

Noteworthy

The noteworthy items are structured in three groups: annual reports and global surveys, regional and country reports, and specific issues. Though we apply serious criteria in the selection of items noted, it is beyond our capacity to scrutinize the accuracy of every statement made. We therefore disclaim responsibility for the contents of the items noted. The compilation was produced by Executive Editor Janet Epp Buckingham.

ANNUAL REPORTS AND GLOBAL SURVEYS

Reports of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief United Nations General Assembly and Human Rights Council

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/freedomreligion/pages/annual.aspx>

The Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Ahmed Shaheed, issued two reports in 2021. The first was to the Human Rights Council and is titled “Countering Islamophobia/anti-Muslim hatred to eliminate discrimination and intolerance based on religion or belief.” The second was to the UN General Assembly and focused on freedom of thought.

United Nations Universal Periodic Review

United Nations Human Rights Council, January–November 2021

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/CyclesUPR.aspx>

The 37th, 38th and 39th sessions of the Universal Periodic Review for Human Rights took place during 2021, reviewing the human rights situation in 42 countries.

2020 Report on international religious freedom

US Department of State, Office of International Religious Freedom, 12 May 2021

<https://bit.ly/3Lr2H96>

The US Department of State draws from NGOs, religious groups, media, academic reports and other sources of information to compile an overview report on international religious freedom.

2021 Annual Report

United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, April 2021

<https://bit.ly/3K3x2Kg>

This report documents the violations and progress in religious freedom violations and designates 14 Countries of Particular Concern and 12 countries for the State Department’s Special Watch List.

Globally, social hostilities related to religion decline in 2019, while government restrictions remain at highest levels

Pew Forum, 30 September 2021

<https://pewrsr.ch/3Hsj6HD>

This annual report on global religious freedom documents violations from 2019.

Freedom in the world 2021: Democracy under siege

Freedom House, November 2021

<https://bit.ly/36Yr27a>

The aