") movement, which called for the Prime Minister's resignation after nearly \$700 million from Malaysia's wealth fund, 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), was found in his personal bank account.

In another example, on March 16, 2015, police arrested Nurul Izzah Anwar after she publicly criticized the Federal Court for upholding an earlier sentence against her father, opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim. His February 2015 conviction resulted in a five-year prison term and a ban from elected office for an additional five years thereafter.

In August 2015, a USCIRF Commissioner-led delegation visited Malaysia, meeting in the capital, Kuala Lumpur, and the administrative center, Putrajaya, with government officials, religious representatives, and civil society organizations.

Religious Freedom Conditions 2015–2016

General Conditions

While Malaysians generally are free to worship, some within and outside government exploit politics and ethnicity to create divisions. Under the constitution, ethnic Malays – the predominant ethnic group – are defined as Muslim, and, in practice, the government only supports Sunni Islam. Through the federal Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM), the government funds most Sunni mosques and imams and provides talking points for sermons, which regularly vilify religious minorities, such as Shi’a Muslims. Both the government and the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), the country’s largest Islamic party, send individuals to Saudi Arabia for religious training; the stricter mindsets and more austere interpretation of Sunni Islam with which they return have caused concern that Malaysian Islam is becoming more “Arabized.”

Harassment of or attacks on non-Muslim houses of worship are infrequent, but they do occur, and non-Muslims also report difficulties in obtaining government permission to build houses of worship. For example, in April 2015, intense pressure from approximately 50 Muslim protestors prompted a Christian church in Taman Medan in the state of Selangor to remove its cross. In a positive sign, the central government called for a police investigation, local leaders swiftly organized a meeting with interested stakeholders, and, by the end of May, the church planned to reinstall the cross. The investigation officially closed in December 2015 with no further action against the protestors.

Increasingly, state and federal level religious councils issue *fatwas* (religious edicts) that, in effect, carry

the force of law. In 2014, the Selangor Islamic Religious Council (MAIS) issued a *fatwa* declaring the Malaysian civil society organization Sisters in Islam (SIS) to be “deviant;” the *fatwa* enabled MAIS to block SIS’s website and confiscate its publications. SIS filed a judicial review application to challenge the *fatwa*’s constitutionality, and although the hearing was originally set for November 2015, the High Court is now expected to hear the case in June 2016.

. . . in April 2015, intense pressure from approximately 50 Muslim protestors prompted a Christian church in Taman Medan to remove its cross.

In response to the growing number of Malaysians known to be working or affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and to prevent home-grown or ISIL-related attacks, in April 2015 the parliament approved the Prevention of Terrorism Act. The bill notably re-establishes indefinite detention without trial, which had not been permitted since the controversial Internal Security Act was abolished in 2012. On December 22, Malaysia’s Senate approved the National Security Council Act that grants broad powers to the prime minister to authorize searches and arrests without warrants.

Restrictions on Belief and Expression

In 2015, the government continued to suppress free speech and religious expression. Muslims are allowed to proselytize to non-Muslims, but not vice versa. Apostasy, considered a sin by Islamic authorities, has been criminalized in some states as a capital offense. Malaysia’s vaguely-worded Sedition Act, which was amended in 2015 to increase jail times and other penalties, is used as a means to suppress political and religious dissent, and authorities increasingly target individuals for expression online. One provision of the 2015 amendments strengthens the Sedition Act to cover any insults to Islam.

In March 2015, police arrested five journalists associated with online news portal *The Malaysian Insider* to investigate them under the Sedition Act for

a story about the position of Malaysia's nine sultans regarding a proposal to implement *hudood* punishments (commonly spelled *hudud* in Malaysia) in the state of Kelantan (discussed below). Authorities raided their offices and later released the five on bail. In July 2015, police questioned publisher Ho Kay Tat for publishing stories critical of the 1MDB controversy involving Prime Minister Najib. After *The Malaysian Insider* continued to publish critical coverage, the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, a government regulatory body, blocked the news website in February 2016, prompting the publisher to shut down the site entirely just weeks later.

Mohd Ezra Mohd Zaid, a publisher at ZI Publications, faces prosecution for publishing books about Islam that the Selangor state government and religious authorities deemed "un-Islamic." In September 2015, the Federal Court dismissed his attempt to invalidate

when the Federal Court refused any further review of its 2014 decision upholding a ban on the newspaper's use of the word. In another case, in June 2015, the Court of Appeals ordered the Malaysian government to return to Jill Ireland, a Christian from Sarawak, eight Christian CDs with song titles with the word Allah confiscated in 2008. In July 2014, the Kuala Lumpur High Court first ordered the CDs returned, but the Ministry of Home Affairs refused. Then, the Federal Territories Islamic Council, the local-level body in charge of religious affairs, applied to weigh in on the case, claiming the right to regulate non-Muslims. The Court of Appeals decision dismissed this application, thereby upholding the High Court's order to return the CDs, but did not address Ms. Ireland's question on the constitutionality of using the word Allah. The CDs were returned in September 2015.

Also, the government continued to target Malaysian human rights lawyer Eric Paulsen, charging him with sedition in February 2015 . . . and arresting him in March 2015 for tweets critical of hudood punishments.

the section of Selangor Shari'ah law on which their objections were based. The ruling means Ezra will be prosecuted in Shari'ah court. In another case, in April 2015, authorities charged a popular Malaysian cartoonist known as Zunar with nine counts of sedition for a series of tweets critical of the government's prosecution of opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim. Zunar, whose trial has been delayed several times, could face up to 43 years in prison. Also, the government continued to target Malaysian human rights lawyer Eric Paulsen, charging him with sedition in February 2015 for criticizing JAKIM and arresting him in March 2015 for tweets critical of *hudood* punishments. He was released on bail, but authorities continued to question and harass him throughout the reporting period.

Ban on the Use of the Word "Allah"

The years-long legal battle over the use of the word "Allah" by the Malay-language edition of a weekly Catholic newspaper came to an end in January 2015

Hudood Punishments

In March 2015, the Kelantan State Assembly passed a bill that would amend the state's penal code to allow *hudood*, a set of Islamic criminal punishments outlined in the Qur'an and the Hadith (the Prophet Muhammed's sayings). Crimes punishable under *hudood* include apostasy, slander, adultery, and alcohol consumption; the punishments include amputation, stoning, and flogging. Kelantan politicians want to expand *hudood* nationwide and have garnered support among some in UMNO. Datuk Othman Mustapha, director general of JAKIM, said the punishments would apply only to Muslims. The Kelantan State government is controlled by the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS), whose push for *hudood* contributed to the party's split from the Pakatan Rakyat (PR) opposition coalition in 2015. Critics of the jockeying over *hudood*, including former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, argue that proponents are encouraging stricter interpretations of Islam for political gain.

Forced Conversions and the Dual Court System

Civil courts increasingly cede jurisdiction to Shari'ah courts, particularly with respect to family law. This has negative implications for non-Muslims, who have fewer rights in Shari'ah courts and cannot appear as witnesses. In one case, the Ipoh High Court ruled that unilateral conversions to Islam of children by one parent without the other's consent is unconstitutional. In December 2015, however, the Court of Appeals overturned that ruling and also determined that Shari'ah courts have sole jurisdiction in Islamic matters, thereby establishing a precedent to eliminate the role of civil courts in family cases in which at least one party is non-Muslim. The case revolves around M. Indira Gandhi, a Hindu whose ex-husband converted their three children to Islam without her knowledge. However, in another case, in February 2016, the Federal Court asserted the civil court's role in family law cases when at least one party is non-Muslim, granting each parent full custody of one of the couple's two children. The father in this case converted both children to Islam and abducted the son; the court allowed him to keep custody of the son, while the daughter was permitted to live with her mother.

one year to allow time for resettlement to third countries. As of April 2015, more than 46,000 Rohingya Muslims were registered with UNHCR in Malaysia; UNHCR reportedly has asked the Malaysian government to issue them work permits.

U.S. Policy

In 2015, Malaysia chaired the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). While visiting Malaysia for the November 2015 ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, President Barack Obama attended a civil society roundtable and visited refugees, including Rohingya Muslims from Burma. In addition, the President met bilaterally with Prime Minister Najib, and the two discussed the importance of combatting violent extremism, the Trans-Pacific Partnership regional free trade agreement, climate change, the South China Sea, and general development issues. In public remarks about their meeting, President Obama said, "Malaysia, like Indonesia, is a majority-Muslim country that represents tolerance and peace." Secretary of State John Kerry visited Malaysia in August 2015 in connection with the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting and related events.

During the year, the State Department issued remarks both praising and criticizing Malaysia, including praise for Malaysia's efforts to assist Rohingya Muslim refugees and criticism of tighter restrictions on freedom of expression, including under the Sedition Act.

In October 2015, reports surfaced from Sabah alleging Christians were converted forcibly to Islam. Prime Minister Najib publicly denied any government involvement in these claims and encouraged individuals forcibly converted to reach out to Sabah's chief minister.

Regional Refugee Crisis

In May 2015, Malaysian authorities discovered more than 100 graves believed to contain Rohingya Muslims. This discovery initially prompted Malaysia to turn away additional Rohingya Muslims fleeing Burma, although later in May both Malaysia and Indonesia agreed to provide temporary shelter to thousands of refugees for up to

Throughout 2015, the United States and Malaysia worked on several components of the bilateral Comprehensive Partnership launched in 2014, including on issues such as counter-terrorism and counter proliferation. During the year, the State Department issued remarks both praising and criticizing Malaysia, including praise for Malaysia's efforts to assist Rohingya Muslim refugees and criticism of tighter restrictions on freedom of expression, including under the Sedition Act. At a January 2015 roundtable with Malaysian media, Assistant Secretary Daniel R. Russel noted the role of religious leaders in countering "false ideology

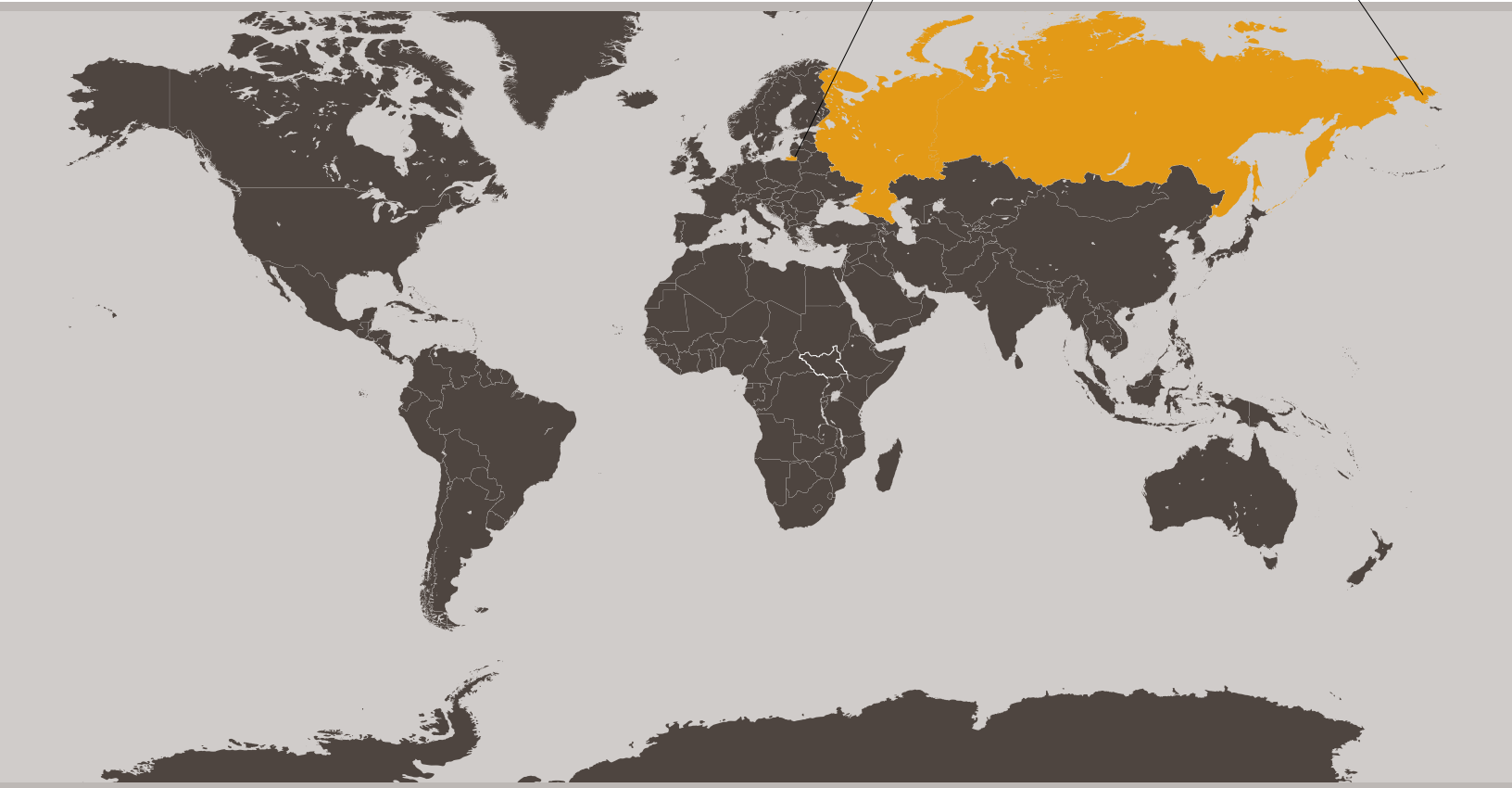
that distorts religious teaching for bad political goals,” as well as the importance of creating tolerant and inclusive political environments.

According to the State Department, the U.S. Embassy in Kuala Lumpur regularly engages government representatives, religious groups of multiple faiths, and civil society on religious freedom issues, including religious tolerance, interfaith dialogue and roundtables, and inter-religious education. In July 2015, the State Department released its 2015 Trafficking in Persons Report, upgrading Malaysia from Tier 3 – those countries least in compliance with the Trafficking Victims Protection Act – to Tier 2. Critics argued the upgrade was not deserved given the discovery in Malaysia just months earlier of mass graves linked to smugglers and traffickers who had taken advantage of Rohingya Muslims from Burma and other asylum seekers.

Recommendations

Restrictions on freedom of religion or belief affecting non-Muslim and non-Sunni Muslim religious minorities are central to Malaysia’s mounting human rights challenges and belie its own claims to be a moderate Muslim country. The manipulation of both the constitution and Islam for political gain increasingly threatens many rights and freedoms. The United States and the international community must engage the Malaysian government on these issues. In addition, USCIRF recommends that the U.S. government should:

- Encourage the Malaysian government to become party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights without reservations;
 - Urge the Malaysian government to cease the arrest, detention, or forced “rehabilitation” of individuals involved in peaceful religious activity, such as Shi’a Muslim, Ahmadiyya Muslim, Baha’i, and Al-Arqam groups, among others, and to release unconditionally those detained or imprisoned for related charges; and
 - Encourage the Malaysian government to establish independent institutions, such as the judiciary, office of the Attorney General, and law enforcement, and to address the human rights shortcomings of the parallel civil-Shari’ah justice systems, in order to guarantee that all Malaysians, regardless of ethnicity or religion, enjoy freedom of religion or belief.
- Ensure that human rights and religious freedom are pursued consistently and publicly at every level of the U.S.-Malaysia relationship, including in the Comprehensive Partnership and other discussions related to military, trade, or economic and security assistance, and in programs that address freedom of speech and expression and civil society development, among others, and follow up on these priorities after agreements or deals are reached, such as in the Trans-Pacific Partnership;
 - Press the Malaysian government to bring all laws and policies into conformity with international human rights standards, especially with respect to freedom of religion or belief, freedom of assembly, and freedom of religious expression, including the rights to use the word “Allah” and to possess religious materials;



RUSSIA

Key Findings

Along with other human rights abuses, violations of religious freedom in Russia escalated in the past year. There were numerous criminal convictions, fines, and detentions, particularly of Muslims and Jehovah's Witnesses, under an extremism law that does not require proof of the use or advocacy of violence. The Constitutional Court ruled that material can be banned as "extremist" for proclaiming the truth or superiority of one religion or belief system. Other laws, including the recently-amended 1997 religion law and a growing number of harsh laws restricting civil society, limit the freedoms of religious groups and lead to abuses. An atheist was charged with blasphemy under a 2013 law, and was on trial at the end of the reporting period. Rising xenophobia and intolerance, including anti-Semitism, are linked to violent and lethal hate crimes that often occur with impunity. Russian officials and local paramilitary in Chechnya and Dagestan commit often violent religious freedom violations. Religious freedom violations also escalated in Russian-occupied Crimea and Russian-separatist regions of eastern Ukraine. Based on these concerns, in 2016 USCIRF again places Russia on Tier 2, where it has been since 2009. Given Russia's negative trajectory in terms of religious freedom, USCIRF will continue to monitor the situation closely during the year ahead to determine if Russia should be recommended to the U.S. State Department for designation as a "country of particular concern," or CPC, under the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) for systematic, ongoing, egregious violations of religious freedom.

Background

Russia is the world's largest country by land mass. Its estimated population of 142.5 million is 81 percent ethnic Russian plus some 160 other ethnicities. A 2013 poll reports that 68 percent of Russians view themselves as Orthodox Christian, while seven percent identify as

Muslim. Other religious groups – each under five percent – include Buddhists, Protestants, Roman Catholics, Jews, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), Jehovah's Witnesses, Hindus, Baha'is, Hare Krishnas, pagans, Tengrists, Scientologists, and Falun Gong adherents. The 2010 census listed 150,000 Jews; the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia cites 750,000. Many Russian citizens who say they belong to a religious community are not observant.

Russia's 1997 religion law sets onerous registration procedures for religious groups and empowers state officials to impede registration or obstruct construction or rental of worship buildings. The three types of religious associations – groups, local organizations, and centralized organizations – have varying legal status and privileges. Some aspects of the public association law also apply to religious associations, including lengthy reporting requirements, annual compliance reviews, and detailed data on the group's history, doctrine, and evolution. Russia's arbitrary legal system means that government respect for freedom of religion or belief varies widely, often depending on a religious group's relations with local officials.

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The religion law's preface, which is not legally binding, singles out Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, and Orthodox Christianity as the country's four "traditional" faiths. Although the Russian constitution guarantees a secular state and equal legal status for

all religions, the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church (MPROC) – which claims as adherents 60 percent of Russians – is strongly favored, including in chaplaincies, the education system, and state subsidies. “Non-traditional” religious groups do not receive state subsidies. Officials often refer negatively to religious and other minorities, which fosters a climate of intolerance.

The major threat to religious freedom remains the much-amended Russian anti-extremism law, which defines extremism in a religious context and does not require the threat or use of violence. Among other provisions, the law qualifies as extremist “propaganda of the superiority of one’s own religion.” In February 2015, the Constitutional Court ruled that freedom of speech, conscience, and religion is not infringed if material is banned as “extremist” for proclaiming the truth or superiority of one religion or belief system. If any Russian court rules any print or Web-based text extremist, it is added to the Ministry of Justice’s (MOJ) Federal List of Extremist Materials and banned throughout Russia. As of February 2016, that list reportedly totaled 3,291 items, including Jehovah’s Witnesses’ texts, the writings of Turkish theologian Said Nursi, a 1900 sermon by Greek Catholic Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky (who risked his life to save Jews during the Holocaust), and a video of police-confiscated relics of the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church. Suspected extremist texts are reviewed by the MOJ’s Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), which is comprised of academics and representatives of the four “traditional” religions. In November 2015, President Putin amended the extremism law to prohibit the banning of the four sacred texts of the “traditional” religions: the Bible, the Qur’an, the Jewish Torah, and the Tibetan Buddhist Kanjur. However, some 4,000 Jehovah’s Witness Bibles are among millions of that groups’ publications confiscated by Russian customs for alleged “extremism.”

A 2013 blasphemy law criminalized disrespecting or insulting religious beliefs; a 2012 public protest in Moscow’s main Orthodox cathedral over the MPROC’s close Kremlin ties served as the official impetus for the passage of this law. Increasing legal restrictions on civil society also impact religious groups. A 2012 law on “unauthorized” public meetings includes onerous fines and was used against a Protestant pastor for holding a religious

service. Another 2012 law requires foreign-funded NGOs engaged in vaguely-defined political activity to register as “foreign agents” or face fines or two years’ imprisonment. Russia’s treason law was amended in 2012, threatening with 20-year prison terms those Russian citizens who provide financial, material, technical, consultative, or other assistance to a foreign state or an international or foreign organization. A 2014 “public order” law requires prior official approval to conduct prayer and public religious observance, even in places owned by religious groups. A July 2015 law banned “undesirable” foreign or international organizations that allegedly threaten state security, public order, or health; religious groups fear that it could also apply to religious bodies. A December 2015 law provided that Russian courts are not bound by European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) rulings if they contradict the Russian constitution.

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Religious Freedom Conditions 2015–2016

New Legal Provisions on Religious Groups

Amendments to the religion law that took effect in July 2015 appear to require all religious communities without legal status to notify state officials of their existence and activity, including the names and addresses of all members and addresses of meeting places. Registered religious organizations only are required to give officials a list of their founders. Nevertheless, no penalties are known to have been imposed against those who meet for worship without official notification. According to Forum 18, the amendments also provide that, for the first 10 years after registration, religious groups not affiliated with centralized religious organizations cannot form religious educational organizations, hold ceremonies in hospitals, prisons, and old people’s homes, or invite foreigners to visit the country.

Extremism Charges

Surveillance, investigations, and prosecutions of Muslims and Jehovah's Witnesses for alleged extremism continued during 2015. For example, two Said Nursi readers, Imam Komil Odilov and Yevgeny Kim, were arrested in December 2015 and were in pre-trial detention at the end of the reporting period. Also in December, a Krasnoyarsk court sentenced two other Nursi readers; Andrei Dedkov was fined the equivalent of US\$2,205 and Aleksei Kuzmenko was fined the equivalent of US\$1,470. In December 2015, after a ten-month re-trial of Jehovah's Witnesses, 14 men and two women received heavy fines (which the judge waived) and suspended prison sentences at Taganrog City Court. From September to December 2015, at least 35 individuals and three religious groups were prosecuted on charges relating to alleged extremist texts, a sharp increase compared to a similar period in 2014. Courts imposed fines in 34 of these cases, and one Jehovah's

also underwent one month of psychiatric examinations in a local hospital.

Legal Status Issues

Despite a 2009 ECtHR finding that the 15-year existence rule for registration violated the European Convention on Human Rights, the Church of Scientology still is denied registration, as is an Armenian Catholic parish in Moscow. State officials obstruct construction or rental of worship buildings, particularly for allegedly "non-traditional" groups such as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), non-Moscow Patriarchate Orthodox, the Hare Krishnas, and Old Believers. Muslim groups in many urban areas face official obstacles to opening mosques. Although Moscow has the largest Muslim population of any European city, it only has six public mosques; the sixth opened in September 2015 after a decade of construction.

In the last five months of 2015, at least 45 people and one religious group faced administrative charges for peaceful public religious activities.

Witness received a six-day prison term; two individuals and one Jehovah's Witness community member were acquitted. Of the 2015 prosecutions, 19 were for Islamic texts or videos, 17 for Jehovah's Witness texts, and two for items by the Falun Gong. Despite the 2015 overturning of the Orenburg court ruling that 50 of 68 Muslim texts were "extremist," it took several months for the texts to be removed from the banned list. Muslim leaders protested an August 2015 Sakhalin court ban on a Qur'anic commentary. After the reporting period, a Moscow regional court ruled that Scientology texts are banned as extremist.

Blasphemy Case

In October 2015, Victor Krasnov was charged in Stavropol under the 2013 blasphemy law for allegedly publicly insulting Orthodox believers in 2014 by supporting atheism in social media; his closed preliminary hearing began in January 2016. Krasnov told RFE/RL he received death threats from "Orthodox Christian fundamentalists;" he

Penalties for Public Religious Activities and Expression

In the last five months of 2015, at least 45 people and one religious group faced administrative charges for peaceful public religious activities. Most were Jehovah's Witnesses who offered religious texts in public, but Mormons, Hare Krishnas, Baptists, and a Muslim also were prosecuted; 31 received heavy fines. Additionally, human rights groups report that some peaceful ethnic Russian and other converts to Islam face possible persecution and criminal charges. For example, in 2015 Russian security police removed Vasily Tkachev from Belarus. In January 2016, reportedly he was tortured in a Chelyabinsk prison and denied access to his family and lawyer; the charges against Tkachev are not known. A Tibetan Buddhist lama who had been a legal resident in Russia since 2008 was deported from Tuva in 2015. Leading Russian Tatar imam Suleiman Zaripov from Kazan reportedly was disappeared under suspicious circumstances in early 2016, as were at least two other imams in recent years.

Violent Hate Crimes against Persons and Property

Chauvinist violence against defenders of religious minorities and migrants continues. In many parts of Russia, local officials often fail to investigate hate crimes against ethnic and religious minorities, mainly Muslim Central Asians and Jews. The Sova Center identified 38 xenophobic attacks in 2015, compared to 101 in 2014. An increased number of criminal sentences were levied for such violence in 2015, along with a sharp increase of criminal sentences for xenophobic statements or for inciting hatred, but an unprecedented number of jail terms were levied for allegedly offensive comments.

Violations in the North Caucasus

Human rights violations occur with almost total impunity in the North Caucasus. In Dagestan, the area's most violent region, Muslims alleged to be extremist or Salafist are registered, sentenced, and may be tortured or disappeared as suspected insurgents. Police continue to raid and close Salafi mosques. Human rights lawyers, independent journalists, and religious freedom activists also are targeted for violence in Dagestan. In Chechnya, the Kremlin-appointed president, Ramzan Kadyrov, oversees mass violations of human rights, including religious freedom. Kadyrov and his militia practice collective "justice," distort Chechen Sufi traditions, and run a repressive state. Under an official "female virtue campaign," women must wear Islamic headscarves and may be forced into illegal polygamous marriages. Reportedly, there is a drive to urge young Chechen men to fill out "spiritual-moral questionnaires" to document their views on Islam. At a February 2016 conference, Kadyrov equated Salafism with terrorism and conflated

are accused of violence against political opponents, critics, and human rights activists, in Russia and abroad.

Russia's Illegal Annexation of Crimea

In March 2014, Russia illegally annexed the Ukrainian Black Sea peninsula of Crimea, which has some two million people and a key Russian naval port. President Putin sought to justify this invasion due to the shared Orthodox "culture, civilization, and human values" of Russia and Ukraine. Almost all the 300,000 Muslim Crimean Tatars oppose Russian occupation and are persecuted. In January 2016, 12 Crimean Tatars were arrested after meeting the visiting Council of Europe Commission on Human Rights in Crimea. After the reporting period, the Russian-installed prosecutor of Crimea announced the suspension of the Crimean Tatar representative assembly allegedly because it had been declared "extremist" even though the court proceedings are ongoing.

Decline in Registration of Crimean Religious Groups

Russia required all religious groups in Crimea to re-register under Russia's more stringent requirements by January 1, 2016; of the over 1,100 religious communities that had legal status under Ukrainian law, only about 400 were re-registered. Re-registered groups include Moscow Patriarchate Russian Orthodox Churches (MPROC), Muslims including the Crimean Muftiate, various Protestant churches, Roman Catholics, various Jewish affiliations, Karaites, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Hare Krishnas. The Greek Catholic Church was not registered, nor were any Armenian Apostolic parishes. The Kiev Patriarchate Ukrainian Orthodox Church did not seek registration. Based on the Ministry of Justice Scientific Advisory

Russia required all religious groups in Crimea to re-register under Russia's more stringent requirements by January 1, 2016. . . .

the peaceful preaching of a popular Ingush Salafi cleric, Sheikh Khamzat Chumakov, with the militant Salafism of the North Caucasus insurgency and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Kadyrov and his men also

Council recommendations, certain Crimean religious groups, such as the Crimean Muftiate, nine Catholic parishes, and Yalta's Augsburg Lutheran Church, had to change institutional affiliations or alter their charters so

as to re-register. Some groups were denied re-registration, including St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Krasnoper-ekopsk, the Seventh-day Adventist Reformed Church in Yevpatoriya, and the Tavrida Muftiate, the smaller of the two Crimean Muftiates.

Restrictions on Religious Activity in Crimea

In January 2015, the Russian-installed Crimean government issued a counter-terrorism plan that authorizes police and security officials "to identify and influence" individuals "to reject illegal and destructive activity, to repent and to participate in preventive measures," particularly of undefined "non-traditional" sects. The plan also seeks to bring religious education under state control. According to Forum 18, Russian-installed officials have raided many libraries, schools, Muslim homes, and mosques and issued fines for owning allegedly extremist Islamic and Jehovah's Witness texts. Among those fined was the mufti of the Tavrida Muftiate, Ruslan Saitvaliyev. In October 2015, three Council of Churches Baptists who refused to pay fines for a public religious meeting were each sentenced to 20 hours' community service and another Baptist was fined three weeks' average local wages.

. . . Russian-installed officials [in Crimea] have raided many libraries, schools, Muslim homes, and mosques and issued fines for owning allegedly extremist Islamic and Jehovah's Witness texts.

At least five of Crimea's *madrasahs* remain closed, as well as four of the five Crimean Muftiate *madrasahs*. Clergy without Russian citizenship were forced to leave Crimea, including Greek and Roman Catholics and almost all Turkish Muslim imams and religious teachers. The lack of legal status for the Greek Catholic Church creates major difficulties for their four priests, who are not Crimea natives; they can work for only three months before they must leave for a month and re-apply for permits. In 2014, five of

10 Kiev Patriarchate Ukrainian Orthodox Church priests were forced to leave Crimea; the churches of its Crimea diocese, with about 200,000 members, were targets of mob and arson attacks. The MPROC, that claims 35 million members in Ukraine, officially views the Kiev Patriarchate Ukrainian Orthodox Church as a "schismatic nationalist organization."

Russia's Separatist Enclaves in the Donbas

In those Donbas regions of eastern Ukraine controlled by Russian-backed separatists espousing MPROC supremacy, Protestants and Kievan Patriarchate Ukrainian Orthodox Church parishes have been targets of arrests, violence, church damage, property confiscation, and discrimination. According to a March 2015 report by the civic movement "All Together," Donbas separatists in 2014 murdered seven clergymen, questioned and beat in detention more than 40 church ministers, and seized buildings and premises of 12 Christian communities, a church orphanage, a Christian university, and three medical rehabilitation centers. According to the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, seven of their churches were seized and three more were destroyed. In February 2015, the Archbishop of the Donetsk Diocese of the Kievan Patriarchate Ukrainian Orthodox Church said that 30 out of its 40 parishes in the occupied territory had ceased activity due to separatists' pressure.

Separatist "police" in Slovyansk, Donetsk and Horlivka have arrested many civilians; Russian Cossacks also have wreaked havoc in various regions. In Slovyansk, separatists abducted and killed four Protestants in June 2014. In July 2014, a Greek Catholic priest endured three mock executions during 12 days of detention. Two Roman Catholic priests also were briefly detained in the summer of 2014. As of March 2015, reportedly 40 of Donetsk's 58 varied religious communities have to gather in homes or stop worshipping. Father Nikon, a MPROC priest, was held by Ukrainian authorities in Donbas from August until December 2015 on suspicion that he was working for the separatist forces. In January 2016, security officials of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic detained 50 people allegedly linked to an attempt to blow up a Lenin statue, including a Donetsk University Professor for History and Religious Studies; reportedly police were suspicious of his contacts with religious faiths, including Muslims.

The United Nations reported that, as of November 2015, more than 9,000 persons had died and some 18,000 had been wounded due to Russian aggression in the Donbas, including civilians, members of the Ukrainian armed forces, and Russian-backed separatists, since fighting began in 2014. More than two million persons have fled the region, including thousands of Jews, Muslims, Protestants and other religious minorities who faced pressure and discrimination.

U.S. Policy

In a key foreign policy initiative, President Obama sought to “reset” U.S.-Russia relations in 2010 to reverse what he called a “dangerous drift” in bilateral relations by engaging the Russian government on common foreign policy goals and by engaging directly with Russian civil society groups. The reset goals included promoting economic interests, enhancing mutual understanding, and advancing universal values. Arms control and foreign policy concerns took priority, but 16 working groups in a new U.S.-Russia Bilateral Commission also addressed civil society issues. U.S.-Russian relations began to worsen in September 2011, when then-Prime Minister Putin said he would again run for president in March 2012. In October 2012, the Kremlin expelled the U.S. Agency for International Development and banned its Russia programs.

freezes under the Magnitsky Act. There is also an unpublished list of sanctioned officials, reportedly including Ramzan Kadyrov, as USCIRF had recommended.

The Russian annexation of Crimea in March 2014 marked a new low in Russia’s international relations, including with the United States. The United States suspended its role in the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Commission. The United States has issued numerous sanctions against Russia, including banning various bilateral commercial transactions. It also has imposed sanctions against specific Russian officials and their proxies involved in the Crimean annexation and military support for separatists in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine.

On religious freedom, the State Department reports that the U.S. Ambassador and embassy and consulate officers met with Russian government officials to discuss religious freedom issues, including the extremism law, registration issues and the federal list of extremist material, as well as meeting with religious leaders and civil society groups.

Recommendations

USCIRF recommends that the U.S. government should:

- Urge the Russian government to amend its extremism law in line with international human rights standards, such as adding criteria on the advocacy or use of violence, and to ensure that the law is not

The Russian annexation of Crimea in March 2014 marked a new low in Russia’s international relations, including with the United States.

In December 2012, the U.S. Congress normalized trade with Russia by repealing the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, but also passed the Magnitsky Act sanctioning Russian officials responsible for gross human rights violations, including the 2009 death of lawyer Sergei Magnitsky in a Moscow prison; President Obama signed the Act later that month. In response, the Russian government denied Americans the opportunity to adopt Russian children, issued a list of U.S. officials prohibited from entering Russia, and posthumously convicted Magnitsky. By February 2016, the U.S. government had named 39 Russian officials subject to U.S. visa bans and asset

used against members of peaceful religious groups or disfavored communities;

- Press the Russian government to ensure that new laws, such as the expansion of the foreign agents law, do not limit the religious activities of peaceful religious groups; also encourage the Russian government to implement ECtHR decisions relating to religious freedom;
- Under the Magnitsky Act, continue to identify Russian government officials responsible for severe violations of religious freedom and human rights,

freeze their assets, and bar their entry into the United States;

- Raise religious freedom concerns in multilateral settings and meetings, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and urge the Russian government to agree to visits by the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief and the OSCE Representatives on Tolerance, set specific visit dates, and provide the full and necessary conditions for such visits;
- Call for and work to secure the release of religious prisoners and press the Russian government to ensure that every prisoner has regular access to his or her family, human rights monitors, adequate medical care, and a lawyer;
- Ensure that the U.S. Embassy, including at the ambassadorial level, maintains appropriate contacts with human rights activists;
- Encourage the Board of Broadcasting Governors to increase U.S. funding for VOA Russian and Ukrainian Services and for RFE/RL's Russian and Ukrainian Services, and consider Russian translation of the RFE/RL Uzbek Web site, Muslims and Democracy;
- Ensure that violations of freedom of religion or belief and related human rights are included in all relevant discussions with the Russian government due to Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and its support of rebels in the Donbas, and work closely with European and other allies to apply pressure through advocacy, diplomacy, and targeted sanctions; and
- Work to establish an OSCE monitoring presence in Crimea.

Dissenting Statement of Vice Chair M. Zuhdi Jasser:

Russia has been designated a Tier 2 offender of religious freedom by USCIRF since 2009, meaning that the Commission has felt that at least one of the elements of the “systematic, ongoing, and egregious” standard for designation as a “country of particular concern,” or CPC, were being met. During these seven years, severe

violations of religious freedom imposed upon the people of Russia, and now including Crimea and Ukraine, have only accumulated, with no sign of abatement nor any heed during this time by the Russian government of any of our concerns. The continued increase in the repression of religious freedom during this time in Russia beyond a doubt has come to include all of the elements of the definition of “systematic, ongoing, and egregious” violations of religious freedom. The Russian government has had far too long to address all of these areas of concern in Tier 2 status that we have annually raised and their indifference to them, along with a concomitant increase in the religious freedom violations, I believe now requires that the State Department designate Russia a CPC.

I also do not believe the case has been adequately made to explain why the violations described in this report *do not* now, after all this time and expansion rather than retraction, meet the criteria for CPC designation. This report very well delineates all the areas of concern. But specifically in order to reiterate those offenses which particularly merit CPC designation, I want to highlight the following eight areas:

1) In 2015, there was an increase in the number of criminal convictions, fines, and detentions, particularly of Muslims and Jehovah's Witnesses for alleged extremism. A prisoner list compiled by an NGO includes at least 105 religious prisoners in Russia. 2) As of February 2016, 3,291 items had been banned as extremist, including Jehovah's Witnesses' texts and the writings of Turkish theologian Said Nursi. Last year, the number was 2,634. 3) In just part of the past year, from September to December 2015, at least 35 individuals (Muslims, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Falun Gong) were prosecuted on charges relating to alleged extremist texts, a sharp increase over a similar period in 2014. 4) The Russian legal authorities have also continued to oppress religious minorities. Russia's Constitutional Court ruled in 2015 ruled that material can be banned as “extremist” for proclaiming the truth or superiority of one religion or belief system. In 2015, an atheist, Victor Krasnov, was charged with blasphemy under the 2013 blasphemy law for insulting Orthodox believers by supporting atheism on social media. He was on trial at the end of the reporting period, and could receive one year in prison. 5) In Chechnya and Dagestan, Russian officials and local paramilitary

continued to commit often violent religious freedom violations, mostly against Muslims and with almost total impunity. 6) Russia has imposed its repressive religion law in Ukraine's Crimea peninsula, which it illegally annexed in 2014. By January 1, 2016, only 400 of the over 1,100 religious communities that had legal status under Ukrainian law were re-registered under the Russian rules. In the Donbas regions of eastern Ukraine controlled by Russian-backed separatists, Protestants and Kievan Patriarchate Ukrainian Orthodox Church parishes have been targets of arrests, violence, church damage, property confiscation, and discrimination. More than 9,000 individuals have died during the conflict and two million have fled the region, including thousands of Jews, Muslims, Protestants and other religious minorities who faced pressure and discrimination. 7) Russian-installed officials in Crimea have raided libraries, schools, Muslim homes, and mosques; closed Islamic schools; and issued fines for owning allegedly extremist Islamic and Jehovah's Witness texts. Clergy without Russian citizenship were forced to leave Crimea, including Greek and Roman Catholics. Muslim Crimean Tatars, most of whom oppose the Russian occupation, were particularly targeted. 8) Rising xenophobia and intolerance, including anti-Semitism in Russia, are also linked to violent and lethal hate crimes that often occur with impunity.

The above clearly demonstrates a Russian government that has perpetrated "systematic, ongoing, and egregious" violations of religious freedom and thus merits the designation of Russia by the State Department as a CPC.



TURKEY

Key Findings

Turkey's constitution is based on the French model of *laïcité*, strict secularism, which requires the absence of religion in public life and in government. No religious community, including the Sunni Muslim majority, has full legal status and all are subject to state controls that limit their rights to own and maintain places of worship, train clergy, and offer religious education. Other concerns relate to the compulsory religious education classes in public primary and secondary schools, the listing of religious affiliation on national identity cards, anti-Semitism, threats against Turkey's small Protestant community, and denials of access to religious sites in the Turkish-occupied northern part of Cyprus. There were, however, several positive developments during the reporting period, relating to minority property returns and public minority religious celebrations. Nevertheless, based on limitations on religious freedom that continue to exist in the country, USCIRF again places Turkey on Tier 2 in 2016.

is through the Presidency of Religious Affairs, and of all other faiths is through the General Directorate for Foundations. Additionally, the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, a peace treaty between Turkish military forces and several European powers, affords specific guarantees and protections for the Greek and Armenian Orthodox and Jewish communities, but they are not provided to other minority groups.

The Turkish government does not maintain population statistics based on religious identity, but an estimated 75 to 85 percent of the country's population is Sunni Muslim. Alevis comprise an estimated 15 to 25 percent. The Turkish government and many Alevis view the community as heterodox Muslims, but many Sunni Muslims consider them non-Muslims. Some Alevis identify as Shi'a Muslim, while others reject Islam and view themselves as a unique culture. Turkey's non-Muslim religious minority communities are small, estimated at between .1 and .3 percent of the total population, but they are diverse and are historically and

Under the Turkish interpretation of secularism, however, the state has pervasive control over religion and denies full legal status to all religious communities.

Background

Turkey's constitution, adopted in 1982, provides for freedom of belief, worship, and the private dissemination of religious ideas, and prohibits discrimination on religious grounds. Under the Turkish interpretation of secularism, however, the state has pervasive control over religion and denies full legal status to all religious communities. This limits religious freedom for all religious groups and has been particularly detrimental to the smallest minority faiths. Official control of Islam

culturally significant. The fewer than 150,000 Christians in Turkey include Armenian and Greek Orthodox, Syriac Christians, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Protestants, as well as small Georgian Orthodox, Bulgarian Orthodox, Maronite, Chaldean, Nestorian Assyrian, and Roman Catholic communities. The Jewish community comprises fewer than 20,000 persons. Other smaller communities exist in Turkey, including Baha'is.

In August 2014, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was elected President of Turkey, after serving as the country's Prime Minister between 2003 and 2014. Turkey held

two general parliamentary elections in 2015. After the June 2015 election, neither the Justice and Development Party (AKP) nor the Republican People's Party (CHP) secured a majority of seats, and efforts to build a coalition government failed. The AKP won a parliamentary majority in the November 2015 election, although the vote was marred by allegations of fraud and intimidation and incidents of election-related violence. Since 2011, the Turkish government has attempted to revise the constitution but these efforts have failed due to political disagreements unrelated to religious freedom. Nevertheless, despite the continuing constitutional impediments to full religious freedom protections, the Turkish government has shown that improvements for freedom of religion or belief are possible without a new constitution when sufficient political will is present. For example, over the past few years, the government has returned or paid compensation for expropriated religious minority properties and loosened restrictions on Islamic religious dress. That resolve, however, remains lacking on other issues, such as the long-promised reopening of the Greek Orthodox Halki Seminary.

The overall landscape for democracy and human rights in Turkey has deteriorated over the last several years. The government has increased restrictions on social media and cracked down on journalists and individuals or groups that criticize the government, especially President Erdogan.

the ability to train clergy in the country. The Greek Orthodox Theological School of Halki remains closed, as it has been since 1971. The Armenian Orthodox community also lacks a seminary, although there are 16 Armenian Orthodox parish schools.

Religious Minority Properties

Historically, the Turkish government expropriated religious minority properties. Beginning in 2003, and especially since a 2011 governmental decree, many properties have been returned or financial compensation paid when return was not possible. According to the Turkish government, more than 1,000 properties – valued at more than 2.5 billion Turkish Lira (1 billion U.S. Dollars) – had been returned or compensated for between 2003 and 2014. For example, in 2013, the government returned the deed for 244,000 square meters (over 60 acres) of land to the Syriac Foundation that maintains the historic Mor Gabriel Monastery. However, several cases connected to Mor Gabriel remain pending before the European Court of Human Rights, including a case regarding an additional 320,000 square meters (nearly 80 acres) claimed by the Syriac community.

In 2015, the Turkish government reports that out of 1,560 applications, it returned an additional 333 properties and paid compensation for 21 properties. For example, in October 2015, the government returned 439 acres of land to the Syriac Christian Mor Hananyo Mon-

The Turkish government continues to require that only Turkish citizens can be members of the Greek Orthodox Church's Holy Synod, which elects that community's Patriarch.

Religious Freedom Conditions 2015–2016 Interference in Internal Religious Affairs

The Turkish government continues to require that only Turkish citizens can be members of the Greek Orthodox Church's Holy Synod, which elects that community's Patriarch. Since 2010, 30 foreign Metropolitans have been approved for dual citizenship. The government also has interfered in the selection process of the Armenian Patriarchate's leadership. In addition, the government of Turkey denies religious minority communities

astery in Mardin. The same month, following 175 days of protests by Armenians and various religious and ethnic communities, the government returned the deed of Camp Armen to the Armenian Protestant Church Foundation. Camp Armen, confiscated by the government in 1983, was once part of a boarding school and orphanage for Armenian children. The remaining applications are still under review.

Religious minority communities report that the government has rejected around 1,000 applications

since 2011. The communities allege bias, delays, and insufficient compensation. The government states that denials are due to lack of proof of ownership, for example when different religious communities are claiming the same property.

Education

The constitution makes religious and moral instruction compulsory in public primary and secondary schools, with a curriculum established by the Ministry of National Education. Non-Muslim children can be exempted, but to do so parents and students must reveal their religious affiliation, which can lead to societal and teacher discrimination. Alevis, however, are not afforded the exemption option. In 2014, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Turkey's compulsory religious education violated the right of Alevi parents and others to have their children educated consistent with their own convictions. The court ruled that Turkey should institute a system whereby pupils could be exempted from religion classes without parents having to disclose their religious or philosophical convictions. To date, the Turkish government has not done so, although Forum 18 reported that the government is reviewing the education system and plans to present an action plan to respond to the European Court decision.

Religious minority communities also have complained that the textbooks used in the compulsory class were written from a Muslim worldview and included generalized and derogatory language about other faiths. During USCIRF's 2014 visit to Turkey, the Ministry of Education reported to USCIRF that it was aware of the complaints by religious communities and that it had made an effort to revise the books. The ministry shared the revised textbooks with USCIRF. In late 2015, USCIRF released an analysis of the books, *Compulsory Religious Education in Turkey: A Survey and Assessment of Textbooks*. The report found that the textbooks included positive passages on religion and science, religion and rationality, good citizenship, religious freedom, and the origins of differences in Islamic thought. However, the study also found that the textbooks had superficial, limited, and misleading information about religions other than Islam, including Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism, and linked atheism with the concept of Satanism.

National Identity Cards

In January 2015, responding to a 2010 European Court of Human Rights' ruling that the mandatory listing of religious affiliation on national identity cards violated the European Convention, the parliament passed a law removing the requirement on the cards. However, the new ID cards, expected to be distributed in 2016, will include a microchip where religious affiliation may be included, although it will not be required. This has led to the concern that individuals who fail to list "Muslim" will automatically be deemed part of a minority community, which may lead to bias. Additionally, it is not known what affiliations will be permitted to be listed on the microchips. In the past, some groups, such as Baha'is and atheists, were unable to state their affiliations on their identity cards because their faiths or belief systems were not on the official list of options.

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Alevis

Alevis worship in "gathering places" (*cemevi*), which the Turkish government does not consider legal houses of worship and thus cannot receive the legal and financial benefits associated with such status. In December 2014, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Turkey discriminates against the Alevi community by failing to recognize *cemevis* as official places of worship. In November 2015, Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu presented to the Turkish parliament a new plan to grant legal status to Alevi houses of worship. Under this plan, the Presidency of Religious Affairs would pay for *cemevis'* water and electricity bills and provide a salary for *Dedes* (Alevi religious leaders), as it does for Sunni mosques and imams. At the end of the reporting period, it was not clear if the Parliament had agreed to the Prime Minister's proposal.

Anti-Semitism

Generally, the small Jewish community in Turkey is able to worship freely; their community foundations operate schools, hospitals, and other entities; and their synagogues receive government protection when needed. Nevertheless, anti-Semitism in Turkish society and media remains a serious concern. Additionally, there continue to be reports that government officials have made anti-Semitic comments. A 2015 report by the Hrant Dink Foundation found 130 examples of hate speech in the Turkish print media that targeted the Jewish community in Turkey or the Jewish community more broadly between May and August 2014. In addition, in January 2016, unknown vandals sprayed “Terrorist Israel, there is Allah” on the outside wall of Istipol Synagogue in Istanbul’s Balat neighborhood. On

years, religious communities on occasion were denied access to houses of worship, cemeteries, and other historical and cultural sites.

Positive Developments Regarding Minority Religious Celebrations

In the last year, there were some notable developments concerning public minority religious celebrations. In March 2015, the third largest synagogue in Europe, the Great Synagogue of Edirne in Turkey’s northwest region, was reopened and a service held for the first time in nearly 50 years. In December 2015, the first public celebration of Hanukah in the Republic’s history was held in Istanbul’s historic Ortakoy Square; the country’s Chief Rabbi, Izak Haleva, lit a large menorah, the head of the Jewish Community’s foundation

In December 2015, the first public celebration of Hanukah in the Republic’s history was held in Istanbul’s historic Ortakoy Square; the country’s Chief Rabbi, Izak Haleva, lit a large menorah, the head of the Jewish Community’s foundation delivered a speech, and government officials reportedly attended.

a positive note, during the reporting period, the Turkish government took steps to publicly support the Jewish community, as described below.

Protestants

In August 2015, 15 Protestant churches and 20 church leaders received cyber-threats including through SMS text messaging, email, and social media. The community and the Turkish government believe that the threats came from religious extremists in Turkey affiliated with or sympathetic to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). In one video released on Twitter, militants threatened to commit mass murder in churches affiliated with the Association of Protestant Churches. Reportedly, the Turkish government is investigating the cases.

Northern part of the Republic of Cyprus

Turkey has occupied nearly one-third of the northern part of Cyprus since 1974. In the past year, as in previous

delivered a speech, and government officials reportedly attended. In January 2015, the government also sponsored the first-ever Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremony, with the Parliamentary Speaker and Minister of Culture and Tourism participating. In May 2015, the Agios Konstantinos Greek Church, located in the western province of Izmir, reopened after extensive renovations; a mass was held for the first time in 93 years, with the Greek Orthodox Patriarch present. In July 2015, for the first time in 188 years, the Alevi community held a religious service in the Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli dervish convent, located in the province of Nevşehir. However, the community was required to get permission from the Turkish Culture and Tourism Ministry. In November 2015, for the first time in 60 years, a religious service was held in the Protestant Church in Artuklu, located in Mardin. It is unknown if these events were one-time occurrences or if they will be allowed in the future.

U.S. Policy

Turkey is an important strategic partner of the United States; it is a NATO ally and there is a U.S. airbase in Incirlik, Turkey. The U.S.-Turkey relationship includes many matters, most importantly regional stability and security due to Turkey's shared borders with Syria, Iraq, and Iran, and the emergence of ISIL. The United States continues to support Turkish accession to the European Union. In addition, in the past, the United States worked to criminalize the sources of material support for the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) by designating the PKK a Foreign Terrorist Organization and supported the Turkish military against the PKK in northern Iraq. However, since 2014, relations between Turkey and the United States have soured over a number of issues, including differences in their approaches to the war in Syria and the threat of ISIL and anti-democratic domestic actions by the government of Turkey.

Since President Jimmy Carter, every U.S. president has called consistently for Turkey to reopen the Greek Orthodox Theological School of Halki under the

Since President Jimmy Carter, every U.S. president has called consistently for Turkey to reopen the Greek Orthodox Theological School of Halki under the auspices of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. . . .

auspices of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and to take specific steps to address concerns of the ethnic Kurdish population and other minority communities. The U.S. government also cooperates with Turkey to assist in the advancement of freedom of expression, respect for individual human rights, civil society, and promotion of ethnic diversity. Like every country except Turkey, the United States does not officially recognize the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus." However, the United States government does discuss religious freedom with Turkish Cypriot authorities and supports international efforts to reunify the island.

Recommendations

In its engagement with Turkey, the U.S. government, at the highest levels, should continue to raise religious freedom issues with the Turkish government. Specifically, USCIRF recommends that the U.S. government should urge the Turkish government to:

- Revive the multi-party constitutional drafting commission with the goal of drafting a new constitution consistent with international human rights standards on freedom of religion or belief;
- Interpret the 1923 Lausanne Treaty to provide equal rights to all religious minority communities;
- Comply with decisions made by the European Court of Human Rights, including by:
 - removing the space listing religious affiliation on official identification cards, both in print and on future microchipped versions;
 - recognizing Alevi *cemevis* as official places of worship; and
 - instituting a system whereby pupils can be exempted from religion classes without parents having to disclose their religious or philosophical convictions;
- Without conditions, fulfill private and public promises that the Greek Orthodox Halki Seminary be reopened, and permit other religious communities to open and operate their seminaries;
- Permit religious communities to select and appoint their leadership in accordance with their internal guidelines and beliefs;
- Publicly rebuke government officials who make anti-Semitic or derogatory statements about religious communities in Turkey; and
- Ensure that, with respect to the northern part of the Republic of Cyprus, Turkish military authorities and Turkish-controlled local authorities end all restrictions on the access, use, and restoration of places of worship and cemeteries for religious minorities.

OTHER COUNTRIES/REGIONS MONITORED

- BAHRAIN
- BANGLADESH
- BELARUS
- HORN OF AFRICA
- KYRGYZSTAN
- WESTERN EUROPE

BAHRAIN

During the past year, there was an increase in the number of interrogations, detentions, and arbitrary arrests of Shi'a Muslims, including clerics, for peaceful protests and criticizing the government's human rights and religious freedom record. While the Bahraini government has made significant progress in rebuilding 30 mosques and religious structures it destroyed during unrest in the spring of 2011, it did not meet its self-imposed deadline to complete the process by the end of 2014. In addition, the government has yet to fully implement recommendations from the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI) to redress past abuses against Shi'a Muslims and further improve religious freedom conditions.

Background

With a population of approximately 1.3 million, about half are Bahraini citizens and half are expatriate workers, primarily from South Asian countries. Almost half of the expatriate workers are non-Muslim (approximately 250,000-300,000). Bahraini citizens are estimated to be 60-65 percent Shi'a and 30-35 percent Sunni, with approximately one to two percent non-Muslims, including Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, Jews, and Baha'is. Compared to other countries in the region, Bahrain is among the most tolerant of non-Muslim religious minority communities. The government officially recognizes at least 19 Christian denominations, a tiny Jewish community, Hindus, and Sikhs. A small Baha'i community is recognized as a social entity. Most Bahrainis acknowledge that their society has been historically tolerant of all faiths and religiously pluralistic to a degree that is notable in the region.

Progress and Concerns Related to Accountability for Past Abuses

Since the release of the 2011 BICI report, the Bahraini government has created entities to address accountability for abuses, including a Civilian Settlement Office to compensate for deaths and injuries from the 2011 unrest,

as well as an Office of the Ombudsman in the Ministry of Interior to ensure compliance with policing standards and receive reports of misconduct. However, the government still has not adequately held high-level security officials accountable for serious abuses, which included targeting, imprisoning, torturing, and killing predominantly Shi'a demonstrators. Bahraini courts have tried, prosecuted, and convicted only a few lower-level police officers, with little or no transparency about the trials, convictions, and length of prison terms; several have been acquitted. The government has stated that there are ongoing investigations of commanding officers related to the 2011 abuses, but has not disclosed details.

[T]he government still has not adequately held high-level security officials accountable for serious abuses, which included targeting, imprisoning, torturing, and killing predominantly Shi'a demonstrators.

Ongoing Abuses and Discrimination

In October 2015, UN experts found that patterns of cultural, economic, educational, and social discrimination against Shi'a Muslims in Bahrain persisted in 2015. They found that excessive use of force and abuses targeting Shi'a clerics continued, as did discrimination in the education system, media, public sector employment, and other government social policies, such as housing and welfare programs.

During the reporting period, Shi'a Muslims continued to be interrogated, detained, and arrested, and, in some cases, convicted and sentenced to prison terms. For example, in August and December 2015, Shi'a cleric and interfaith activist Maytham al-Salman was interrogated about his criticism of Bahraini government policies and his advocacy of human rights and religious freedom. He

was charged with “expressing views regarding a case still in court” and “inciting hatred against the regime” and his travel was restricted. At the end of the reporting period, the charges were still pending. In June 2015, Shi’a cleric and prominent opposition leader Ali Salman was sentenced to four years in prison on a range of security-related charges, including inciting regime change and insulting the Ministry of Interior, which UN experts have criticized as violations of the freedoms of expression, association, and religion. Salman originally was arrested and imprisoned in December 2014. At the end of the reporting period, he continues to appeal the sentence and remains in detention.

Furthermore, while government officials often make public statements condemning sectarian hatred, pro-government media continued to use inflammatory, sectarian rhetoric. New media laws that would curb anti-Shi’a incitement, as recommended in the BICI report, have not been passed. According to interlocutors, members of the Shi’a community still cannot serve in the active military, only in administrative positions, and there are no Shi’a Muslims in the upper levels of the Bahrain government security apparatus, including the military and police.

Despite a self-imposed end-of-2014 deadline, the Bahraini government has not completed rebuilding destroyed structures.

Progress in Rebuilding Shi’a Mosques and Religious Structures

Despite a self-imposed end-of-2014 deadline, the Bahraini government has not completed rebuilding destroyed structures. In early 2014, the government increased to approximately US\$8 million the amount to rebuild Shi’a mosques and religious structures, nearly twice what it pledged in 2012. It also moved the deadline from 2018 to the end of 2014 to complete rebuilding the 30 destroyed structures identified in the BICI report. In October 2015, the government stated publicly that 27 had been completed and were approved for use and that three still required legal and administrative approval. Nevertheless, as of February 2016, other credible sources found

that the government had rebuilt 20 structures – 15 fully in use and five nearly complete but not yet in use – and the Shi’a community itself had rebuilt seven structures. The government has stated that it helped secure legal permits for the structures built by the Shi’a community, but despite indicating willingness in the past, officials have not committed to reimbursing the community.

Of the 27 completed or nearly complete, one mosque – the Mohamad Al Barbaghi mosque, which is religiously and historically significant to the Shi’a community – was rebuilt some 200 meters from its original site. The government has stated this was for security reasons, since the original mosque site is next to a major highway, but some members of the Shi’a community continue to insist that the mosque can only be built on the original location. Bahraini officials have committed to an ongoing dialogue with the Shi’a community to resolve the remaining disputed cases, although some community representatives do not believe the government is fully committed to the negotiations.

Other Developments

In December 2015, Bahrain’s Shura Council approved amendments to the law governing political societies that ban clerics from delivering sermons and carrying out religious duties while also being members of political societies. In August, the Shura Council debated criminalizing contempt of religion and insults to religious sanctities, as well as hate speech that promotes sectarian discord and undermines national unity. By the end of the reporting period, no further action had been taken. In October, there were numerous reports that authorities removed Ashura banners in some locations where commemorations were taking place; clashes followed, resulting in injuries to dozens of protestors.

Recommendations

USCIRF urges the United States government to continue to press the Bahraini government to implement fully the BICI recommendations, including those related to freedom of religion and belief and accountability for past abuses against the Shi’a community. In addition, USCIRF continues to encourage the Bahraini government to reimburse the Shi’a community for expending its own funds to rebuild seven mosques and religious structures that were demolished in 2011.

BANGLADESH

In 2015, violent extremists killed, threatened, assaulted, harassed, and intimidated religious minorities and self-described atheists or secularist bloggers. While the government, led by the ruling Awami League, has taken steps to investigate, arrest, and prosecute perpetrators of violent attacks or threats, and has increased protection for likely targets, religious and civil society groups fear that increasing religious extremism will result in future threats and attacks. In addition, illegal land appropriations, commonly referred to as land-grabbing, and ownership disputes remain widespread, with religious minorities, especially Hindus and Christians, being particularly vulnerable. Other concerns include the implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord and the situation of Rohingya Muslims. In March 2015, a USCIRF staff member traveled to Bangladesh to assess the religious freedom situation.

[R]eligious and civil society groups fear that increasing religious extremism will result in future threats and attacks.

Background

Bangladesh's political landscape is deeply divided between the ruling Awami League and the main opposition party, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). The January 2014 parliamentary election was not free and fair, and was followed by violence in 16 out of 64 districts. The worst attacks occurred in minority-dominated villages. Dozens of Hindu properties were looted or set ablaze, and hundreds of Hindus fled their homes. Christian and Buddhist communities also were targeted. Most attacks were attributed to individuals and groups associated with the BNP and the main Islamist party Jamaat-e-Islami (Jamaat).

Approximately 90 percent of Bangladesh's estimated 160 million population is Sunni Muslim. Hindus are 9.5

percent of the total population, and all other faiths, including Christians and Buddhists, are less than one percent.

Targeting of Religious Minorities

During the reporting period, religious minority leaders and laity from the Christian, Shi'a Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist communities were killed, injured, or threatened, and some houses of worship were attacked. These incidents were either attributed to or claimed by domestic and international extremist groups, including Jamaatul Mujahedin Bangladesh (JMB) and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), although the government of Bangladesh denies that ISIL is present and operating in the country. On a positive note, religious minority communities reported that the government and police actively have investigated, arrested, and prosecuted individuals for threats and attacks, and have increased protection, especially during religious holidays and festivals. Religious leaders also noted that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, and religious leaders, including from the Sunni majority, have made public statements condemning attacks against religious minorities. However, religious communities also report that political parties sometimes use religiously-divisive language and act in ways that exacerbate religious and communal tensions for political gain.

Murders of and Threats against Bloggers

In 2015, four Bangladeshis – Washiqur Rahman Babu, Ananta Bijoy Das, Niloy Chatterjee, and Faisal Arefin Dipan – and one Bangladeshi-American, Avijit Roy, were assassinated for their writings on secularism and freedom of thought, religious and communal tolerance, and political transparency and accountability. Groups such as Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), Ansar al Islam, and Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT) claimed responsibility. According to the government, over 30 people have been arrested for the murders of Roy, Bijoy Das, Babu, and

Chatterjee. Additionally, on December 31, 2015, two men were sentenced to death and six others to prison for the 2013 murder of blogger Ahmed Rajib Haider.

Due to threats made against them, including in “Hit Lists” of individuals targeted for assassination widely available on the Internet, dozens of individuals have either fled the country or their areas of residence.

Land-Grabbing

Land-grabbing, including by police and political leaders, is a significant concern and is widespread throughout Bangladesh. Attacks on property holders and arson almost always accompanies incidents of land-grabbing. Religious minorities, particularly Hindus, believe that a lack of political representation makes them especially vulnerable targets. This problem affects all communities, which makes it difficult to determine if minorities are targeted due to their faith, their vulnerable status as minorities, or the value of the property.

In January 2016, hundreds of Christians protested against the government’s attempted seizure of land claimed by the St. Peter’s Church in Barisal district. At the end of the reporting period, the Bangladesh Christian Association’s appeal to stop the seizure remains pending.

Property Returns

In 2011, the Vested Property Return Act established an application process for families or individuals to apply for the return of, or compensation for, property seized by the government prior to and immediately after Bangladesh’s independence from Pakistan in 1971. The Hindu community was especially affected by the government’s property seizures. Reportedly, in May 2015, the Act was amended to add an additional six thousand acres of land eligible for return. Reportedly, in consultation with the Hindu community, the government is considering additional amendments to address concerns about the application process and the number of eligible properties for return.

Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord (CHT Accord)

The CHT Accord is a political agreement and peace treaty between the Bangladeshi government and the political organization representing the ethnic and indigenous people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts area

in south-eastern Bangladesh, nearly 50 percent of whom follow Theravada Buddhism. Additionally, in recent years the Hindu population has increased from migration. According to the Bangladeshi government, out of 72 articles of the CHT Accord, 48 have been fully implemented, 15 partially implemented, and nine have not been implemented. However, in February 2016, the communities’ political organization asserted that two-thirds of the CHT Accord articles are unimplemented. On a positive note, the representation of ethnic and religious groups in the CHT local police force reportedly has increased.

Rohingya Muslims

For decades, Bangladesh has hosted, in two government-run camps in Cox’s Bazaar, near the Bangladesh-Burmese border, an estimated 30,000 officially-recognized Rohingya Muslim refugees who fled religious persecution in Burma. An estimated 200,000 to 500,000 Rohingya Muslims deemed illegal immigrants live outside the camps, in deplorable conditions. In late 2015, the Bangladesh government began conducting a census of the Rohingya population. Reportedly, participants in the census will receive an identification card from the International Organization for Migration, which will improve access to health care and education.

Recommendations

In its engagement with Bangladesh, USCIRF recommends that the U.S. government should: provide technical assistance and encourage the Bangladesh government to further develop its national counter terrorism strategy; urge Prime Minister Hasina and all government officials to frequently and publicly denounce religiously-divisive language and acts of religiously-motivated violence and harassment; assist the Bangladeshi government in providing local government officials, police officers and judges with training on international human rights standards, as well as how to investigate and adjudicate religiously-motivated violent acts; and urge the government of Bangladesh to investigate claims of land-grabbing and to repeal its blasphemy law. Additionally, the United States government should provide humanitarian parole for a limited number of Bangladeshi writers at imminent risk of assassination by extremist groups.

BELARUS

USCIRF continues to monitor the situation in Belarus, where the government tightly regulates religious communities through an extensive security and religious affairs bureaucracy, which has driven some groups underground. Officials are particularly hostile towards religious groups viewed as political opponents, such as Protestants. The government strictly controls foreign citizens who conduct religious activity, particularly Catholic priests. The rights of prisoners to practice their religion or belief – even those on death row – are routinely denied. In 2015, Belarus adopted an alternative service law, but it does not fully protect the right to conscientious objection to military service.

country's six regions employs multiple religious affairs officials, as does Minsk city. Officials from local Ideology Departments and the Belarusian secret police (which retains the Soviet-era title of Committee for State Security (KGB)) also are involved in religious controls. The 2002 religion law, which includes compulsory state registration of all communities and geographical limits on religious activity, is central to a wide web of regulations that tethers all registered religious groups. The religion law recognizes the “determining role” of the Moscow Patriarchate Belarus Orthodox Church (MPBOC) in national traditions and deems four faiths “traditional” – Catholicism, Judaism, Islam, and Evangelical Lutheranism – but does not include the Old Believers and

[T]he government tightly regulates religious communities through an extensive security and religious affairs bureaucracy, which has driven some groups underground.

Background

Of Belarus' 9.6 million population, an estimated 68 percent belong to the Belarusian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, 15 percent profess no religion, and 14 percent are Roman Catholic. The remaining three percent are adherents of other religious groups, which include Protestants, Muslims, Jews, Ukrainian or Greek Catholics, other Orthodox communities, Old Believers, Lutherans, Jehovah's Witnesses, Apostolic Christians, Hare Krishnas, Baha'is, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), and Armenian Apostolics.

Government Control over Religious Activity

A government agency, headed by the Plenipotentiary for Religious and Ethnic Affairs, oversees an extensive bureaucracy to regulate religious groups; each of the

Calvinist churches, present in the country since the 17th century. Non-Moscow Patriarchate Orthodox Christian communities only can gain registration with the approval of a local MPBOC bishop.

Religious meetings in private homes must not occur regularly or involve large numbers. Use of houses of worship and any public exercise of religion requires state permission, which is rarely granted for disfavored groups, particularly Protestants. Moscow Patriarchate Orthodox and Catholic communities are less affected, partly due to the state's more positive view of them, but also because they are more likely to occupy historic churches. The New Life Church, a 1,000-member Pentecostal congregation in Minsk, has struggled since 2002 to keep control of its private church property, a renovated cow barn that authorities claim cannot officially be used as a church.

Unregistered religious activity usually is treated as an administrative offense punishable by a fine. Since registration is compulsory, the religion law makes no provision for those which do not wish to register, such as the Council of Churches Baptists and a similar Pentecostal group. A religious group found to have violated the religion law must correct the alleged violation within six months and not repeat it for one year or face closure. There is no legal avenue for religious groups to challenge such warnings, as the Belarus Constitutional Court noted in 2007. After that ruling, Jehovah's Witnesses often have tried, but failed, to establish the legal right to challenge such rulings.

long attempts to register. In May 2015, riot police raided the rented worship place of the Reformed Orthodox Transfiguration Church in Gomel; one month later, officials forbade the church from renting space, in effect a meeting ban. Its pastor, Sergei Nikolaenko, faces administrative charges and his home was searched. Also in May, armed police raided the Council of Churches Baptists in Svetlogorsk. Three members were later fined for unauthorized worship meetings; others face similar charges, as does the owner of the home where the church meets. In December 2015, police in Gorki raided a private religious meeting of a Council of Churches Baptists congregation. Its leader, Mikhail Shulgan,

In a positive development, during the reporting period, several religious groups were permitted to hold large religious events outside registered places of worship.

Status of Public Religious Activity

In a positive development, during the reporting period, several religious groups were permitted to hold large religious events outside registered places of worship. Protestants held outdoor baptisms in lakes, Catholic and Orthodox churches held large public processions, and the Protestant Full Gospel Union received official permission for the first time in 20 years to rent a major public sports venue in Minsk. However, although Hare Krishnas were denied permits for large processions, they did hold small processions. Also, officials reportedly tried to prevent individuals from offering religious texts on the street, even if punishment is infrequent. In June 2015, three Hare Krishnas were briefly detained in Vitebsk for offering religious texts to passers-by. In November 2015, a lawyer who belongs to an unregistered Protestant church in Minsk asked parliament to explain why he was denied permission for a public Bible reading although registered religious groups are allowed to do so.

Actions against Religious Minorities

In July 2015, the Belarusian Autocephalous Orthodox Church's parish in the capital Minsk gave up its years-

was told he should not hold a meeting without state permission, but as of 2011 that is no longer an administrative offense; his wife, however, was charged with the administrative offence of "not using living premises for their designated purpose." In February 2016, the Plenipotentiary for Religious and Ethnic Affairs, Leonid Gulyako, threatened to revoke the registration of Jehovah's Witness communities, although he lacks the legal authority to do so.

Actions against Foreign Priests

In July 2015, Belarusian border guards denied entry to the U.S.-based Archbishop of the Belarusian Autocephalous Orthodox Church. In December 2015, the government denied entry to two Polish Catholic priests invited by the church to work in Belarus. The Catholic Bishops Conference has noted publicly the increased difficulty their priests face in receiving official permission to enter Belarus. In February 2016, Plenipotentiary Gulyako was publicly critical of Catholic priests' "destructive" activity and also criticized the Catholic Church for its alleged failings in training clergy. According to Forum 18, the Plenipotentiary's Office impeded the required registration for the Catholic Theological Academy that remains under construction in Minsk. The Conference

of Catholic Bishops observed that training of clergy is an internal issue and noted there are 19 students in Catholic seminaries in Belarus and abroad.

New Alternative Service Law

In June 2015, Belarus adopted its first Alternative Service Law, which will go into effect on July 1, 2016. Members of pacifist religious communities will be eligible for civilian alternative service, under the control of the Labor and Social Security Ministry, for a term that is twice as long as military service. The new law does not address the status of objectors from religious communities that are not formally pacifist or non-religious conscientious objectors. Young men already in military service cannot apply for alternative service if they change their views.

In June 2015, Belarus adopted its first Alternative Service Law, which will go into effect on July 1, 2016.

As of September 2015, one Jehovah's Witness conscientious objector still faced conscription attempts, even though criminal and administrative charges against him were dropped. A second Jehovah's Witness conscientious objector was acquitted at his criminal trial.

Recommendations

After Russian forces invaded Ukraine in 2014, Belarus has hosted several high-level international meetings on the crisis. These meetings have included State Department representatives, even though the United States has not had an ambassador in Belarus since 2008. With such increased U.S. government engagement with Belarus, USCIRF recommends the State Department raise concerns about religious freedom and related human rights with Belarusian officials. In addition, the U.S. government should raise publicly Belarusian religious freedom violations at appropriate international fora, such as the OSCE and the UN, particularly the need to reform the religion law.

HORN OF AFRICA

Religious freedom violations are prevalent in a number of countries in the Horn of Africa region. As previously discussed in this report, USCIRF continues to recommend Eritrea and Sudan be designated as “countries of particular concern” (CPCs) due to their governments’ systematic, ongoing, and egregious religious freedom violations. In addition, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia also are plagued by religious freedom violations. The U.S.-designated terrorist organization al-Shabaab is responsible for many of the abuses in Kenya and Somalia. However, the Ethiopian and Kenyan governments’ responses to terrorism and increasing religious extremism also lead to religious freedom violations. In Somalia, governmental and societal religious intolerance contributes to that country’s poor religious freedom record.

constitution explicitly prohibits apostasy and names the Qur’an and the Sunnah as the main source of the law within the country.

Societal and Governmental Intolerance

Somalis are almost all Sunni Muslims. Christians in Somalia are persecuted by their family and their community. Somali clerics and al-Shabaab have stated that Christianity, Christians, and churches are antithetical to Somalia. The Somali government also has shown an intolerance toward Christians. In 2013 and 2015, government officials announced, and later rescinded, a ban on Christmas celebrations in the country.

In a new development, Shi’a Muslims were harassed in Somalia during the reporting period. On December 23, government authorities arrested and deported two

The U.S.-designated terrorist organization al-Shabaab is responsible for many of the abuses in Kenya and Somalia.

Somalia

Background

The Federal Government of Somalia, the current transitional government, was established in August 2012. In January 2016, Somali political leaders agreed that a permanent government would be voted into power during the August 2016 elections. In 2015, transitional authorities continued the contentious effort to form a federal state, and interim regional administrations still struggled to establish authority.

Provisional Constitution

The Somali government continues to review the provisional constitution, which includes a number of provisions inconsistent with religious freedom. The

Iranian nationals, accusing them of proselytizing. In January 2016, the Somali government ended relations with Iran. On January 12, a Somaliland judge fined and imprisoned two Pakistani nationals for propagating Shi’a Islam.

Al-Shabaab

Al-Shabaab (also known as the Harakat Shabaab al-Mujahidin, Shabaab, Mujahidin al-Shabaab Movement, Mujahideen Youth Movement, or Mujahidin Youth Movement) came to prominence in Somalia as the military wing of the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) in 2006. Its stated goals are to turn Somalia into an Islamic state, build a greater Somalia including areas in neighboring countries with large ethnically-Somali populations, and spread its strict version of Islam. Since 2007, al-Shabaab

has fought both Somali and regional forces in its campaign to control Somalia, at times holding large territories in the central and southern regions of the country.

In February 2012, it pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda. In 2015, divisions emerged within al-Shabaab over its allegiance to al-Qaeda, with a splinter group seeking to join forces with the Islamic State and the Levant (ISIL). On October 22, senior al-Shabaab leader Sheikh Abdiqadir Mumin and some 20 of his followers pledged allegiance to ISIL. In response, al-Shabaab arrested and executed some of these ISIL sympathizers, maintaining its allegiance to al-Qaeda.

During the reporting period, the security situation in central and southern Somalia remained highly volatile. Al-Shabaab executed frequent attacks on the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the Somali national army, and civilians in central and southern Somalia and also perpetrated sporadic attacks in the Puntland autonomous region. In Mogadishu, al-Shabaab bombings killed Somali government officials, international representatives, and Somali civilians. The group assassinated federal government officials and their allies whom it viewed as non-Muslims or apostates. In addition, al-Shabaab continued to brutally enforce its extremist interpretation of Islamic law, killing Christians and those accused of “sorcery.” The militants also lashed individuals accused of rape and adultery.

Kenya

Background

The Kenyan constitution and other laws protect religious freedom, including the freedom to manifest any religion or belief through worship, practice, teaching, or observance, and prohibit religious discrimination. However, government efforts to respond to al-Shabaab have resulted in large-scale targeting and collective punishment of Somali citizens, ethnic-Somalis, and other Muslims.

Al-Shabaab

In October 2011, Kenya deployed its military to Somalia to counter al-Shabaab gains in that country. Al-Shabaab responded by expanding its attacks into Kenya, including the September 2013 Westgate mall attack, June-July 2014 five-week campaign across Lamu and Tana River counties, and dozens of other terrorist assaults throughout the country. The group has killed both Muslims and

non-Muslims, but al-Shabaab terrorists routinely seek to identify and isolate Christians during their strikes. The most notable al-Shabaab attack in Kenya during the reporting period occurred on April 2 at Garissa University College; 148 students were killed in the worst terrorist attack in Kenya since the 1998 U.S. Embassy bombing. On June 8, the Kenyan government charged five persons with terrorism for their involvement.

The most notable al-Shabaab attack in Kenya during the reporting period occurred on April 2 at Garissa University College; 148 students were killed in the worst terrorist attack in Kenya since the 1998 U.S. Embassy bombing.

Operation Usalama Watch

In April 2014, the Kenyan government initiated Operation Usalama Watch to identify and arrest al-Shabaab terrorists and sympathizers in Kenya. The operation started in Nairobi’s largely Somali Eastleigh neighborhood, then expanded to the ethnically-Somali northeast and majority Muslim coastal regions. Kenyan and international human rights organizations have accused security officials involved in the operation of targeting entire ethnic and religious communities and committing gross human rights abuses, including arbitrary arrests, extortion, illegal detention, torture, killings, and disappearances. In September 2015, the independent, governmental Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) released a detailed report documenting at least 4,000 arrests since April 2014, mostly of ethnic Somalis, many of whom suffered severe abuses in detention; hundreds were later released and the charges against them dropped for lack of evidence. Kenya’s Independent Oversight Policing Authority (IPOA) and international human rights groups reported that security officers deployed to Nairobi’s Eastleigh neighborhood and elsewhere in the country beat scores of people; raided homes, buildings, and shops; and extorted massive sums of money. In Mombasa, three prominent

radical Muslim clerics were assassinated, purportedly by Kenyan security officers. Also in Mombasa, mosques accused of radicalism were closed and subsequently re-opened a short time later.

Operation Usalama Watch also ordered all Somali refugees residing outside the Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps to immediately return to the camps. After the Garissa University attack, the government announced

income, and require clergy to pass a police clearance, prove accreditation from an approved theological institution, and in the case of foreign clergy, provide work permits and a recommendation from their home government. On January 28, the Kenyan government withdrew the proposal from Parliament following opposition from Catholic, Evangelical Christian, and Muslim groups.

Kenyan and international human rights organizations have accused security officials involved in the operation of targeting entire ethnic and religious communities and committing gross human rights abuses, including arbitrary arrests, extortion, illegal detention, torture, killings, and disappearances.

plans to close Dadaab refugee camp and repatriate all Somali refugees in the country. Voluntary repatriations started in August 2015.

Targeting of Human Rights Organizations

On April 8, following the Garissa University attack, the government classified a number of individuals, businesses, and organizations as entities associated with terrorist groups and froze their bank accounts. Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI) and HAKI Africa were included in this list. These two Coast-based human rights organizations documented cases of extrajudicial killings and disappearances of alleged terrorism suspects and Muslim clerics, purportedly at the hands of government security forces, and advocated for accountability. The organizations challenged the government's actions, and on November 12 a judge cleared both groups of any terrorism links after the government failed to present evidence. However, the government has yet to unfreeze their bank accounts, preventing the organizations from resuming their work.

Regulating Religious Communities

In January 2016, the Kenyan government sought to implement registration requirements on religious communities and clerics. The proposed legislation would mandate that religious groups submit to the government a statement of faith and a list of their sources of

Ethiopia

Background

Ethiopia has a long history of religious tolerance and inter-religious cooperation, and its constitution protects freedom of religion or belief and provides for separation of religion and state. In 2011-2012, however, in response to concerns about rising extremism, the government imposed the al-Ahbash interpretation of Islam on the country's Muslim community, including through required training for imams; interfered in the independence of the community's representative body, the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC); and then arrested and prosecuted Muslims who opposed these actions and engaged in peaceful protests.

Convictions for Peaceful Protests

On July 6 and August 3, 2015 respectively, the Ethiopian government convicted and sentenced 18 leaders of the 2012 Muslim protest movement. They were convicted of plotting to institute an Islamic government and sentenced to seven to 22 years in prison under Ethiopia's controversial Anti-Terror Proclamation. U.S. government officials and human rights organizations have criticized the Ethiopian government's use of the Anti-Terror Proclamation to silence critics. On September 16, the Ethiopian government pardoned six of those convicted.

Increased EIASC Oversight of Mosques

The EIASC is the Ethiopian Muslim community's representative body, but due to the government's interference since 2011 many in the community no longer support it and view its members as government figureheads.

During the reporting period, the EIASC increased its management of the Muslim community. It issued two directives giving it greater oversight, and even ownership, of Ethiopia's mosques. The directives include detailed rules regulating the administration of mosques; give the EIASC authority to issue internal mosque regulations and appoint mosque employees; and prohibit public meetings, speeches and preaching, and fundraising events without the EIASC's written approval.

KYRGYZSTAN

The Kyrgyz government restricts religious freedom through its 2008 religion law and other laws and policies. Pending religion law amendments would sharply increase these controls, and, if enacted, could negatively affect Kyrgyzstan's status in USCIRF's next annual report. USCIRF has monitored religious freedom conditions in Kyrgyzstan for several years.

Background

Over 80 percent of Kyrgyzstan's population of 5.7 million is Sunni Muslim; 15 percent is Christian, mostly Russian Orthodox; and the remaining five percent consists of very small Shi'a Muslim, Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Buddhist, and Baha'i communities or individuals who are unaffiliated with any religion. The country's large ethnic Uzbek community (up to 40 percent of the population of southern Kyrgyzstan) mostly adheres to the Hanafi school of Sunni Islam.

2008 Religion Law

The constitution purports to provide for religious freedom for all citizens, but Kyrgyzstan's 2008 religion law criminalizes unregistered religious activity and imposes burdensome registration requirements, including that a religious group must have 200 resident citizens as its founders and at least ten members, of whom one must be a 15-year local resident. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe's Venice Commission, and the UN Human Rights Committee have noted that the law violates international standards, including through its: registration requirements, criminal penalties for unregistered activity, restrictions on "fanaticism and extremism," and limits on missionary activity and the dissemination of religious materials. In 2015, some Kyrgyz officials reportedly ignored a 2014 ruling of the Supreme Court's Constitutional Chamber that a registered religious group's activities cannot be limited to its legal address and that it is unconstitutional

to require local council approval of the list of 200 founders necessary for registration.

Proposed Religion Law Amendments

In 2014, the State Committee on Religious Affairs (SCRA) prepared draft amendments to the religion law that would sharply increase the SCRA's authority; privilege Islam and the Russian Orthodox Church over other "non-traditional" religions; require 500 founders for the required re-registration of all religious groups; require an annual SCRA license for any official or worker in a religious group or religious educational institution; and further limit the sites for distribution of religious materials. Draft administrative code amendments would increase the maximum fines for religious offenses to the equivalent of 14 months' average salary. In 2015, a Defense Council working group (to which the SCRA director belongs) and the Prime Minister's Office reportedly were reviewing and revising the proposals. As of the end of the reporting period, Kyrgyz authorities had not sent any proposed amendments to parliament.

Increased State Control of Muslims

Countries in Central Asia face security threats from groups using violence in the name of religion, and thousands of Central Asians, including official estimates of 250 Kyrgyz, allegedly have joined ISIL (the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant). However, the overly restrictive religion laws and repressive anti-extremism measures applied by the Kyrgyz and other Central Asian governments run the risk of radicalizing otherwise peaceful religious adherents.

In 2015, Kyrgyzstan reportedly implemented a 2014 Presidential Decree that increased state control over the semi-autonomous Muslim Board, including by requiring the Muslim Board to elect imams and the Chief Mufti; mandating that government officials participate in internal exams for imams; providing monetary rewards to Muslim clergy who excelled in meeting

internal criteria; and requiring the Board to check with local and national law enforcement agencies whether clerical candidates belong to extremist organizations, Forum 18 reported. The Muslim Board also was instructed to select the Mufti, imams, regional imams, religious judges, and Council of Ulema members only from the Hanafi school of Islam officially deemed “traditional” for Kyrgyzstan’s Muslims.

In November 2015, a provincial court in Osh doubled the five-year prison term for “inciting religious hatred” imposed on Rashot Kamalov, a popular ethnic Uzbek imam, despite his sermons against ISIL and extremism. Reportedly, Kamalov also accused local police of extracting numerous bribes by randomly accusing individuals of ISIL membership. As a result, some 200 ethnic Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan who could not afford to pay such bribes have been jailed.

Unlike other post-Soviet states, Kyrgyzstan has not banned *Tabligh Jamaat*, a Muslim missionary movement that reportedly is quite influential with some Kyrgyz officials. In 2014, the Kyrgyz government banned the Uzbek Islamic religious movement *Akromiya* as an extremist organization. Lists of prohibited religious organizations reportedly are coordinated with intergovernmental regional security organizations, in particular, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

Registration Issues

Some 700 of the country’s unregistered mosques have been identified as “illegal” for lack of registration. In recent years, some religious groups were denied registration, including the Ahmadiyya Muslim community and the Church of Scientology. In February 2016, the Kyrgyz Supreme Court rejected an appeal by Jehovah’s Witnesses against registration denials in four cities. In October 2015, two Jehovah’s Witnesses, Nadezhda Sergienko and Oksana Koriakina, were freed from 31 months of house arrest on charges of alleged witchcraft in apparent reprisal for their community’s registration application. In February 2016, however, the Supreme Court returned their case to Osh for a new trial. Even registered religious minorities face obstacles; for example, in December 2015, a Chuy regional court rejected an appeal by the registered Embassy Protestant Church against a lower court’s order to halt

activity. The church reportedly also was threatened with mob violence.

Forced Conversion and Violence against Religious Minorities

In December 2015, Ahmadiyya Muslim Yunusjan Abdjalilov was murdered in the Jalalabad region; police arrested nine suspects and claimed they belonged to an ISIL-linked terrorist group. Local human rights activists report that Kyrgyz officials ignore hate speech, including comments by imams and the Muslim Board, in the media against religious and ethnic minorities. The Kyrgyz government also has not resolved the chronic problem of religious minorities being denied burials in municipal cemeteries controlled by the Muslim Board. For example, in August 2015, Osh city officials and a local imam did not allow a Protestant to bury her son in their local cemetery and the imam pressured her to renounce her faith. The same month, 10 police officers raided a Jehovah’s Witness worship meeting in a rented cafe in Osh and brought an imam to convert those present. Police beat one man who was filming the raid; at the police station, officers strangled three Jehovah’s Witnesses until they lost consciousness. According to Kyrgyz human rights activists, the government does not take legal action against police who commit violent acts during raids or against detainees.

Other Legal Issues

The Kyrgyz religion law limits conscientious objection to military service status to those who belong to registered religious groups. In addition, SCRA authority to censor religious materials – increased under 2012 amendments to the religion law – seems particularly to apply to non-traditional Muslim, Protestant, and other minority religions.

Recommendations

USCIRF recommends that the U.S. government urge Kyrgyzstan to seek expert advice from the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief as well as relevant OSCE entities on the still pending draft amendments to the religion law. The United States also should raise publicly Kyrgyzstan’s religious freedom violations at appropriate international fora, such as the OSCE and the UN.

WESTERN EUROPE

USCIRF continues to monitor religious freedom-related issues in Western Europe highlighted in previous Annual Reports. These include: government restrictions on, and efforts to restrict, certain forms of religious expression (such as dress and visible symbols, ritual slaughter, religious circumcision, and places of worship); government monitoring of disfavored groups pejoratively labeled as “cults” or “sects;” issues surrounding the accommodation of religious objections; and the impact of hate speech laws on peaceful expressions of belief. Governmental restrictions on religious freedom both arise from and encourage a societal atmosphere of intolerance against the targeted religious groups, and limit their social integration and educational and employment opportunities. Alongside these restrictions, there has been an alarming rise in recent years of societal hostility toward Jews and Muslims in Europe, including discrimination, harassment, and sometimes violence, which further isolates and marginalizes these populations. Organizations tracking anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim incidents in a number of Western European countries reported increases in 2015.

Religious Dress

Various European countries, at the national, state, and/or local level, restrict individuals from wearing visible religious symbols, such as Islamic headscarves, Sikh turbans, Jewish skullcaps, and Christian crosses, in certain contexts. For example, France and some parts of Belgium, Germany, and Switzerland prohibit wearing such symbols in public schools. A French government body, the High Council for Integration, has proposed extending the ban to public universities; in 2015, Nicholas Sarkozy, the former president of France and leader of the center-right party now called The Republicans, expressed support for this extension. The French government also does not permit government employees to wear visible religious symbols or reli-

gious dress at work. President François Hollande and other high-ranking government officials have publicly called for the extension of this rule to at least some private workplaces.

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France and Belgium also ban the wearing of full-face Islamic veils anywhere in public. In May 2015, the Dutch cabinet approved a bill to prohibit full-face veils in education and healthcare institutions, government buildings, and on public transportation; the proposal remained pending at the end of the reporting period. Covering one’s face in public presents legitimate issues not presented by other forms of religious dress, such as the necessity of facial identification, which may justify governmental restrictions in some circumstances. However, to satisfy international religious freedom standards, a restriction must be tailored narrowly to achieve a specified permitted ground (public safety, public order, public health, public morals, or the rights and freedoms of others) and it must be non-discriminatory. The European Court of Human Rights upheld the French full-face veil ban in 2014. The court rejected arguments that the ban protected public safety, gender equality, or human dignity, but found it justified to uphold “the minimum requirements of life in society.” This justification was widely criticized, including by two dissenting judges, as vague, open-ended, and not grounded in European or international human rights law.

Ritual Slaughter and Dietary Requirements

A European Union (EU) directive generally requires stunning before slaughter but allows countries to exempt religious slaughter. Nevertheless, EU members Denmark, Luxembourg, and Sweden and non-EU members Switzerland, Norway, and Iceland continue to ban all slaughter without stunning, including kosher and halal slaughter.

In 2015, several French towns discontinued providing non-pork alternatives in school cafeterias for Jewish and Muslim students, arguing this was required under France's strict form of secularism. Marine Le Pen, the leader of the far-right Front National (FN) political party, had called for FN members elected in 2014 local elections to take this action. Former president and opposition leader Sarkozy also publicly supported the effort.

Places of Worship

In Switzerland, the federal constitution bans the construction of minarets. The ban was enacted through a 2009 popular referendum initiated by the far-right Swiss People's Party (SVP), which the Swiss government opposed as irreconcilable with human rights guarantees in European and international law and the Swiss constitution. No other European country has a constitutional provision or national law banning minarets, but in various countries generally-applicable zoning and other laws have been applied in a discriminatory manner to Muslim places of worship. According to the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights, "[l]ocal authorities in many European cities regularly find reasons to delay building permits for mosques, but not for other houses of worship." In

In 2015, several French towns discontinued providing non-pork alternatives in school cafeterias for Jewish and Muslim students. . . .

Religious Circumcision

Disputes continue over the religious circumcision of male children, which is integral to both Judaism and Islam. Organizations such as the Swedish Medical Association, the Danish College of General Practitioners, and the Norwegian Ombudsman for Children have spoken out against the practice as abusive. In 2013, in what Jewish and Muslim groups viewed with alarm as a call to ban the practice, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) adopted a resolution on children's rights that deemed religious circumcision of young boys a violation of children's physical integrity and appeared to equate it with female genital mutilation. Two years later, a PACE resolution on freedom of religion and living together in a democratic society addressed the practice in a way religious groups found more acceptable. The September 2015 resolution recommended that religious circumcision should be performed only "by a person with the requisite medical training and skills, in appropriate medical and health conditions" and with the parents "duly informed of any potential medical risk or possible contraindication."

countries including France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom, existing mosques are insufficient for the communities, particularly for Friday prayers, leading worshippers to pray in homes or outside. Farther east, there is still no official mosque in Athens, Greece, the only EU capital without one, despite the Greek parliament approving construction in 2011 and the country's highest administrative court, the Council of State, rejecting a legal challenge in 2014.

Governmental Monitoring of Disfavored Religious Groups

Since the 1990s, the governments of France, Austria, Belgium, and Germany have, to varying degrees, taken measures against religious groups they view as "cults" or "sects," including through monitoring and investigations. Targeted groups have included Jehovah's Witnesses, Scientologists, Hare Krishnas, Evangelical Protestants, and other small, non-traditional, and/or new religious communities. In 2012, the French government created a new entity (in addition to its "anti-cult" agency) to observe and promote secularism in the country, about which some religious groups have expressed concern.

Hate Speech Laws

The peaceful public sharing of one's religious beliefs is both an integral part of religious freedom and protected by freedom of expression. This includes the expression of beliefs that may be offensive to others or controversial in society, such as views on homosexuality, abortion, or other religions. Vague and overbroad laws against "incitement to hatred" that encompass speech that does not rise to the level of incitement of violence pose a risk of chilling protected expression. If used against the peaceful expression of beliefs, they can result in violations of the freedoms of speech and religion.

In January 2016, a court in Belfast, Northern Ireland acquitted Evangelical Christian pastor James McConnell of hate speech charges, for which he could have received six months in prison. The charges stemmed from a 2014 sermon, broadcast over the Internet, in which Pastor McConnell described Christianity as the only true faith and called Islam heathen and Satanic. The judge ruled that his comments were offensive but not criminal.

religious reasons were fined for violating school attendance laws, and at least one family sought asylum in the United States.

Anti-Semitism

France has the largest Jewish community in Europe and the third largest in the world, estimated at around 500,000 people (approximately 0.75 percent of France's population). There also are Jewish communities in Belgium, Germany, Italy, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Anti-Semitic incidents, ranging from verbal harassment to vandalism of property to violent attacks, including terrorist attacks on Jews and Jewish sites, have occurred in multiple Western European countries in the past few years. According to many reports, these incidents increased in 2015.

Anti-Semitism in Western Europe has three primary sources: the political far-right, the political far-left, and Islamist extremists. Islamist extremists have been the main perpetrators of the anti-Semitic violence in the region; examples include terrorist

Vague and overbroad laws against "incitement to hatred" that encompass speech that does not rise to the level of incitement of violence pose a risk of chilling protected expression.

Accommodation of Religious Objections

There have been issues in many countries concerning how to address conflicts between religious beliefs and generally-applicable laws, government policies, or employer requirements. In 2013, the European Court of Human Rights recognized that wearing religious symbols at work or not being required to endorse same-sex relationships are protected manifestations of religious freedom that employers may only limit under certain circumstances. The decision did not establish a uniform approach for all cases, but rather gave great deference to national authorities to decide how to strike the balance in each particular case.

Another example of official policies limiting some individuals' ability to practice elements of their faith concerns homeschooling in Germany. In recent years, German parents who homeschooled their children for

attacks against a Jewish school in Toulouse in 2012, a Jewish museum in Brussels in 2014, and a kosher supermarket in Paris and a synagogue in Copenhagen in 2015. Although they comprise only a small fraction of Europe's or the world's Muslims, violent Islamist extremists present the threat about which Western European Jewish leaders say that they and their communities are most concerned. Additionally, on the far-right, xenophobic nationalist political parties and groups, including neo-Nazis, continue to espouse anti-Semitism. Finally, on the far-left, anti-Israel sentiment often crosses the line from criticism of Israeli policies into anti-Semitism, especially at times of increased Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For example, in the summer of 2014, pro-Palestinian demonstrations in France devolved into calls of "Jews to the oven" and assaults against local Jews and Jewish sites.

Western European Jewish leaders emphasize that, unlike in the 1930s, anti-Semitism in the region today is not government-sponsored. To the contrary, leaders, including the French Prime Minister, the German Chancellor, and the British Prime Minister, have spoken out strongly against it, and governments have provided security for Jewish sites. In December 2015, the EU appointed for the first time a Coordinator on Combating Anti-Semitism. Nevertheless, reports indicate increasing Jewish emigration from Western Europe, particularly France, in the past several years. Around 7,900 French Jews immigrated to Israel in 2015 and approximately 7,200 did so in 2014. By contrast, the number was around 3,300 in 2013 and fewer than 1,900 in 2012.

Anti-Muslim Bias

Western Europe's largest Muslim population lives in France, comprising approximately eight percent of the country's total population or approximately 5.3 million people. A number of other European countries have Muslim populations in the four to six percent range, including Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Anti-Muslim incidents ranging from verbal harassment to property vandalism to violent assaults have occurred in multiple Western European countries in recent years. According to many reports, these incidents increased in 2015. Discrimination against Muslims, including in education, employment, and housing, also is a significant problem.

More than a million migrants and asylum seekers, mainly from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan, arrived in Europe irregularly during 2015. At a time of high profile Islamist terrorist attacks around the globe, including in France, and with European governments' chaotic management of the influx, this situation exacerbated anti-Muslim sentiment. Despite the fact that many were fleeing conflict, the largely Muslim arrivals were viewed with suspicion and fear in many countries.

Far-right political parties and other nativist groups are a major source of the intolerant rhetoric and acts against Muslims in Western Europe, including against Muslim migrants and asylum seekers. European Muslim communities also face the dual challenges of Islamist extremist groups seeking recruits and sympathizers from within their communities and of members

of the wider society blaming all Muslims collectively for Islamist terrorist attacks. The backlashes against Muslims following the January and November 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris illustrate the latter point. Mosques were given police protection in several countries, and government and EU officials emphasized the importance of not stigmatizing all Muslims. In December 2015, the EU appointed for the first time a Coordinator on Combating Anti-Muslim Hatred.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

BIOGRAPHIES OF USCIRF COMMISSIONERS

Dr. Robert P. George, Chairman

Robert P. George is McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence and Director of the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions at Princeton University. He has been a Visiting Professor at Harvard Law School, and is a Senior Fellow of the Hoover Institution at Stanford University.

He has served on the President's Council on Bioethics and as a presidential appointee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights. He has also served on UNESCO's World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST), of which he remains a corresponding member.

A graduate of Swarthmore College and Harvard Law School, Professor George also earned a master's degree in theology from Harvard and a doctorate in philosophy of law from Oxford University, which he attended on a Knox Scholarship from Harvard. He holds honorary doctorates of law, letters, science, ethics, divinity, humane letters, civil law, and juridical science.

He is the author of *Making Men Moral: Civil Liberties and Public Morality* and *In Defense of Natural Law*, among other books. His articles and review essays have appeared in the Harvard Law Review, the Yale Law Journal, the Columbia Law Review, the Review of Politics, the Review of Metaphysics, the American Journal of Jurisprudence, and Law and Philosophy. He has also written for the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post, First Things magazine, National Review, the Boston Review, and the Times Literary Supplement.

Professor George is a former Judicial Fellow at the Supreme Court of the United States, where he received the Justice Tom C. Clark Award.

His other honors include the United States Presidential Citizens Medal, the Honorific Medal for the Defense of Human Rights of the Republic of Poland, the Bradley Prize for Intellectual and Civic Achievement, the Phillip Merrill Award for Outstanding Contributions

to the Liberal Arts of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, a Silver Gavel Award of the American Bar Association, the Paul Bator Award of the Federalist Society for Law and Public Policy, and the Canterbury Medal of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty.

He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and is Of Counsel to the law firm of Robinson & McElwee.

Dr. George was appointed to the Commission on March 22, 2012 by Speaker of the House John Boehner (R-OH) and was reappointed in 2014 for a second term.

Dr. M. Zuhdi Jasser, Vice Chair

M. Zuhdi Jasser, M.D. is the President of the American Islamic Forum for Democracy (AIFD) based in Phoenix, Arizona. A first generation American Muslim, Dr. Jasser's parents fled the oppressive Baath regime of Syria in the mid-1960's for American freedom. A devout Muslim, he and his family have strong ties to the American Muslim community having helped lead mosques in Wisconsin, Arkansas, Virginia, and Arizona.

In the wake of the 9/11 attacks on the United States, Dr. Jasser and a group of American Muslims founded AIFD which promotes Muslim voices for liberty and freedom through the separation of mosque and state in order to counter the root cause of Islamist terrorism--the ideology of political Islam (Islamism) and a belief in the supremacy of the Islamic state. AIFD's primary projects include the Muslim Liberty Project, the American Islamic Leadership Coalition and Save Syria Now!

An internationally recognized expert on Islamism, Dr. Jasser is widely published on domestic and foreign issues related to Islam, Islamism, and modernity. He has spoken at hundreds of national and international events including testimony to the U.S. Congress on the centrality of religious liberty in countering Muslim radicalization within the "House of Islam". He is a contributing writer to a number of books and the author of *The Battle for the Soul of Islam: An American Muslim Patriot's Fight to Save His Faith* (Simon & Schuster, 2012).

Dr. Jasser earned his medical degree on a U.S. Navy scholarship at the Medical College of Wisconsin in 1992. He served 11 years as a medical officer in the U. S. Navy, achieving the rank of Lieutenant Commander. His tours of duty included Medical Department Head aboard the U.S.S. El Paso, Chief Resident at Bethesda Naval Hospital, and Staff Internist for the Office of the Attending Physician to the U. S. Congress. He is a recipient of the Meritorious Service Medal.

Dr. Jasser is a respected physician currently in private practice specializing in internal medicine and nuclear cardiology. He is a Past-President of the Arizona Medical Association. He and his wife Gada and their three children reside in Arizona.

Dr. Jasser was appointed to the Commission on March 22, 2012 by Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and was reappointed to a second term in 2014.

Hon. Eric P. Schwartz, Vice Chair

Eric Schwartz became dean of the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota in October 2011, after serving for 25 years in senior public service positions in government, at the United Nations and in the philanthropic and non-governmental communities.

Prior to his arrival in Minnesota, he was U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration, having been nominated by President Obama and confirmed by the U.S. Senate in 2009. Working with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, he served as the Department of State's principal humanitarian official, managing a \$1.85 billion budget, as well as State Department policy and programs for U.S. refugee admissions and U.S. international assistance worldwide.

From 2006 through 2009, he directed the Connect U.S. Fund, a multi-foundation - NGO collaborative seeking to promote responsible U.S. engagement overseas, and which included the Hewlett Foundation, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the Open Society Institute, the Ford Foundation, the Atlantic Philanthropies, and the Mott Foundation.

From August 2005 through January 2007, he served as the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Deputy Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery. In that capacity, he worked with the Special Envoy, former President Clinton, to promote an effective recovery

effort. Before that appointment, he was a lead expert for the congressionally mandated Mitchell-Gingrich Task Force on UN Reform. Prior to that, in 2003 and 2004, he served as the second-ranking official at the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva.

From 1993 to 2001, he served at the National Security Council at the White House, ultimately as Senior Director and Special Assistant to the President for Multilateral and Humanitarian Affairs. He managed responses on international humanitarian, human rights and rule of law issues, as well as United Nations affairs, including peacekeeping.

From 2001 through 2003, he held fellowships at the Woodrow Wilson Center, the U.S. Institute of Peace and the Council on Foreign Relations. During this period, he also served as a contributor to the Responsibility to Protect Project of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty.

From 1989 to 1993, he served as Staff Consultant to the U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs. Prior to his work on the Subcommittee, he was Washington Director of the human rights organization Asia Watch (now known as Human Rights Watch-Asia). He holds a law degree from New York University School of Law, where he was a recipient of a Root-Tilden-Snow Scholarship for commitment to public service through law; a Master of Public Affairs degree from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs Princeton University; and a Bachelor of Arts degree, with honors, in Political Science from the State University of New York at Binghamton. Between 2001 and 2009, he also was a visiting lecturer of public and international affairs at the Woodrow Wilson School, teaching both undergraduate and graduate seminars, taskforces and workshops.

He was appointed to the Commission on April 25, 2013 by President Obama and reappointed in 2014.

Ambassador Mary Ann Glendon, Commissioner

Mary Ann Glendon is the Learned Hand Professor of Law at Harvard University, and former U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See. She writes and teaches in the fields of human rights, comparative law, constitutional law, and political theory.

Glendon is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences since 1991, the International Academy of Comparative Law, and the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences which she served as President from 2004-2014. She is also a past president of the UNESCO-sponsored International Association of Legal Science. She served two terms as a member of the U.S. President's Council on Bioethics (2001-2004), and has represented the Holy See at various conferences including the 1995 U.N. Women's conference in Beijing where she headed the Vatican delegation.

Glendon has contributed to legal and social thought in several articles and books, and has lectured widely in this country and in Europe. Her widely translated books, bringing a comparative approach to a variety of subjects, include *The Forum and the Tower* (2011), a series of biographical essays exploring the relation between political philosophy and politics-in-action; *Traditions in Turmoil* (2006), a collection of essays on law, culture and human rights; *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (2001), which the New York Times reviewer said should be the definitive study of the framing of the UDHR; *A Nation Under Lawyers* (1996), a portrait of turbulence in the legal profession, analyzing the implications of changes in legal culture for a democratic polity that entrusts crucial roles to legally trained men and women; *Seedbeds of Virtue* (co-edited with David Blankenhorn) (1995); *Rights Talk* (1991), a critique of the impoverishment of political discourse; *The Transformation of Family Law* (1989), winner of the legal academy's highest honor, the Order of the Coif Triennial Book Award; *Abortion and Divorce in Western Law* (1987), winner of the Scribes Book Award for best writing on a legal subject; *The New Family and the New Property* (1981), and textbooks on comparative legal traditions.

Her prizes and honors include the National Humanities Medal, the Bradley Foundation Prize, and honorary doctorates from numerous universities including the Universities of Chicago and Louvain.

Glendon taught at Boston College Law School from 1968 to 1986, and has been a visiting professor at the University of Chicago Law School and the Gregorian University in Rome.

She received her bachelor of arts, juris doctor, and master of comparative law degrees from the University of Chicago. During a post-graduate fellowship for the

study of European law, she studied at the Université Libre de Bruxelles and was a legal intern with the European Economic Community. From 1963 to 1968, she practiced law with the Chicago firm of Mayer, Brown & Platt, and served as a volunteer civil rights attorney in Mississippi during "Freedom Summer" 1964.

A native of Berkshire County, she lives in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts.

Ambassador Glendon was appointed to the Commission on May 23, 2012 by Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and reappointed to a second term in 2014.

Dr. Daniel I. Mark, Commissioner

Dr. Daniel Mark is an assistant professor of political science at Villanova University in Pennsylvania. He teaches political theory, philosophy of law, American government, and politics and religion. At Villanova, he is a faculty associate of the Matthew J. Ryan Center for the Study of Free Institutions and the Public Good. He holds the rank of battalion professor and serves as the university representative to the performance review board for Villanova's Navy Reserve Officers' Training Corps unit. He is the faculty adviser to the mock trial team and to the men's club lacrosse team, and he is a mentor in the university's Faith and Learning Scholars Program. He also serves on the Jewish Religion and Culture Lecture Committee and the Graduate Committee of the Department of Political Science.

For the 2015-16 academic year, Dr. Mark is on sabbatical from Villanova University as a visiting fellow in the Department of Politics at Princeton University under the sponsorship of the department's James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions.

In addition, Dr. Mark is an assistant editor of *Interpretation: A Journal of Political Philosophy*; a fellow of the Witherspoon Institute in Princeton, NJ; and a contributor to *Arc of the Universe: Ethics and Global Justice*. He has published on topics related to international religious freedom in *US News & World Report*, *Investor's Business Daily*, *Foreign Affairs*, *The Hill*, and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and he has appeared on CNN, Al Jazeera America, CBS radio in Philadelphia, and KNUS radio in Denver.

He holds a BA (magna cum laude), MA, and PhD from the Department of Politics at Princeton University. He wrote his dissertation under the direction of Professor

Robert P. George on the subject of “Authority and Legal Obligation.” There, he participated in the Program in Law and Public Affairs and the Penn-Princeton Bioethics Forum. He was also affiliated with the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions and served as coordinator of its Undergraduate Fellows Forum.

Dr. Mark works with the Tikvah Fund in New York and the Hertog Foundation in Washington, DC, and he has taught at the Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought at Yeshiva University. Daniel speaks frequently for a wide variety of groups, including the Acton Institute, the US Military Academy (West Point), the American Enterprise Institute, the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, and Chabad. In September, Daniel spoke at the World Meeting of Families, a triennial event organized by the Catholic Church, which drew 20,000 participants to Philadelphia. Other recent appearances have included speeches at Ave Maria University, Brigham Young University, Colorado Christian University, the University of Notre Dame, and the Mount Academy, the Bruderhof (Anabaptist) high school in upstate New York.

Before graduate school, Dr. Mark spent four years as a high school teacher in New York City, and he received the New Jersey Department of Education Commissioner’s Distinguished Teacher Candidate Award while earning his teaching certification.

Dr. Mark was appointed to the Commission on May 9, 2014 by Speaker of the House John Boehner (R-OH).

Rev. Thomas J. Reese, S.J., Commissioner

Rev. Thomas J. Reese, S.J. is a Senior Analyst for the National Catholic Reporter, a position he has held since 2014. Previously, he was a Senior Fellow at the Woodstock Theological Center from 2006 to 2013 and from 1988 to 1998. He joined the Center as a Visiting Fellow in 1985. He was Editor-in-Chief of America magazine from 1998 to 2005 and an associate editor from 1978 to 1985. As an associate editor, he covered politics, economics, and the Catholic Church. Rev. Reese entered the Jesuits in 1962 and was ordained in 1974. He received a B.A. and an M.A. from St. Louis University, an M.Div. from the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, and a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California, Berkeley.

Rev. Reese was appointed to the Commission on May 14, 2014 by President Obama.

Hon. Hannah Rosenthal, Commissioner

Hannah Rosenthal is the CEO and president of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation. Prior to joining the Milwaukee Jewish Federation, Hannah served as: Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, U.S. State Department; Executive Director, Chicago Foundation for Women (CFW); Executive Director, Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA); and Executive Director, Wisconsin Women’s Council.

In these positions, Rosenthal has demonstrated an ability to build relationships within and between communities, creating unique connections with local, national, and international influencers. She has been honored for her achievements throughout her career, with distinctions including: the National Council for Jewish Women Building Bridges Award (2013); Pearls for Teen Girls, Women Inspired to Lead (2013); RUMI Forum Peace and Dialogue Award for extraordinary contributions (2012); National Council for Jewish Women Faith and Humanity Award for advancing human rights and advocacy (2011); 2010 – Forward Fifty’s Top 5, national Jewish weekly’s list of the world’s most influential Jews (2010); Haiti Holocaust Committee award for advocacy for historical memory (2010); and Women to Watch, Jewish Women International’s list of outstanding leaders (2005). Hannah has also received the Wisconsin State Civil Rights Award and the Wisconsin Community Action Advocacy Award.

Rosenthal currently represents the at-large community on the United States National Commission for the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and on the Committee on Holocaust Denial and State-Sponsored Anti-Semitism of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

As an agent for change, Rosenthal was responsible for a significant new approach to combating anti-Semitism in her most recent position with the State Department, and successfully led CFW through its transition into an advocacy organization. She is leading the reorganization of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation following the agency’s strategic reimagining process.

Rosenthal is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and studied for the rabbinate in Jerusalem and California. She has long been active in public policy in Wisconsin, serving in support roles to a Wisconsin State Representative and a Wisconsin Member of Congress, as well as heading a Wisconsin state agency

and a regional federal agency. Rosenthal also is a former member of the Madison Jewish Federation Board of Directors.

Ms. Rosenthal was appointed to the Commission on June 17, 2014 by the Honorable Nancy Pelosi.

Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett, Commissioner

Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett established the Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice in 2008 and serves as its President and Chief Executive Officer. This human rights organization is proudly carrying on the unique legacy of the late Congressman Tom Lantos who, as the only survivor of the Holocaust ever elected to Congress, was one of our nation's most eloquent and forceful leaders on behalf of human rights and justice. In addition to managing the Lantos Foundation, Dr. Lantos Swett teaches human rights and American foreign policy at Tufts University. She also taught at the University of Southern Denmark while her husband, former Congressman Richard Swett, was serving as the U.S. Ambassador in Copenhagen.

Her varied professional experiences include working on Capitol Hill as Deputy Counsel to the Criminal Justice Sub-Committee of the Senate Judiciary Committee for then Senator Joe Biden and as a consultant to businesses, charitable foundations, and political campaigns.

Dr. Lantos Swett also has experience in broadcasting, having co-hosted the highly regarded political talk show "Beyond Politics" for many years on WMUR TV, New Hampshire's only network affiliated television station. As co-host, she interviewed state, national, and international figures, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Vice President Al Gore, First Lady Hillary Clinton, Members of the United States Congress, and George Stephanopoulos on the issues of the day.

From 2003-2006 Dr. Lantos Swett served as the Director of the Graduate program in Public Policy at New England College, where she now serves on the college's Board of Trustees. She is also a member of the Board of HRNK Human Rights in North Korea and the Tom Lantos Institute in Budapest. She has served on numerous Boards in the past, including the Christa McAuliffe Planetarium Foundation, the Institute for Justice Sector Development, the Granite State Coalition Against Expanded Gambling (co-Chair), and the NH Citizen's Commission on the State Courts. She has

also been active in Democratic politics for over three decades. In 2002, she was the Democratic nominee for Congress in New Hampshire's 2nd District, and she was chosen as a Presidential elector in 1992. She has been a member of the New Hampshire Democratic Party (NHDP) Executive Committee and served as Vice-Chair of the NHDP Finance Committee.

Under Dr. Lantos Swett's leadership as President and CEO, the Lantos Foundation has quickly become a distinguished and respected voice on many key human rights concerns ranging from rule of law in Russia and Internet freedom in closed societies to the on-going threat of anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial. The Foundation also supports human rights defenders around the globe through its Front Line Fund and runs the Lantos Congressional Fellows program in conjunction with Humanity in Action. Each year the Lantos Foundation awards the Lantos Human Rights Prize to an individual who has demonstrated a commitment to standing up for decency, dignity, freedom, and justice. Past recipients have included His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Professor Elie Wiesel, and Paul Rusesabagina.

Dr. Lantos Swett graduated from Yale University in 1974 at the age of 18 and earned her Juris Doctor at the University of California, Hastings College of the Law in 1976. She received her Ph.D. in History from the University of Southern Denmark in 2001. Dr. Lantos Swett has been married for 31 years to former Congressman and Ambassador Richard Swett and they are parents of 7 children and 2 grandchildren. She resides in Bow, New Hampshire.

Dr. Lantos Swett was appointed to the Commission on March 26, 2012 by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) and reappointed to a second term in 2014.

Dr. James J. Zogby, Commissioner

Dr. James J. Zogby is the founder and president of the Arab American Institute (AAI), a Washington, D.C.-based organization which serves as the political and policy research arm of the Arab American community. He is also Managing Director of Zogby Research Services, which specializes in public opinion polling across the Arab world.

Since 1985, Dr. Zogby and AAI have led Arab American efforts to secure political empowerment in the U.S. Through voter registration, education and

mobilization, AAI has moved Arab Americans into the political mainstream.

For the past three decades, Dr. Zogby has been involved in a full range of Arab American issues. A co-founder and chairman of the Palestine Human Rights Campaign in the late 1970s, he later co-founded and served as the Executive Director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. In 1982, he co-founded Save Lebanon, Inc., a relief organization which provided health care for Palestinian and Lebanese victims of war. In 1985, Zogby founded AAI.

In 1993, following the signing of the Israeli-Palestinian peace accord in Washington, he was asked by Vice President Al Gore to lead Builders for Peace, an effort to promote U.S. business investment in the West Bank and Gaza. In his capacity as co-president of Builders, Zogby frequently traveled to the Middle East with delegations led by Vice President Gore and late Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown.

Dr. Zogby has also been active in U.S. politics for many years. Since 1995 he has played a leadership role in the National Democratic Ethnic Coordinating Committee (NDECC), an umbrella organization of leaders of European and Mediterranean descent. In 2001, he was appointed to the Executive Committee of the Democratic National Committee (DNC), and in 2006 was also named Co-Chair of the DNC's Resolutions Committee.

A lecturer and scholar on Middle East issues, U.S.-Arab relations, and the history of the Arab American community, Dr. Zogby has an extensive media profile in the U.S. and across the Arab World. He currently serves as Chairman of the Editorial Advisory Committee for SkyNewsArabia. Since 1992, Dr. Zogby has also written a weekly column published in 14 Arab and South Asian countries.

He has authored a number of books, including: *Looking at Iran* (2013), *Arab Voices* (2010), *What Ethnic Americans Really Think* (2002), and *What Arabs Think: Values, Beliefs and Concerns* (2001).

In 1975, Dr. Zogby received his doctorate from Temple University's Department of Religion. He was a Post-Doctoral Fellow at Princeton University in 1976, and has been awarded numerous grants and honorary degrees.

Dr. Zogby is married to Eileen Patricia McMahon.

Dr. Zogby was appointed to the Commission on

September 6, 2013 by President Obama and was reappointed to a second term in 2015.

APPENDIX 2

ERITREAN PRISONER LIST 2016

Jehovah's Witnesses Imprisoned in Eritrea

NAME	AGE AT ARREST	SEX	LOCATION	DATE OF ARREST	REASON
Paulos Eyassu	43	Male	Sawa Camp	9/24/1994	Conscientious Objection
Isaac Mogos	41	Male	Sawa Camp	9/24/1994	Conscientious Objection
Negede Teklemariam	40	Male	Sawa Camp	9/24/1994	Conscientious Objection
Aron Abraha	42	Male	Sawa Camp	5/9/2001	Conscientious Objection
Mussie Fessehaya	44	Male	Sawa Camp	6/2003	Conscientious Objection
Ambakom Tsegezab	41	Male	Sawa Camp	2/2004	Conscientious Objection
Bemnet Fessehaye	44	Male	Sawa Camp	2/2005	Conscientious Objection
Henok Ghebru	32	Male	Sawa Camp	2/2005	Conscientious Objection
Worede Kiros	59	Male	Sawa Camp	5/4/2005	Religious Activity
Yonathan Yonas	30	Male	Sawa Camp	11/12/2005	Religious Activity
Kibreab Fessehaye	38	Male	Sawa Camp	12/27/2005	Conscientious Objection
Bereket Abraha Oqbagabir	46	Male	Sawa Camp	1/1/2006	Conscientious Objection
Yosief Fessehaye	27	Male	Sawa Camp	2007	Conscientious Objection
Mogos Gebremeskel	68	Male	Adi-Abieto	7/3/2008	Unknown
Bereket Abraha	67	Male	Meitir Camp	7/8/2008	Unknown
Ermias Ashgedom	25	Male	Meitir Camp	7/11/2008	Unknown
Habtemichael Mekonen	74	Male	Meitir Camp	7/17/2008	Unknown
Tareke Tesfamariam	64	Male	Meitir Camp	8/4/2008	Unknown
Goitom Aradom	72	Male	Meitir Camp	8/8/2008	Unknown
Habtemichael Tesfamariam	67	Male	Meitir Camp	8/8/2008	Unknown
Tewoldemedhin Habtezion	57	Male	Meitir Camp	8/9/2008	Unknown
Teferi Beyene	73	Male	Meitir Camp	9/23/2008	Unknown
Beyene Abraham	63	Male	Karen Police Station	10/23/2008	Unknown
Asfaha Haile	80	Male	Meitir Camp	12/2/2008	Unknown
Tsehaye Leghessa	75	Male	Karen Police Station	12/23/2008	Unknown
Tsegezeab Tesfazghi	68	Male	Meitir Camp	12/23/2008	Unknown
Yoab Teclé	63	Male	Meitir Camp	4/23/2009	Rearrested
Yoel Tsegezab	40	Male	Meitir Camp	8/26/2008	Conscientious Objection
Nehemiah Hagos	30	Male	Meitir Camp	8/26/2008	Conscientious Objection
Samuel Ghirmay	33	Male	Meitir Camp	3/2009	Conscientious Objection
Teklu Gebrehiwot	40	Male	Meitir Camp	6/28/2009	Religious Meeting
Isaias Afeworki	30	Male	Meitir Camp	6/28/2009	Religious Meeting
Isaac Milen	27	Female	Meitir Camp	6/28/2009	Religious Meeting

NAME	AGE AT ARREST	SEX	LOCATION	DATE OF ARREST	REASON
Faiza Seid	30	Female	Meitir Camp	6/28/2009	Religious Meeting
Tesfazion Gebremichael	72	Male	5th Police Station	7/20/2011	Unknown
Hagos Woldemichael	62	Male	Meitir Camp	4/21/2012	Preaching at a Funeral
Araia Ghebremariam	60	Male	Meitir Camp	4/21/2012	Preaching at a Funeral
Tsegabirhan Berhe	52	Male	Meitir Camp	4/21/2012	Preaching at a Funeral
Daniel Meharizghi	38	Male	Meitir Camp	4/21/2012	Preaching at a Funeral
Yoseph Tesfarmaiam	51	Male	Around Keren	5/2012	Conscientious Objection
Gebru Berane	65	Male	2nd Police Station	4/14/2014	Religious Meeting
Tekle Gebrehiwot	59	Male	2nd Police Station	4/14/2014	Religious Meeting
Thomas Tesfagabir	33	Male	5th Police Station	4/27/2014	Religious Meeting
Mordochai Estifanos	21	Male	5th Police Station	4/27/2014	Religious Meeting
Mehari Tewolde	*	Male	5th Police Station	4/27/2014	Religious Meeting
Michael Gashazghi	23	Male	5th Police Station	4/27/2014	Religious Meeting
Liya Hidru	*	Female	5th Police Station	4/27/2014	Religious Meeting
Wintana Shiwaseged	26	Female	5th Police Station	4/27/2014	Religious Meeting
Mikaal Tadessee	24	Female	5th Police Station	4/27/2014	Religious Meeting
Emnet Woldai	36	Female	5th Police Station	4/27/2014	Religious Meeting
Salem Ghebrehiwot	20	Female	5th Police Station	4/27/2014	Religious Meeting
Senait Berhane	*	Female	5th Police Station	4/27/2014	Religious Meeting
Bereket Habteyesus	23	Male	2nd Police Station	5/26/2014	Conscientious Objection
Melaku Kahsai	*	Male	2nd Police Station	Unknown	Unkown
Meraf Seyum Habtemariam	53	Female	1st Police Station	10/25/015	Preaching

APPENDIX 3

BOKO HARAM ATTACKS

Boko Haram Attacks on Houses of Worship and Religious Ceremonies, January 1, 2015–February 29, 2016

DATE	PERPETRATOR	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	PERSONS KILLED	INJURED	HOUSES OF WORSHIP ATTACKED
1/1/15	Suspected Boko Haram	Suicide bombing at the gates of a church during a New Year service	Gombe, Gombe, Nigeria		8	Evangelical church
1/4/15	Suspected Boko Haram	A bomb thrown into the mosque	Maiha, Adamawa, Nigeria	1		mosque
1/15/15	Boko Haram	Suicide bomber attempted mosque attack	Gombe, Gombe, Nigeria	5	21	mosque
5/23/15	Boko Haram	A convoy of around 50 Boko Haram members stormed Gubio during a five hour attack	Gubio, Borno, Nigeria	37-43		8 mosques destroyed
5/30/15	Boko Haram	Suicide bomber detonated explosive inside a mosque while worshippers were present	Maiduguri, Borno, Nigeria	18-26	30	mosque
6/22/15	Boko Haram	Two female suicide bombers detonated an explosive device near a mosque during afternoon prayers during Ramadan	Maiduguri, Borno, Nigeria	11-30	60	mosque
7/1/15	Boko Haram	During a raid on three villages during Ramadan, militants gathered mosque worshippers following evening prayers, separated the men and women and opened fire on them	Maiduguri, Borno, Nigeria	118-147 (includes casualties from non-mosque attacks)		mosque
7/3/15	Boko Haram	A young female suicide bomber blew herself up in a mosque	Malari Village, Borno, Nigeria	12	7	mosque
7/5/15	Boko Haram	A female suicide bomber blew up in a crowded Evangelical church	Potiskum, Yobe, Nigeria	5	1	Redeemed Christian Church of God
7/5/15	Suspected Boko Haram	Unidentified attackers opened fire outside the Yantaya Mosque during prayers before launching a rocket-propelled grenade at the mosque	Jos, Plateau, Nigeria	22	47-67	Yantaya Mosque
7/5/15	Boko Haram	32 churches burned down during attacks on several villages	Borno, Nigeria			churches
7/6/15	Boko Haram	13-year-old female suicide bomber detonated explosives near a mosque	Kano, Kano, Nigeria			mosque

DATE	PERPETRATOR	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	PERSONS KILLED	INJURED	HOUSES OF WORSHIP ATTACKED
7/12/15	Suspected Boko Haram	Explosive devise detonated near an Evangelical church during Sunday service	Jos, Plateau, Nigeria	0	1	The Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA)
7/17/15	Suspected Boko Haram	Two female suicide bombers detonated explosive devises near mosque in Damaturu. The explosion occurred outside the mosque as worshippers were being searched before they could enter the house of worship	Damaturu, Yobe, Nigeria	9-15	18	mosque
7/22/15	Suspected Boko Haram	Explosive devise detonated at a mosque in Dadin Kowa motor park	Gombe, Gombe, Nigeria	37	60-105	Attack occurred near mosque in a bus terminal
9/13/15	Boko Haram	dual suicide bombings, one near a well and the other near a church	Kolofata, Far North, Cameroon	7		church
9/20/15	Boko Haram	During simultaneous suicide attacks, one bomber attacked a mosque, the other attacked a game center as people watched a soccer match	Maiduguri, Borno, Nigeria	117 (includes casualties from non-mosque attacks)		mosque
9/25/15	Boko Haram	Operatives shot/slit the throats of village as residents celebrated Eid al-Adha	N'Gourtoua, Diffa, Niger	15		on Eid
10/1/15	Suspected Boko Haram	Multiple suicide bombers targeted several locations, including a mosque after Friday prayers	Maiduguri, Borno, Nigeria	10 (includes casualties from non-mosque attacks)	39 (includes injuries from non-mosque attack)	mosque
10/3/15	Boko Haram	Four female suicide bombers attacked multiple locations, including a mosque	Borno, Nigeria	34 (includes casualties from non-mosque attacks)	39 (includes injuries from non-mosque attacks)	mosque
10/7/15	Boko Haram	Suicide bomber detonated an explosive devise at a mosque during early morning prayers	Damaturu, Yobe, Nigeria	18		mosque
10/7/15	Boko Haram	Suicide bomber detonated an explosive devise at a mosque during early morning prayers	Gubio, Borno, Nigeria	12		mosque
10/7/15	Suspected Boko Haram	Suicide bombings of multiple locations, including a local mosque	Damaturu, Yobe, Nigeria	18 (includes casualties from non-mosque attacks)	11 (includes injuries from non-mosque attacks)	mosque
10/16/15	Suspected Boko Haram	dual suicide bombings, one at a mosque and one at a residential building	Maiduguri, Borno, Nigeria	20-35 (includes casualties from non-mosque attacks)	17 (includes injuries from non-mosque attacks)	mosque

DATE	PERPETRATOR	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	PERSONS KILLED	INJURED	HOUSES OF WORSHIP ATTACKED
11/28/15	Boko Haram	One suicide bomber attacked Shi'a pilgrimage procession	Zaria, Kano State, Nigeria	22	30-60	Shi'a procession for Arbaeen pilgrimage
12/21/15	Boko Haram	Bombing outside a mosque	Madagali, Adamawa, Nigeria	20		mosque
12/24/15	Suspected Boko Haram	Five suspected operatives attempted to use coolers to smuggle five bombs into a Maulud celebration. They were inspected at a checkpoint where the devices were discovered and they were arrested	Maiduguri, Borno, Nigeria			Abdulfathi Mosque
12/25/15	Suspected Boko Haram	Bicycling gunmen raided a village on Christmas and burned down all houses	Kimba, Borno, Nigeria	14-16		
1/8/16	Suspected Boko Haram	Explosive devise detonated in a mosque	Kolofata, Far North, Cameroon	2		mosque
1/13/16	Suspected Boko Haram	Suicide bomber detonated an explosive devise at a mosque	Kouyape, Far North, Cameroon	12	1	mosque
1/18/16	Suspected Boko Haram	Suicide bomber detonated an explosive devise running toward a mosque	Nguetchewe, Far North, Cameroon	4		mosque
2/13/16	Boko Haram	During multiple attacks, worshippers were forced into a mosque and shot	Borno, Nigeria	30 (includes casualties from non-mosque attacks)	5 (includes injuries from non-mosque attacks)	mosque

APPENDIX 4

MUSLIM LEADERS IMPRISONED IN ETHIOPIA

NAME	SENTENCE	STATUS
Abubaker Ahmed Mohamed	22 years	In prison
Yusuf Getachew Zewde	7 Years	In prison
Ahmedin Jabal Muhammad	22 Years	In prison
Ahmed Mustafa Habib	22 Years	In prison
Kamil Shemsu Siraj	22 Years	In prison
Bedru Husain Nur-Husain	18 Years	In prison
Abubeker Alemu Muhe	18 Years	RELEASED
Mekete Muhie Mekonen	15 Years	In prison
Yasin Nuru Isa-Ali	22 Years	RELEASED
Mohammed Abate Tessema	18 Years	In prison
Muneer Shekh Hussien Hassen	18 Years	RELEASED
Nuru Turki Nuru	18 Years	In prison
Seid Ali Johar	15 Years	In prison
Bahru Omer Shukur	7 Years	RELEASED
Murad Shukur Jemal	7 Years	In prison
Mubarek Adem Getu	15 Years	In prison
Sabir Yirgu Mandefro	18 Years	RELEASED
Khalid Ebrahim Balcha	15 Years	In prison

APPENDIX 5

AZERBAIJAN PRISONER LIST 2016

The Case of Said Dadashbayli and Those Arrested with Him.

From January 13 to January 18, 2007 approximately 30 people were arrested in the Said Dadashbayli case on trumped up charges of plotting terrorist attacks and espionage for Iran. Some were released, but only after testifying against the eleven defendants (one of whom later passed away due to severe torture) who were held at the Ministry of National Security detention facility. Security officials entered the apartments of the accused by force, without presenting search warrants. In front of the relatives of those being arrested, Ministry of National Security officials planted guns and other evidence in those apartments in order to justify the arrests.

	NAME	DATE OF ARREST	ARTICLES OF THE CRIMINAL CODE	PLACE OF DETENTION
1	Said Alakbar Dadashbayli	15 Jan 2007	28.2; 180.3.1; 204.3.1; 204.3.2; 218.1; 228.1; 228.4; 234.1; 274; 278	Prison #15
2	Farid Nadir Aghayev	15 Jan 2007	28.2; 180.3.1; 218.2; 278	Prison #1
3	Jeyhun Saleh Aliyev	15 Jan 2007	28.2; 180.3.1; 218.2; 228.1; 274; 278	Prison #7
4	Rashad Ismayil Aliyev	13 Jan 2007	28.2; 180.3.1; 204.3.1; 204.3.2; 218.2; 278	Prison #11
5	Mikayil Garib Idrisov	15 Jan 2007	218.2; 228.1; 278	Prison #1
6	Jahangir Ramiz Karim	15 Jan 2007	28.2; 180.3.1; 218.2; 228.1; 274; 278	Prison #1
7	Rasim Rafiq Karimov	20 Jan 2007	218.2; 278	Prison #11
8	Samir Edik Gojayev	17 Jan 2007	218.2; 278	Prison #7
9	Baybala Yahya Guliyev	13 Mar 2007	218.2; 228.1; 228.2.1; 228.4; 278	Prison #11
10	Emil Nuraddin Mohbaliyev	15 Jan 2007	218.2; 278	Prison #15

The Islamic Party of Azerbaijan (IPA)

The Islamic Party of Azerbaijan (IPA) was founded in 1991 in Baku and was registered with the government in 1992. Although the Supreme Court revoked the IPA's registration in 1995, the party has continued to operate without registration. The party advocates that the requirements of Islam should be followed in Azerbaijan and accuses the government of pursuing an anti-Islamic policy. The government accused IPA members of calling for mass unrest, violation of public order, and jihad, and launched a criminal case against them. Arms and ammunition were reportedly found in the houses of its members. Most of the witnesses who testified against the defendants during the investigation withdrew their testimonies during the trial, stating that they had given the statements under pressure.

NAME	DATE OF ARREST	ARTICLES OF THE CRIMINAL CODE	PLACE OF DETENTION	STATUS
11 Faramiz Zaynal Abbasov	24 Jan 2011	28, 214.2.1; 28, 214.2.3; 228.3; 278	Prison #7	Sentenced to 11 years in prison under a decision issued by Baku Court of Grave Crimes Judge Eldar Ismayilov on 7 October 2011. The Baku Court of Appeals upheld the decision on 17 May 2012, and the Supreme Court upheld the decision on 21 February 2013.
12 Rufulla Hojjatullah Akhundzada	21 Jan 2011	28, 214.2.1; 28, 214.2.3; 228.3; 278; 283.1	Prison #15	Sentenced to 11.5 years in prison under a decision issued by Baku Court of Grave Crimes Judge Eldar Ismayilov on 7 October 2011. The Baku Court of Appeals upheld the decision on 17 May 2012, and the Supreme Court upheld the decision on 21 February 2013.
13 Firdovsi Teymur Mammadrzayev	12 Jan 2011	28, 214.2.1; 28, 214.2.3; 228.3	Prison #1	Sentenced to 10 years in prison under a decision issued by Baku Court of Grave Crimes Judge Eldar Ismayilov on 7 October 2011. The Baku Court of Appeals upheld the decision on 17 May 2012, and the Supreme Court upheld the decision on 21 February 2013.
14 Dayanat Alaskar Samadov	8 Jan 2011	28, 214.2.1; 28, 214.2.3; 228.3;	Prison #12	Sentenced to 10 years in prison under a decision issued by Baku Court of Grave Crimes Judge Eldar Ismayilov on 7 October 2011. The Baku Court of Appeals upheld the decision on 17 May 2012, and the Supreme Court upheld the decision on 21 February 2013.
15 Movsum Mardan Samadov	20 Jan 2011	28, 214.2.1; 28, 214.2.3; 228.3; 278	Prison #11	Sentenced to 12 years in prison under a decision issued by Baku Court of Grave Crimes Judge Eldar Ismayilov on 7 October 2011. The Baku Court of Appeals upheld the decision on 17 May 2012, and the Supreme Court upheld the decision on 21 February 2013.

The Case of the Web site www.azad.xeber.az

Religious activists arrested with journalist Nijat Aliyev, editor of www.azad.xeber.az, an Islamic website. Aliyev, other journalists, and young activists were arrested in 2012–2013 for campaigning against the arrests of religious believers as well as for distributing CDs with religious materials, including sermons by imprisoned Muslim leaders Abgül Suleymanov and Tale Bagirov (both of whom are arrested and in the list below).

NAME	DATE OF ARREST	ARTICLES OF THE CRIMINAL CODE	PLACE OF DETENTION	STATUS
16 Nijat Nazim Aliyev	21 May 2012	167.2.2.1; 234.1; 281.2; 283.2.3	Prison #2	Published materials criticizing the government's policy in regards to religion, allocation of excessive funding for the Eurovision 2012 Song Contest, and the possibility of an LGBT parade in Baku. On 9 December 2013, sentenced to 10 years in jail under a decision issued by Baku Court of Grave Crimes.
17 Valeh Mammadaga Abdullayev	9 Dec 2013	167.2.2.1; 281.2; 283.2.3	Baku Investigative Prison (Kurdakhani Detention Center)	Sentenced to 8 years in jail under a decision issued by Baku Court of Grave Crimes Judge Zeynal Agayev on 9 December 2013.
18 Gorkhmaz Huseyn Jamalov	18 Jan 2013	167.2.2.1; 281.2; 283.2.3	Baku Investigative Prison (Kurdakhani Detention Center)	Sentenced to 7 years in jail under a decision issued by Baku Court of Grave Crimes Judge Zeynal Agayev on 9 December 2013.
19 Ali Etibar Aliyev	9 Dec 2013	167.2.2.1; 283.2.3	Baku Investigative Prison (Kurdakhani Detention Center)	Sentenced to 4 years in jail under a decision issued by Baku Court of Grave Crimes Judge Zeynal Agayev on 9 December 2013.
20 Elimkhan Gurbankhan Huseynov	22 May 2012	167.2.2.1; 283.2.3	Baku Investigative Prison (Kurdakhani Detention Center)	Sentenced to 7 years in jail under a decision issued by Baku Court of Grave Crimes Judge Zeynal Agayev on 9 December 2013.
21 Samir Khanpasha Huseynov	23 May 2012	167.2.2.1; 228.1; 228.4; 283.2.3	Baku Investigative Prison (Kurdakhani Detention Center)	Sentenced to 6 years in jail under a decision issued by Baku Court of Grave Crimes Judge Zeynal Agayev on 9 December 2013. Baku Court of Appeal upheld the decision on June 27, 2014.
22 Safar Rovshan Mammadov	9 Dec 2013	167.2.2.1; 283.2.3	Baku Investigative Prison (Kurdakhani Detention Center)	Sentenced to 3 years and 4 months in jail under a decision issued by Baku Court of Grave Crimes Judge Zeynal Agayev on 9 December 2013. Baku Court of Appeals upheld the ruling on June 27, 2014.
23 Elvin Nuraddin Nasirov	20 May 2012	167.2.2.1; 234.4.1; 234.4.3; 281.2; 283.2.3	Baku Investigative Prison (Kurdakhani Detention Center)	Sentenced to 9 years in jail under a decision issued by Baku Court of Grave Crimes Judge Zeynal Agayev on 9 December 2013.
24 Jeyhun Zabil Safarli	20 May 2012	167.2.2.1; 234.4.1; 234.4.3; 281.2; 283.2.3	Baku Investigative Prison (Kurdakhani Detention Center)	Sentenced to 9 years in jail under a decision issued by Baku Court of Grave Crimes Judge Zeynal Agayev on 9 December 2013. Baku Court of Appeals upheld the ruling on June 27, 2014.
25 Emin Yadigar Tofidi	16 Jan 2013	167.2.2.1; 283.2.3	Baku Investigative Prison (Kurdakhani Detention Center)	Sentenced to 3.5 years in jail under a decision issued by Baku Court of Grave Crimes Judge Zeynal Agayev on 9 December 2013. Baku Court of Appeals upheld the ruling on June 27, 2014.

The Case of Religious Activists in the Masalli Region

These religious activists were arrested in the Masalli, region along with journalist Araz Guliyev, editor of www.xeber44.com, a website critical of Azerbaijan's religion policy. The defendants assisted Guliyev's journalistic activity. In 2012, six Muslims from Masalli were arrested on various false charges, including throwing stones at people during a local folk festival.

NAME	DATE OF ARREST	ARTICLES OF THE CRIMINAL CODE	PLACE OF DETENTION	STATUS
26 Araz Faiq Guliyev	9 Sep 2012	228.1; 233; 283.1; 315.2; 324	Prison #14	Published materials online criticizing the government's policies on religious and social issues in the Masalli region. Sentenced to 8 years in jail under a decision issued by Lankaran Court of Grave Crimes on 5 April 2013. The Shirvan Court of Appeals upheld the decision on 9 January 2014.
27 Rza Gorkhmaz Agali	9 Sep 2012	233; 315.2; 324	Prison #14	Sentenced to 7 years in jail under a decision issued by Lankaran Court of Grave Crimes Judge Nizami Guliyev on 5 April 2013. Shirvan Court of Appeals Judge Kamran Akbarov upheld this ruling on 9 January 2014.
28 Suraj Valeh Agayev	15 Sep 2012	233; 315.2; 324	Prison #5	Sentenced to 5 years in jail under a decision issued by Lankaran Court of Grave Crimes Judge Nizami Guliyev on 5 April 2013. Shirvan Court of Appeals Judge Kamran Akbarov upheld this ruling on 9 January 2014.
29 Nijat Yaser Aliyev	18 Sep 2012	233; 315.2; 324	Prison #16	Sentenced to 4.5 years in jail under a decision issued by Lankaran Court of Grave Crimes Judge Nizami Guliyev on 5 April 2013. Shirvan Court of Appeals Judge Kamran Akbarov upheld this ruling on 9 January 2014.
30 Khalid Nofal Kazimov	14 Sep 2012	233; 234.4.3; 315.2; 324	Prison #6	Sentenced to 8 years in jail under a decision issued by Lankaran Court of Grave Crimes Judge Nizami Guliyev on 5 April 2013. Shirvan Court of Appeals Judge Kamran Akbarov upheld this ruling on 9 January 2014.
31 Namig Alisa Kishiyev	18 Sep 2012	233; 315.2; 324	Prison #5	Sentenced to 4.5 years in jail under a decision issued by Lankaran Court of Grave Crimes Judge Nizami Guliyev on 5 April 2013. Shirvan Court of Appeals Judge Kamran Akbarov upheld this ruling on 9 January 2014.
32 Ziya İbrahim Tahirov	9 Sep 2012	233; 315.2; 324	Prison #5	Sentenced to 7 years in jail under a decision issued by Lankaran Court of Grave Crimes Judge Nizami Guliyev on 5 April 2013. Shirvan Court of Appeals Judge Kamran Akbarov upheld this ruling on 9 January 2014.

The “Freedom for Hijab” Case

These individuals were arrested for participation in the 5 October 2012 “Freedom for Hijab” public protest. On 10 December 2010, Azerbaijan’s Education Ministry ordered the wearing of school uniforms, thereby in effect banning the hijab (Islamic headscarf). A May 2011 mass protest was violently dispersed; a second protest in October resulted in mass arrests. There are reports that government provocateurs initiated a confrontation with police that led to violence and arrests.

NAME	DATE OF ARREST	ARTICLES OF THE CRIMINAL CODE	PLACE OF DETENTION	STATUS
33 Tarlan Faiq Agadadashov	5 Oct 2012	233; 315.2	Prison #16	Sentenced to 5.5 years in jail under a 22 April 2013 decision of the Narimanov District Court. The Baku Court of Appeals upheld this ruling on 19 December 2013.
34 Rovshan Huseyn Allahverdiyev	5 Oct 2012	233; 315.2	Prison #16	Sentenced to 5.5 years in jail under a 22 April 2013 decision of the Narimanov District Court. The Baku Court of Appeals upheld this ruling on 19 December 2013.
35 Nasimi Yusif Hasanov	6 Oct 2012	228.1; 234.1	Prison #16	Arrested in connection with his participation in the “Freedom for hijab” protest but unlike the other defendants was not charged with taking part in an unauthorized public demonstration. Sentenced to 4 years in jail under unrelated articles of the Criminal Code on 27 July 2013.
36 Ilham Bahman Hatamov	5 Oct 2012	233; 315.2	Prison #14	Sentenced to 5.5 years in jail under a 22 April 2013 decision of the Narimanov District Court. The Baku Court of Appeals upheld this ruling on 19 December 2013.
37 David Tarlan Karimov	5 Oct 2012	233; 315.2	Prison #16	Sentenced to 6 years in jail under a 22 April 2013 decision of the Narimanov District Court. The Baku Court of Appeals upheld this ruling on 19 December 2013.
38 Elshad Fikrat Rzayev	23 Feb 2013	233; 315.2	Prison #16	Sentenced to 6 years in jail under a 3 June 2013 decision of the Narimanov District Court. The Baku Court of Appeals upheld this ruling in August 2013.
39 Telman Shirali Shiraliyev	5 Oct 2012	233; 315.2	Prison #16	Sentenced to 6 years in jail under a 22 April 2013 decision of the Narimanov District Court. The Baku Court of Appeals upheld this ruling on 19 December 2013.

The Case of Prominent Muslim Leader Abgül Neymat Suleymanov

NAME	DATE OF ARREST	ARTICLES OF THE CRIMINAL CODE	PLACE OF DETENTION	STATUS
40 Abgül Neymat Suleymanov	12 Aug 2011	228.1; 233; 234.1; 234.4.3; 283.2.1	Prison #8	Leader of the Jafari Heylyat (Life of Jafar) Muslim religious congregation in Baku and co-founder of the association of "National and Moral Values." Arrested in an official sweep against popular Muslim leaders. Sentenced to 11 years in jail on 10 August 2012 by Baku Court of Grave Crimes. Baku Court of Appeals upheld the ruling on 23 January 2013.

The Case of the "Nurcular," readers of the late Turkish Muslim theologian Said Nursi, whose texts are banned in Azerbaijan.

NAME	DATE OF ARREST	ARTICLES OF THE CRIMINAL CODE	PLACE OF DETENTION	STATUS
41 Ismayil Isakh Mammadov	14 Apr 2014	167-2.2.1; 168.1; 168.2	Baku (Kurdakhani) Pretrial Detention Facility	Accused of conducting private religious classes. Imprisoned for 5.5 years by Yasamal District Court on 7 October 2015.
42 Zakariyya Isakh Mammadov	Was put under police control	167-2.2.1; 168.2	Baku (Kurdakhani) Pretrial Detention Facility	Accused of conducting private religious classes. Imprisoned for 5 years by Yasamal District Court on 7 October 2015.
43 Ravan Hakim Sabzaliyev	23 May 2014	168.2	Baku (Kurdakhani) Pretrial Detention Facility	Imprisoned for 1 year, 1 month and 29 days by Yasamal District Court on 7 October 2015.
44 Eldeniz Balamat Hajiyev	14 Apr 2014	167-2.2.1; 168.2	Baku (Kurdakhani) Pretrial Detention Facility	Accused of conducting private religious classes. Imprisoned for 4.5 years by Yasamal District Court on 7 October 2015.
45 Shahin Mukhtar Hasanov	Was put under police control	167-2.2.1; 168.2	Baku (Kurdakhani) Pretrial Detention Facility	Accused of conducting private religious classes. Imprisoned for 5 years by Yasamal District Court on 7 October 2015.

The Case of the Muslim Unity Movement (MUM)

According to Forum 18, the Muslim Unity Movement (MUM), established in January 2015, applied for state registration. After the November 26, 2015 arrest of its leader, Imam Bagirov, in the village of Nardaran near Baku, a Baku court ordered that he be held in four months' pre-trial detention. His deputy, Imam Elchin Qasimov, was arrested on November 5 to punish him for criticizing the police torture of Bagirov. Bagirov and Qasimov, along with many other Shi'a Muslims arrested in and since November 2015, face serious criminal charges on a range of alleged offenses with punishments of up to life imprisonment.

NAME	DATE OF ARREST	ARTICLES OF THE CRIMINAL CODE	PLACE OF DETENTION	STATUS
46 Taleh Kamil Bagirov (Baghizade)	26 Nov 2015	120; 214; 220; 228; 233; 278; 279; 281; 283; 315	Baku's pre-trial detention center	Previously sentenced to 2 years in jail in November 2013, for giving a speech at a mosque blaming the authorities for corruption and false arrests. Released in July 2015 and then arrested in November 2015. Accused by the authorities of plotting a coup, subjected to torture.

In addition to Imam Bagirov, the following MUM members are also currently imprisoned:

47 Abbas Mammadbagir Huseynov	81 Aghasalim Salman Jabrayilov
48 Rasim Mirzebaba Jabrayilov	82 Farhad Mirzahasan Muradov
49 Jabbar Amirkhan Jabbadov	83 Nohbala Bahram Rahimov
50 Agil Azer Ismayilov	84 Intiqam Hamdullah Mammadov
51 Abbas Hafiz Tagizade	85 Fuad Ali Gahramanli
52 Ramin Maharram Yariyev	86 Jahad Balahuseyn Balakishizade
53 Etibar Rasim Ismayilov	87 Bahruz Rahib Asgarov
54 Rasim Sarvar Bunyadov	88 Ramil Zabil Aliyev
55 Alibala Javad Valiyev	89 Nadir Abdulagha Gadirov
56 Ibrahim Mahammad Khudaverdiyev	90 Seyfaddin Nurullah Shirvanov
57 Abbas Abdolrahman Guliyev	91 Javanshir Malik Tagiyev
58 Ali Hasrat Nuriyev	92 Elkhan Heydar Hasanov
59 Farhad Nasreddin Balayev	93 Huseyn Mammadagha Nabizade
60 Elman Seydamir Aghayev	94 Isa Tofiq Ibrahimov
61 Eldar Aliagha Bunyadov	95 Alizohrab Amirhuseyn Rustamov
62 Atabala Shahbaz Shahbazov	96 Seymur Tarlan Aslanov
63 Alibey Atabala Shahbazov	97 Zakir Tapdiq Mustafayev
64 Raji Abasali Babayev	98 Shamil Adil Abdulaliyev
65 Mehman Abulfaz Guliyev	99 Elchin Kamal Gasimov
66 Ali Hummat Huseynov	100 Agha-Ali Eldar Yahyayev
67 Hasan Ahmad Guliyev	101 Anar Yusif Aliyev
68 Urfan Feyyaz Nabizade	102 Sahib Firudin Habibov
69 Nahid Nasib Gahramanov	103 Latif Suleyman Ahmadov
70 Vusal Nadir Alish	104 Niftali Ashraf Valiyev
71 Vasif Vaqif Aliyev	105 Teymur Adilkhan Osmanov
72 Mohtabar Gilman Babayev	106 Elvin Hatif Bunyadov
73 Vidadi Shirinbala Alkhasov	107 Sahil Khalid Rzayev
74 Mehman Sudef Mammadov	108 Ruzi Khaliq Ismayilov
75 Amiralii Ismayil Aliyev	109 Jabir Sabir Aliyev
76 Aliagha Mahmud Gasimov	110 Ramil Suliddin Seyfullayev
77 Alekber Tofiq Gurbanov	111 Mubariz Eyyub Ibrahimov
78 Mubariz Nasir Agaraziyev	112 Elnur Nazim Jabbarov
79 Hilal Damir Jabbarov	113 Zulfugar Sadraddin Mikayilov
80 Zahid Faiq Zakiyev	

APPENDIX 6

KAZAKHSTAN PRISONER LIST 2016

Compiled and updated by the Forum 18 News Service on 28 March 2016

Thirteen known alleged members of Tabligh Jamaat (all men) have been jailed as prisoners of conscience for exercising the right to freedom of religion or belief since December 2014.

	NAME	DATE OF SENTENCING AND COURT	CRIMINAL CODE ARTICLES	SENTENCE
1	Mamurzhan Rashidovich Turashov	2 Dec 2014, Sairam District Court, South Kazakhstan Region	337-1, Part 1 of old Criminal Code (equivalent of Article 405 of current Criminal Code)	3 years' imprisonment.
2	Bakyt Narimanovich Nurmanbetov	14 Jan 2015, Taldykorgan City Court, Almaty Region	337-1, Part 2 of old Criminal Code (equivalent of Article 405 of current Criminal Code)	20 months' imprisonment (reduced to one year on appeal, freed in August 2015 on completion of sentence).
3	Aykhan Samarkanovich Kurmangaliyev	14 Jan 2015, Taldykorgan City Court, Almaty Region	337-1, Part 2 of old Criminal Code (equivalent of Article 405 of current Criminal Code)	20 months' imprisonment (reduced to one year on appeal).
4	Sagyndyk Mazhenovich Tatubayev	14 Jan 2015, Taldykorgan City Court, Almaty Region	337-1, Part 2 of old Criminal Code (equivalent of Article 405 of current Criminal Code)	20 months' imprisonment (reduced to one year on appeal, freed in August 2015 on completion of sentence).
5	Kairat Amangeldinovich Esmukhambetov	14 Jan 2015, Taldykorgan City Court, Almaty Region	337-1, Part 2 of old Criminal Code (equivalent of Article 405 of current Criminal Code)	20 months' imprisonment (reduced to one year on appeal, freed in August 2015 on completion of sentence).
6	Ruslan Sadvakasovich Kairanov	14 Jan 2015, Taldykorgan City Court, Almaty Region	337-1, Part 2 of old Criminal Code (equivalent of Article 405 of current Criminal Code)	18 months' imprisonment (reduced to one year on appeal).
7	Saken Peisenovich Tulbayev	2 July 2015, Almaty's Bostandyk Court No. 2	174, Part 1 and 405, Part 2	4 years 8 months' imprisonment and banned from exercising freedom of religion or belief until the end of 2022, 3 years after his release.
8	Orazbek Kabdrashovich Apakashev	29 Sep 2015, Temirtau City Court, Karaganda Region	405, Part 1	3 years' imprisonment.
9	Erbolat Kabzakievich Omarbekov	18 Feb 2016, Astana's Saryarka District Court No. 2	405, Part 1	2 years' imprisonment.
10	Bolatbek Kambarovich Kozhageldinov	18 Feb 2016, Astana's Saryarka District Court No. 2	405, Part 1	2 years' imprisonment.
11	Khalambakhi Khalym	18 Feb 2016, Astana's Saryarka District Court No. 2	405, Part 2 and 174, Part 1	2 and a half years' imprisonment.
12	Nurzhan Beisembayevich Nuradilov	18 Feb 2016, Astana's Saryarka District Court No. 2	405, Part 1	2 years' imprisonment.
13	Kubaidolla Abishevich Tyulyubayev	18 Feb 2016, Astana's Saryarka District Court No. 2	405, Part 1	2 years' imprisonment.
14	Aidin Zulfukarovich Shakentayev	28 March 2016 Karaganda's Kazybek Bi District Court	405, Part 1	2 and a half years' imprisonment
15	Bauyrzhan Omirzhanovich Serikov	28 March 2016 Karaganda's Kazybek Bi District Court	405, Part 1	2 years' imprisonment
16	Murat Askarovich Shopenov	28 March 2016 Karaganda's Kazybek Bi District Court	405, Part 1	2 years' imprisonment

Twelve known alleged members of Tabligh Jamaat (all men) were given terms of restricted freedom for exercising the right to freedom of religion or belief since December 2014.

	NAME	DATE OF SENTENCING AND COURT	CRIMINAL CODE ARTICLE	SENTENCE
1	Bakittkali Urazovich Konirbayev	29 April 2015, Aktobe City Court No. 2	405, Part 2	2 years' restricted freedom.
2	Samat Koishykulovich Shadmanov	29 April 2015, Aktobe City Court No. 2	405, Part 2	2 years' restricted freedom.
3	Adi Bakytovich Bakyt	29 April 2015, Aktobe City Court No. 2	405, Part 2	2 years' restricted freedom.
4	Nurulan Mukhanbetrakhimuli Koyshybai	29 April 2015, Aktobe City Court No. 2	405, Part 2	1 year's restricted freedom.
5	Bakytzhan Zhasuzakovich Nuskabayev	16 September 2015, Shymkent's Al-Farabi District Court	405, Part 2	1 year's restricted freedom.
6	Yerbol Nurzhigituli Zhaylymysov	16 September 2015, Shymkent's Al-Farabi District Court	405, Part 2	1 year's restricted freedom.
7	Serik Baimanovich Otyshyn	16 September 2015, Shymkent's Al-Farabi District Court	405, Part 2	1 year's restricted freedom.
8	Rashid Mubarakovich Erimbetov	10 December 2015, Shu District Court, Zhambyl Region	405, Part 2	fined court fee and given 1 year's restricted freedom.
9	Ruslan Sirgebayevich Abirov	10 December 2015, Shu District Court, Zhambyl Region	405, Part 2	fined court fee and given 1 year's restricted freedom.
10	Toktasyn Narikbayevich Artykbayev	10 December 2015, Shu District Court, Zhambyl Region	405, Part 2	fined court fee and given 1 year's restricted freedom.
11	Erbol Seidybekovich Sharipov	10 December 2015, Shu District Court, Zhambyl Region	405, Part 2	fined court fee and given 1 year's restricted freedom.
12	Serik Amangeldinovich Seitzhaparov	12 February 2016, Tselinograd District Court, Akmola Region	405, Part 2	2 years' restricted freedom.

One alleged member of Tabligh Jamaat is detained as a prisoner of conscience awaiting criminal trial for exercising the right to freedom of religion or belief.

	NAME	FIRST PRE-TRIAL DETENTION ORDER DATE AND COURT	CRIMINAL CODE ARTICLE	INITIAL PRE-TRIAL DETENTION PERIOD	PLACE OF PRE-TRIAL DETENTION
1	Murat Kazbekovich Takaumov	20 November 2015 Astana's Saryarka District Court No. 2	405, Part 2	2 months' initial detention	Astana KNB Investigation Prison

The Criminal Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Article 174: Evasion of the Draft upon Mobilization

1: Evading conscription to mobilize the Armed Forces, other troops and military formations of the Republic of Kazakhstan-shall be punished by imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years.

2: The same offense, as well as avoidance of further appeals to staff of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan, committed in wartime -shall be punished by imprisonment for a term of five to ten years.

Article 337 (old)/Article 405 (current): Creation or Participation in the Activity of Illegal Public Associations

1: Creation or guidance of a religious or public association the activity of which is associated with violence against citizens or other causation of damage to their health, or with inducing citizens to refuse to perform their civil obligations or to commit other illegal actions, as well as the creation or guidance of a party on a religious basis or a political party or a trade union which are financed by foreign states, or foreign citizens or by foreign or international organisations, - shall be punished by a fine in an amount from two hundred up to five hundred monthly calculation bases, or in an amount of wages or other income of a given convict for a period from two to five months, or by correctional labour for a period up to two years, or by detention under arrest for a period up to four months, or by imprisonment for a period up to three years with deprivation of the right to hold certain positions or to engage in certain types of activity for a period up to three years.

2: Creation of a public association which proclaims or carries out in practice racial, national, tribal, social, class, or religious intolerance or exclusiveness, or which calls for the subversion of the constitutional order, disruption of safety of the state, or infringements upon the territorial integrity of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as the guidance of such an association, -shall be punished by correctional labour for a period up to two years, or by restriction of freedom for a period up to five years, or by detention under arrest for a period up to six months, or by imprisonment for a period up to three

years with deprivation of the right to hold certain positions or to engage in certain types of activity for a period up to three years.

3: Active participation in the activity of public associations indicated in the first or second part of this Article, -shall be punished by a fine in an amount from one hundred up to three hundred monthly assessment indices, or in an amount of wages or other income of a given convict for a period from one to two months, or by correctional labour for a period up to one year, or by detention under arrest for a period up to four months or imprisonment for a period up to one year.

APPENDIX 7

TAJIKISTAN PRISONER LIST 2016

NO.	NAME	BIRTH DATE	RESIDENCY	RESPONSIBILITIES	DATE OF THE ARREST	COMMENTS
1	Saidumar Huseyni (Umarali Khusaini)	1961	Dushanbe	Political council member and the first deputy chairman of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT)	09.16.2015	Various extremism charges. Case went to the Constitutional Court on 9 February 2016.
2	Muhammadalii Hayit	1957	Dushanbe	Political council member and deputy chairman of IRPT	09.16.2015	Various extremism charges. Case went to the Constitutional Court on 9 February 2016.
3	Vohidkhon Kosidinov	1956	Dushanbe	Political council member and chairman of the elections department of IRPT	09.17.2015	Various extremism charges. Case went to the Constitutional Court on 9 February 2016.
4	Fayzmuhammad Muhammadalii	1959	Dushanbe	IRPT chairman of research, political council member	09.16.2015	Various extremism charges. Case went to the Constitutional Court on 9 February 2016.
5	Davlat Abdukahhori	1975	Dushanbe	IRPT foreign relations, political council member	09.16.2015	Various extremism charges. Case went to the Constitutional Court on 9 February 2016.
6	Zarafo Rahmoni	1972	Dushanbe	IRPT chairman advisor, political council member	09.16.2015	Various extremism charges. Case went to the Constitutional Court on 9 February 2016.
7	Rozik Zubaydullohi	1946	Dushanbe	IRPT academic chairman, political council member	09.16.2015	Various extremism charges. Case went to the Constitutional Court on 9 February 2016.
8	Mahmud Jaloliddini	1955	Hisor District	IRPT chairman advisor, political council member	02.10.2015	
9	Hikmatulloh Sayfullozoda	1950	Dushanbe	Editor of "Najot" newspaper, IRPT political council member	09.16.2015	Various extremism charges. Case went to the Constitutional Court on 9 February 2016.
10	Rajab Jobir Rakhmatullohi	1958	Dushanbe	IRPT political council member	09.15.2015	Various extremism charges. Case went to the Constitutional Court on 9 February 2016.
11	Muhammadsharif Nabiev	1962	Kulob City	IRPT branch chairman in Kulob city, political council member	09.16.2015	Various extremism charges. Case went to the Constitutional Court on 9 February 2016.
12	Abdusamad Gayratov	1962	Kulob City	IRPT sector chairman in Kulob city, political council member	09.16.2015	Various extremism charges. Case went to the Constitutional Court on 9 February 2016.
13	Umarshohi Davlat	1977	Rudaki District	IRPT deputy chairman in Rudaki District, political council member	2015	Various extremism charges, 15 years in prison.

NO.	NAME	BIRTH DATE	RESIDENCY	RESPONSIBILITIES	DATE OF THE ARREST	COMMENTS
14	Fakhriddin Mahmataliyev	1981	Bokhtar District	IRPT branch employee in Khatlon, political council member	2015	
15	Kiyomiddin Avazov	1973	Dushanbe	IRPT chairman of Dushanbe city, political council member	09.16.2015	Various extremism charges. Case went to the Constitutional Court on 9 February 2016.
16	Asomiddin Abdurahmanov	1982	Jomi District	IRPT branch deputy chairman in Khatlon, political council member	2015	Various extremism charges, 10 years in prison.
17	Muso Shehov	1976	Dushanbe	IRPT head office employee	10.10.2015	
18	Zavkibek Rahmonov		Vanj	Chairman of the party in Vanj District	2015	Various extremism charges, 4 years in prison.
19	Tavakkal Boboev	1956	Varzob	Responsible for the Department of Elections in Varzob, IRPT candidate in the 2015 Parliamentary Elections	2015	Various extremism charges, 18 years in prison.
20	Kurbon Manonov	1942	Norak City	IRPT branch chairman in Norak city	06.10.2015	Judge Sayfiddin Pirmuhammadzoda. Articles of the Criminal Code 307 and two subparagraphs of 187.
21	Hasan Rahimov		Farkhor District	IRPT branch deputy chairman in Farkhor District	09.23.2015	9 years in prison. Case judge Adham Akramov. Articles of the Criminal Code 307, 195 and 189.
22	Zayniddin Yusupov		Farkhor District	IRPT branch chairman in Farkhor	09.23.2015.	Various extremism charges, 10 years in prison.
23	Mirzosharif Naimov	1944	Khovaling District	IRPT branch chairman in Khovaling District	2015	
24	Madiso Jomiyev		Shuro-obod District	IRPT branch chairman in Shuro-obod District	2015	
25	Abdusattor Boboev	1954	Isfara District	IRPT branch chairman in Isfara District, political council member	09.22.2015	11 years in prison. Criminal Article 307, part 1 and 2
26	Sattor Karimov	1959	Dushanbe	Political council member	09.16.2015	Various extremism charges. Case went to the Constitutional Court on 9 February 2016.
27	Bobohido Haydarov	1949	Isfara District	IRPT branch member in Isfara District	09.22.2015	6 years in prison.
28	Rustam Emomov	1972	Dushanbe	IRPT member	09.22.2015	17 years in prison.
29	Hikmatulloh Sayfov	1973	Dushanbe	IRPT leader driver	09.23.2015	
30	Rustam Sa'didini	1956	Dushanbe	IRPT chairman advisor, political council member	09.23.2015	
31	Mahmadali Islomov			IRPT member		Various extremism charges, 5 years in prison.
32	Mirzoolim Kholov	1965	Kuhistoni Mastchoh District	IRPT branch chairman in Kuhistoni Mastchoh District	2015	
33	Sino Hasanzoda	1974	Panjakent District	IRPT branch chairman in Panjakent District	2015	
34	Anorboy Safarov		Isfara District	IRPT member	2015	7 years in prison.
35	Abdugafor Abdulov		Vahdat District	IRPT member	2015	
36	Farukh Abdulov		Vahdat District	IRPT member	2015	
37	Mehridin Abdulov		Vahdat District	IRPT member	2015	
38	Nizom Abdulov		Vahdat District	IRPT member	2015	
39	Nozim Abdulov		Vahdat District	IRPT member	2015	
40	Mirzoumar Tabarov		Vahdat District	IRPT member	2015	

NO.	NAME	BIRTH DATE	RESIDENCY	RESPONSIBILITIES	DATE OF THE ARREST	COMMENTS
41	Said Mavlavi		Vahdat District	IRPT member	2015	
42	Rahmidin Sangov		Rudaki District	IRPT member	2015	
43	Sayridin Sangov		Rudaki District	IRPT member	2015	
44	Mahmudjon Sangov		Rudaki District	IRPT member	2015	
45	Idibek Hasanovich Chakalov		Norak City	IRPT member	2015	Judge Sayfiddin Pirmuhammadzoda. Articles of the Criminal Code 307 and two subparagraphs of 187.
46	Kasim Mirzoevich Pirov		Norak City	IRPT member	2015	
47	Davliyol Alimardonovich Saidov		Norak City	IRPT member	2015	Judge Sayfiddin Pirmuhammadzoda. Articles of the Criminal Code 307 and two subparagraphs of 187.
48	Jurabek Gulov		Norak City	IRPT member	2015	Judge Sayfiddin Pirmuhammadzoda. Articles of the Criminal Code 307 and two subparagraphs of 187.
49	Dilovar Abdunazarovich Davlatov		Norak City	IRPT member	2015	Judge Sayfiddin Pirmuhammadzoda. Articles of the Criminal Code 307 and two subparagraphs of 187.
50	Bakhtiyor Rizoevich Abdulloev		Norak City	IRPT member	2015	Judge Sayfiddin Pirmuhammadzoda. Articles of the Criminal Code 307 and two subparagraphs of 187.
51	Fayziddin Tojiddinov		Vahdat District	IRPT member	2015	
52	Mahmadamin Gulov			IRPT member	2015	
53	Nodirkhan Samadov		Yovon District	IRPT member	2015	
54	Nurullo Abdulov		Vahdat District	IRPT member	2015	
55	Shodi Abdulov		Vahdat District	IRPT member	2015	
56	Buzurgmehr Yorov	1971	Dushanbe	Detained IRPT lawyer	09.28.2015	
57	Saodatsho Adolatshoyev	1973	Badakhshon	When arrested, was IRPT branch chairman in Badakhshon	04.14.2014	5 years in prison. Article 189.
58	Sherik Karamkhudoyev		Badakhshon	When arrested, was IRPT branch chairman in Khorugh city	07.24.2012	14 years in prison.
59	Mahmatnazar Khojayev		Vahdat District	IRPT member	2015	
60	Rozibek Mirzoyev		Vahdat District	IRPT member	2015	
61	Saydali Taghoyev		Dangara District	IRPT member	2015	15 years in prison. Articles of the Criminal Code 187 part 2, 189 and 307.
62	Davlatyor Saidov			IRPT member	2015	
63	Tojiddin Khujamurodov		Norak City	IRPT member	2015	Judge Sayfiddin Pirmuhammadzoda. Articles of the Criminal Code 307 and two subparagraphs of 187.
64	Umar Rizoyev		Norak City	IRPT member	2015	Judge Sayfiddin Pirmuhammadzoda. Articles of the Criminal Code 307 and two subparagraphs of 187.
65	Murtazo Safarov		Kulob City	IRPT member	2015	
66	Rahmikhudo Saidmuddini		Dushanbe	IRPT member	2015	

NO.	NAME	BIRTH DATE	RESIDENCY	RESPONSIBILITIES	DATE OF THE ARREST	COMMENTS
67	Bahodur Kabirov		Vahdat District	IRPT member	2015	28 years in prison.
68	Ahldin Yusupov		Farkhor District	IRPT member	2015	9 years in prison.
69	Mahmadsaid Vataniev	1977	Jomi District	Suspected member of Salafi sect	2016	5 years in prison. Article of the Criminal Code 198, part 2, clause g.
70	Jamshed Rahmatulloev	1980	Jomi District	Suspected member of Salafi sect	2016	5 years in prison. Article of the Criminal Code 198, part 2, clause g.
71	Fayziddin Saidov		Roghun	Suspected member of Salafi sect	2016	Detained.
72	Rajabmurod Rajabov		Roghun	Suspected member of Salafi sect	2016	Detained.
73	Mansur Toronov	1980	J. Rumi	Suspected member of Salafi sect	2016	Detained.
74	Usmankhoja Gosimov		Khujand	Suspected member of Salafi sect	2016	4.5 years in prison.
75	Shuhrat Masharipov		Khujand	Suspected member of Salafi sect	2016	Sentenced to 3 years and 3 months in prison.
76	Khairullo Huseynov		Khujand	Suspected member of Salafi sect	2016	Sentenced to 3 years and 3 months in prison.
77	Ganjina Ashurova		J. Balkhi	Detained on charges of collaboration with Salafi sect	2016	Article of the Criminal Code 307.
78	Isfandiyor Ashurov		J. Balkhi	Detained on charges of collaboration with Salafi sect	2016	Article of the Criminal Code 307.
79	Muhammadi Rahmatulloevich Muharramov	1973	Dushanbe	Charged of being a leader within Salafi sect	02.10.2016	Three Articles of the Criminal Code, including 307.
80	Shuhrat Guziboiev		Khujand	Suspected member of Salafi sect	02.2015	Charged with Articles of the Criminal Code 307 part 2 and 3, and 189.
81	Umed Hojiev		B. Ghafurov	Suspected member of Salafi sect	02.2015	Charged with Articles of the Criminal Code 307 part 2 and 3, and 189.
82	Behzod Yunusov	1985	Khujand	Suspicion of membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	2015	Charged with Articles of the Criminal Code 187 part 2, & 307 part 2 and 3.
83	Tolibjon Khojaev		Khujand	Suspicion of membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	2015	Charged with Articles of the Criminal Code 187 part 2, & 307 part 2 and 3.
84	Bahrom Hojiboiev	1977	Khujand	Suspicion of membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	2015	In prison.
85	Inomjon Jalolov		Khujand	Suspicion of membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	2015	In prison.
86	Mirzotohir Anvarov		Khujand	Suspicion of membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	2015	In prison.
87	Bahrom Abdughaffarov		Farkhor	Suspicion of collaboration with Salafi sect	2014	5 years in prison.
88	Humayni Ghoziev	1989	Dushanbe	Suspicion of collaboration with Salafi sect	08.15.2014	In prison.
89	Sherali Kholov		Vose'	Suspicion of collaboration with Salafi sect	2014	
90	Jurakhon Sharafov		Vose'	Suspicion of collaboration with Salafi sect	2014	
91	Sharif Mirov		Dushanbe	Suspicion of collaboration with Salafi sect		
92	Murodbek Galandarov		Sarband	Suspicion of membership in Tablighi Jamaat	2011	

NO.	NAME	BIRTH DATE	RESIDENCY	RESPONSIBILITIES	DATE OF THE ARREST	COMMENTS
93	Suhrob Sharifov		Khatlon	Suspicion of membership in Tablighi Jamaat	2010	Charged with Article of the Criminal Code 307, fined 26,700 somoni.
94	Zaynalobiddin Mannonov	1949	Nurobod	Suspicion of collaboration with Salafi sect	09.29.2010	5 years in prison.
95	Mulloh Abdulloh		Qurghonteppe	Suspicion of being a leader of Tablighi Jamaat in Qurghonteppe	2009	Charged with Article of the Criminal Code 307, in prison.
96	Ogil Sharifov	1985	Isfara	Detained for filming on a mobile phone the detention of two women in hijabs by the law enforcement officers	02.20.2016	Charged with Article of the Criminal Code 307.
97	Umed Jabborov (Shaykh Umedi Salafi)	1976	Dushanbe	Suspicion of collaboration with Salafi sect	12.24.2014	Charged with Articles of the Criminal Code 189 and 307, sentenced to 5.5 years in prison. The judge Hotam Rajabzoda.
98	Saidmahdikhon Sattorov (Shaykh Temur)	1950	Tursunzoda	Charged with polygamy and claiming to be the last prophet	02.16.2015	Sentenced with Articles of the Criminal Code 250, 164, 243 and 338 to 16 years in prison
99	Fuzayl Nizomov	1976	Tursunzoda	Student of Shaykh Temur charged with extortion	2015	Sentenced to 15 years in prison.
100	Magsud Urunov		Konibodom	Charged of membership in Muslim Brotherhood	04.2016	Detained.
101	Abdujamil Yusufov		B. Ghafurov	Charged of membership in Muslim Brotherhood	04.2016	Detained.
102	Sulaymon Boltuev		Qayraqqum	Charged of membership in Muslim Brotherhood	04.2016	Detained.
103	Eraj Aliev		Farkhor	Suspicion of collaboration with Salafi sect	09.2014	Sentenced with Article of the Criminal Code 189 part 2, clause g to 5 years in prison.
104	Idris Esanov		Farkhor	Suspicion of collaboration with Salafi sect	09.2014	Sentenced with Article of the Criminal Code 189 part 2, clause g to 5 years in prison.
105	Abdurahmon Ismonov		Farkhor	Suspicion of collaboration with Salafi sect	09.2014	Sentenced with Article of the Criminal Code 189 part 2, clause g to 6 years and 2 months in prison.
106	Abdulloh Ishogov	1977	Isfara	Suspicion of membership in Tablighi Jamaat	01.2015	3 years in prison.
107	Zarif Nuriddinov	1981	Isfara	Suspicion of membership in Tablighi Jamaat	01.2015	3 years in prison.
108	Payravjon Ashurov	1983	Isfara	Suspicion of membership in Tablighi Jamaat	01.2015	3 years in prison.
109	Abdujalol Valiev		B. Ghafurov	Suspicion of membership in Tablighi Jamaat	2012	3 years in prison.
110	Tohir Zoirov		B. Ghafurov	Suspicion of membership in Tablighi Jamaat	2012	3 years in prison.
111	Amrokhon Ergashov	1947	Kulob	Suspicion of membership in Tablighi Jamaat	2015	Sentenced with Articles of the Criminal Code 307, 187 and 195 to 12 years in prison.
112	Mahmadali Islomov			IRPT member		Various extremism charges, 5 years in prison.

APPENDIX 8

RUSSIAN FEDERATION PRISONER LIST 2016

(Information as of December 2015, compiled by the New Chronicle of Current Events and the European Initiative for Human Rights in the Former USSR)

Human Rights Defenders and Civil Activists

NAME AND YEAR OF BIRTH	CASE	ARTICLES OF CRIMINAL CODE AND PLACE OF IMPRISONMENT	SENTENCE
Mikhail Avazov	Remarks on religious themes in personal conversations with other inmates	282, part 1. Correctional penal colony #5 in Nizhni Tagil	On March 30, 2015, sentenced to 1 year and 7 months imprisonment in a penal colony of strict regimen.
Zarema Ziyavutdinovna Bagavutdinova, 1968	Member of the Dagestan regional public organization "Human Rights"	205.1, part 1. Penal colony #8, Republic of Dagestan	On May 22, 2014, was sentenced to 5 years of imprisonment in a penal colony of ordinary regimen.

Internet Expression

NAME AND YEAR OF BIRTH	CASE	ARTICLES OF CRIMINAL CODE AND PLACE OF IMPRISONMENT	SENTENCE
Dmitry Beregoshev	Internet posts criticizing the activities of the Russian Orthodox Church	282, part 1	On October 7, 2015, sentenced to 8 months of corrective works.
Victor Krasnov, 1978	Anti-clerical posts in social media	148, part 1	Case was initiated in early 2015.
Alexander Nikonov, 1988	Anti-religious and anti-Muslim posts in social media	282, part 1	On September 7, 2015, sentenced to 3 years imprisonment in a penal colony of strict regimen.

Religion-Related Cases

The Case of Jehovah's Witnesses in Taganrog

NAME AND YEAR OF BIRTH	CASE	ARTICLES OF CRIMINAL CODE AND PLACE OF IMPRISONMENT	SENTENCE
Yuriy Baklushin, 1984	Participation in activities of the Church of Jehovah's Witnesses	282.2, part 1 and 150, part 4	On 30 November 2015, sentenced to 5.5 years imprisonment conditionally.
Alexei Koptev, 1945	Participation in activities of the Church of Jehovah's Witnesses	282.2, part 1 and 150, part 4	On 30 November 2015, sentenced to 5 years 3 months imprisonment conditionally.
Alexander Skvortsov, 1963	Participation in activities of the Church of Jehovah's Witnesses	282.2, part 1 and 150, part 4	On 30 November 2015, sentenced to 5.5 years imprisonment conditionally.
Nikolai Trotsyuk, 1955	Participation in activities of the Church of Jehovah's Witnesses	282.2, part 1 and 150, part 4	On 30 November 2015, sentenced to 5.5 years imprisonment conditionally.

The Case of “Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islam” in St. Petersburg

NAME AND YEAR OF BIRTH	CASE	ARTICLES OF CRIMINAL CODE AND PLACE OF IMPRISONMENT	SENTENCE
Karim Ibragimov, 1963	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 1 and 282.2, part 1	Arrested in June 2014; currently in pre-trial detention.
Roman Ivanov, 1991	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 1 and 282.2, part 1	Held in pre-trial detention.
Ilyas Kadyrov	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 1	Held in pre-trial detention.
Gapur Magomedov	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 1	On August 17, 2015, was sentenced to 5 years detention in a penal colony of strict regimen.
Dmitriy Mikhaylov	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Held in pre-trial detention.
Eldar Ramazanov, 1984	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 1 and 282.2, part 1	Held in pre-trial detention.
Isa Ragimov	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Held in pre-trial detention.
Mahamadimin Saliev, 1992	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 2	On August 14, 2015, was sentenced to 5 years detention in a penal colony of strict regimen; in pre-trial detention. Citizen of Kyrgyzstan.
Sergei Yablokov, 1982	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 1 and 282.2, part 1	Held in pre-trial detention.

The Case of “Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami” in Chelyabinsk

NAME AND YEAR OF BIRTH	CASE	ARTICLES OF CRIMINAL CODE AND PLACE OF IMPRISONMENT	SENTENCE
Marat Bazarbayev, 1976	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	278 (article 30)	Sentenced on November 21, 2013, to 6 years imprisonment in a penal colony of strict regimen.
Rushat Valiyev, 1982	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	278 (article 30)	Sentenced on November 21, 2013, to 6 years imprisonment in a penal colony of strict regimen.
Rinat Galiullin, 1978	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	278 (article 30)	Sentenced on November 21, 2013, to 6.5 years imprisonment in a penal colony of strict regimen.
Rinat Idelbayev, 1980	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	278 (article 30)	Sentenced on November 21, 2013, to 6 years imprisonment in a penal colony of strict regimen.
Vadim Nasyrov, 1981	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	278 (article 30)	Sentenced on November 21, 2013, to 6 years imprisonment in a penal colony of strict regimen.

The Case of “Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami” in Moscow

NAME AND YEAR OF BIRTH	CASE	ARTICLES OF CRIMINAL CODE AND PLACE OF IMPRISONMENT	SENTENCE
Azizbek Inamov, 1977	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.1, part 1, 282-2, part 1 and 278 (article 30)	On July 30, 2014, was sentenced to 11 years imprisonment in a penal colony of strict regimen. Held in pre-trial detention awaiting a decision of the court of appeal.
Shamil Ismailov, 1974	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	282-2, part 1 and 278 (article 30)	On July 30, 2014, was sentenced to 8 years imprisonment in a penal colony of strict regimen. Held in pre-trial detention awaiting a decision of the court of appeal.
Saypulla Kurbanov, 1980	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	282-2, part 1 and 278 (article 30)	On July 30, 2014, was sentenced to 8 years imprisonment in a penal colony of strict regimen. Held in pre-trial detention awaiting a decision of the court of appeal.
Zikrullohon Rahmonkhodzhaev, 1976	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	222, part 1, 282-2, part 1 and 278 (article 30)	On July 30, 2014, was sentenced to 7 years imprisonment in a penal colony of strict regimen. Held in pre-trial detention awaiting a decision of the court of appeal. Citizen of Tajikistan.

The Second Case of “Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami” in Moscow

NAME AND YEAR OF BIRTH	CASE	ARTICLES OF CRIMINAL CODE AND PLACE OF IMPRISONMENT	SENTENCE
Obijon Jurbaev (Obidzhon Dzhurbayev)	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 2	Arrested on October 20, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention.
Suhrob Ironov	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 2	Arrested on October 20, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention.
Mirzobah Kurbonov	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 2	Arrested on October 20, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention.
Abdukayum Makhsudov	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 2	Arrested on October 20, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention.
Ahror Rahimov	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 2	Arrested on October 20, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention.

The Case of “Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami” in Ufa, Bashkortostan

NAME AND YEAR OF BIRTH	CASE	ARTICLES OF CRIMINAL CODE AND PLACE OF IMPRISONMENT	SENTENCE
Aydar Garifyanov, 1976	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.1, part 1 and 278, part 1 (article 30)	On April 12, 2015, was sentenced to 6 years detention in a penal colony of strict regimen. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa awaiting a decision of the court of appeal.
Eugeny Kulagin, 1981	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.1, part 1 and 278, part 1 (article 30)	On April 12, 2015, was sentenced to 7 years detention in a penal colony of strict regimen. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa awaiting a decision of the court of appeal.
Rasim Satayev, 1988	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.1, part 1 and 278, part 1 (article 30)	On April 12, 2015, was sentenced to 6.5 years detention in a penal colony of strict regimen. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa awaiting a decision of the court of appeal.
Alexey Khamadeev, 1982	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.1, part 1 and 278, part 1 (article 30)	On April 12, 2015, was sentenced to 6 years detention in a penal colony of strict regimen. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa awaiting a decision of the court of appeal.

The Case of “Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami” in Dyurtyuli, Bashkortostan

NAME AND YEAR OF BIRTH	CASE	ARTICLES OF CRIMINAL CODE AND PLACE OF IMPRISONMENT	SENTENCE
Ruslan Asylov, 1986	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 1, part 2, and 282.2, part 2	On June 15, 2015, was sentenced to 6 years and 4 months detention in a penal colony of ordinary regimen. In pre-trial detention in Ufa awaiting a decision of the court of appeal.
Gazim Kutluyarov, 1960	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 1, part 2, and 282.2, part 2	On June 15, 2015, was sentenced to 6 years and 4 months detention in a penal colony of ordinary regimen. In pre-trial detention in Ufa awaiting a decision of the court of appeal.
Ilgiz Salakhov, 1975	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 1, part 2, and 282.2, part 2	On June 15, 2015, was sentenced to 10.5 years detention in a penal colony of strict regimen, followed by restriction of liberty for 1 year. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa awaiting a decision of the court of appeal.
Ilshat Salimov, 1987	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 1, part 2, and 282.2, part 2	On June 15, 2015, was sentenced to 6.5 years detention in a penal colony of ordinary regimen. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa awaiting a decision of the court of appeal.
Shamil Khusniyarov, 1979	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 1, part 2, and 282.2, part 2	On June 15, 2015, was sentenced to 6 years and 4 months detention in a penal colony of ordinary regimen. In pre-trial detention in Ufa awaiting a decision of the court of appeal.

The Case of "Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami" in Crimea

NAME AND YEAR OF BIRTH	CASE	ARTICLES OF CRIMINAL CODE AND PLACE OF IMPRISONMENT	SENTENCE
Rustem Vaitov, 1985	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on 23 Jan 2015. Currently in pre-trial detention in Sevastopol.
Ruslan Zeytullayev	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on 23 Jan 2015. Currently in pre-trial detention in Sevastopol.
Nuri Primov, 1976	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on 23 Jan 2015. Currently in pre-trial detention in Sevastopol.

The Case of Muslim protesters in Kazan, Tatarstan

NAME AND YEAR OF BIRTH	CASE	ARTICLES OF CRIMINAL CODE AND PLACE OF IMPRISONMENT	SENTENCE
Lenar Galimov, 1983	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir, participation in a protest against the ban of the translation of the Quran and in a rally with Islamic flags	282, part 2 and 282.2, part 1	Hiding from the investigation.
Ilmir Imayev, 1952	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir, participation in a protest against the ban of the translation of the Quran and in a rally with Islamic flags	282, part 2, 282.2, part 1, and 306, part 1	On December 18, 2014, was sentenced to 3,5 years imprisonment in a penal colony-settlement.
Azat Hasanov (Khasanov), 1978	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir, participation in a protest against the ban of the translation of the Quran and in a rally with Islamic flags	282, part 2 and 282.2, part 1	On December 18, 2014, was sentenced to 7 years and 4 months imprisonment in a penal colony of strict regimen.
Ildar Shaykhutdinov, 1976	Membership in a banned organization Hizb ut-Tahrir, participation in a protest against the ban of the translation of the Quran and in the rally with Islamic flags	282, part 2 and 282.2, part 1	On December 18, 2014, was sentenced to 5.5 years imprisonment in a penal colony of strict regimen.

The First Case of “Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami” in Tatarstan

NAME AND YEAR OF BIRTH	CASE	ARTICLES OF CRIMINAL CODE AND PLACE OF IMPRISONMENT	SENTENCE
Azat Galimzyanovich Adiyev, 1978	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 1	Arrested on October 10, 2014. Held in pre-trial detention in Kazan.
Albert Rafikovich Valiullin, 1974	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 1	Arrested on October 10, 2014. Held in pre-trial detention in Kazan.
Ruzil Rimovich Davletshin, 1988	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 1	Arrested on October 10, 2014. Held in pre-trial detention in Kazan.
Radik Ramilovich Zaripov, 1986	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 1	Arrested on October 10, 2014. Held in pre-trial detention in Kazan.
Lenar Azatovich Saitov, 1987	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 1	Arrested on October 10, 2014. Held in pre-trial detention in Kazan.
Timur Narimanovich Uzbekov, 1990	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 1	Arrested on October 10, 2014. Held in pre-trial detention in Kazan.
Asgat Hasanovich Hafizov, 1985	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 1	Arrested on October 10, 2014. Held in pre-trial detention in Kazan.
Pavel Vladimirovich Khevronin, 1986	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 1	Arrested on October 10, 2014. Held in pre-trial detention in Kazan.

The Second Case of “Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami” in Tatarstan

NAME AND YEAR OF BIRTH	CASE	ARTICLES OF CRIMINAL CODE AND PLACE OF IMPRISONMENT	SENTENCE
Raynur Ibatullin, 1989	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 1	Arrested on May 19, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Kazan.
Arslan Salimzyanov, 1986	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 1	Arrested on May 19, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Kazan.
Ayrat Shakirov, 1991	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 1	Arrested on May 19, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Kazan.
Nail Yunusov, 1989	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 1	Arrested on May 19, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Kazan.

The First Case of “Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami” in Bashkortostan

NAME AND YEAR OF BIRTH	CASE	ARTICLES OF CRIMINAL CODE AND PLACE OF IMPRISONMENT	SENTENCE
Radik Mudarisovich Ahmedov, 1976	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on February 6, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa.
Fanis Faritovich Ahmetshin, 1962	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on February 6, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa.
Lenar Munirovich Vahitov, 1983	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on February 6, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa.
Rustem Ravilevich Gallyamov, 1981	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on February 6, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa.
Rishat Razitovich Gataullin, 1972	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on February 6, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa.
Ilgiz Failovich Gimaletdinov, 1988	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on February 6, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa.
Azamat Kayumov, 1985	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on February 6, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa.

NAME AND YEAR OF BIRTH	CASE	ARTICLES OF CRIMINAL CODE AND PLACE OF IMPRISONMENT	SENTENCE
Alexander Valeryevich Kornev, 1987	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on February 6, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa.
Rustem Maratovich Latypov, 1976	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5, part 2	Arrested on February 6, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa.
Radmir Yusifovich Maksyutov, 1984	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on February 6, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa.
Rinat Mazitovich Mamaev, 1971	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on February 6, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa.
Farid Ramazanovich Mustafaev, 1987	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on February 6, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa.
Rinat Ranifovich Nurlygayanov, 1991	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on February 6, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa.
Artur Raulevich Salimov, 1986	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on February 6, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa.
Irik Rishatovich Tagirov, 1989	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on February 6, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa.
Danis Miratovich Fayzrahmanov, 1987	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on February 6, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa.
Rafael Raulevich Fattahov, 1980	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on February 6, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa.
Ruslan Vakilevich Fattahov, 1980	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on February 6, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa.
Rustem Valeryevich Hamzin, 1977	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on February 6, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa.
Shamil Hazhgalievich Sharipov, 1976	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on February 6, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa.
Ural Gayfullovich Yakupov, 1991	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on February 6, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa.

The Second Case of "Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami" in Bashkorsostan

NAME AND YEAR OF BIRTH	CASE	ARTICLES OF CRIMINAL CODE AND PLACE OF IMPRISONMENT	SENTENCE
Vilyur Bulatovich Baysuakov, 1983	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on April 16, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa.
Rustam Zaynullin, 1984	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on February 6, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa.
Almaz Agzhamovich Karimov, 1985	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on February 6, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa.
Ayrat Rinatovich Mustaev, 1988	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on February 6, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa.
Ruslan Ramilevich Ryskulov, 1977	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.5	Arrested on February 6, 2015. Held in pre-trial detention in Ufa.

The Case of Members of the Banned Islamic Organization “Nurdzhular” (readers of Said Nursi) in Ulyanovsk

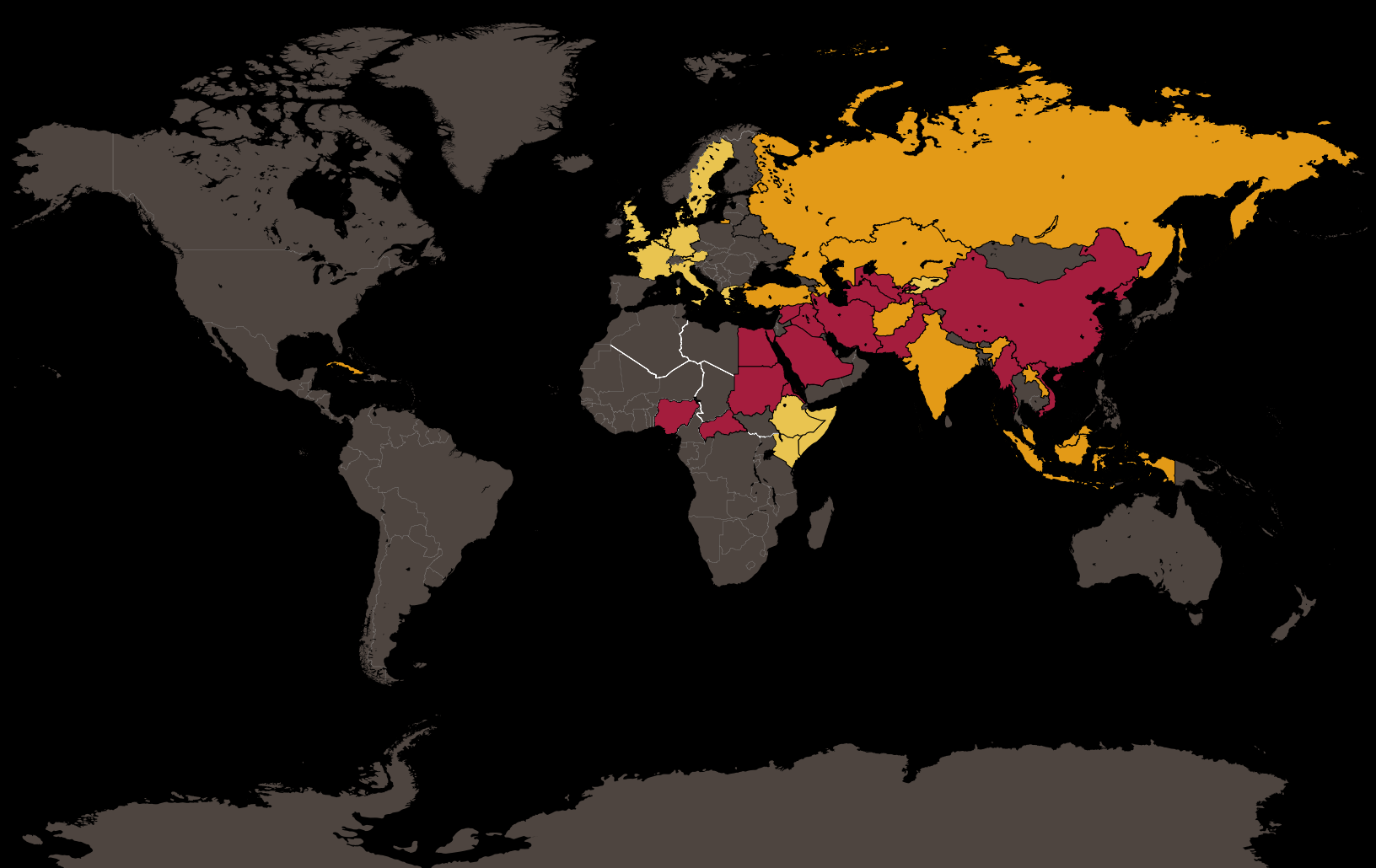
NAME AND YEAR OF BIRTH	CASE	ARTICLES OF CRIMINAL CODE AND PLACE OF IMPRISONMENT	SENTENCE
Bagir Kazikhanov	Membership in Nur Movement	282.2, part 1	On February 26, 2015, was sentenced to 3.5 years imprisonment in a corrective penal colony of ordinary regimen. Held in pre-trial detention in Kirov region.
Alexander Melentyev	Membership in Nur Movement	282.2, part 1	On February 26, 2015, was sentenced to 1 year and 8 months imprisonment conditionally. Held in pre-trial detention in Kirov region.
Stepan Kudryashov	Membership in Nur Movement	282.2, part 1	On February 26, 2015, was sentenced to 2 years imprisonment conditionally. Held in pre-trial detention in Kirov region.

The Case of a Wedding Procession with Islamic Flags in Dagestan.

NAME AND YEAR OF BIRTH	CASE	ARTICLES OF CRIMINAL CODE AND PLACE OF IMPRISONMENT	SENTENCE
Murad Abdulmuminov, 1984	Participation in a wedding procession carrying religious flags	318, part 1	On February 18, 2014, was sentenced to 3 years detention in a correctional colony-settlement.
Magomed Kartashov, 1981	Participation in a wedding procession carrying religious flags	318, part 1	On February 18, 2014, was sentenced to 3 years detention in a correctional colony-settlement.
Mikat Mikatov, 1968	Participation in a wedding procession carrying religious flags	318, part 1	On February 18, 2014, was sentenced to 3 years detention in a correctional colony-settlement.
Shapi Suleymanov, 1982	Participation in a wedding procession carrying religious flags	318, part 1	On February 18, 2014, was sentenced to 3 years detention in a correctional colony-settlement.

Other Cases

NAME AND YEAR OF BIRTH	CASE	ARTICLES OF CRIMINAL CODE AND PLACE OF IMPRISONMENT	SENTENCE
Fanzil Ahmetshin	Religious activities, Islamic charity	282, part 1, 228, part 1, 229.1, part 1	On March 28, 2013, was sentenced to 4.5 years detention in a corrective penal colony of ordinary regimen.
Kurman-Ali Baychorov	Religious activities, construction of a mosque	228, part 2	On January 12, 2015, was sentenced to 3.5 years detention in a penal colony of strict regimen and a fine of 50 thousand rubles.
Ruslan Gazizov, 1988	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205.2, part 1 and 282.2, part 2	On April 27, 2015, was sentenced to 2 years detention conditionally with 2 years probation.
Shamil Garaev	Internet publication of the book "Falun Dafa"	282, part 1	The case passed to a court on 9 June 2015.
Rasul Kudaev, 1978	Accused of involvement in the revolt in Nalchik in October 2005. Despite having an alibi, held in a pre-trial detention for more than 9 years; was tortured during the investigation.	105, part 2, 166, part 4, 205, part 3, 209, part 2, 210, part 2, 222, part 3, 30, part 3, 226, part 4, 279 and 317	Former Guantanamo detainee. On December 23, 2014, was sentenced to life imprisonment. Currently held in pre-trial detention awaiting the decision of the court of appeal.
Timur Malsagov, 1970	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	282.2, part 1, 278 (article 30)	Arrested on November 7, 2012. Held in pre-trial detention, the case is considered by the Moscow City Court. Citizen of Uzbekistan.
Rustam Sinakaev	Muslim religious activities	205.5, part 2 and 282.2, part 2	On July 24, 2015, was sentenced to 5 years detention in a corrective penal colony of ordinary regimen. Currently held in pre-trial detention in Chelyabinsk awaiting a decision of the court of appeal.
Abdurahim Toshmatov, 1988	Membership in Hizb ut-Tahrir	205, part 2 and 30 (attempt)	On April 3, 2014, was sentenced to 17 years detention in a penal colony of strict regimen. Held in a pre-trial detention awaiting a decision of the court of appeal. Citizen of Tajikistan.
Fanis Aglyamovich Shaykhtudinov, 1965	Accused of organizing the explosion of the gas pipeline in Bugulma, which apparently was an accident; was tortured in the course of the investigation; acquitted by court during the first review of the case.	205 and 222	Arrested on March 6, 2006, sentenced to 10 years and 6 months imprisonment in a penal colony of strict regimen (decision of the court of May 12, 2006).



■ **TIER 1 COUNTRIES OF PARTICULAR CONCERN**

Burma, Central African Republic, China, Egypt, Eritrea, Iraq, Iran, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Vietnam

■ **TIER 2 COUNTRIES**

Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Cuba, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Laos, Malaysia, Russia, Turkey

■ **CLOSELY MONITORED COUNTRIES/REGIONS**

Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Horn of Africa, Kyrgyzstan, Western Europe



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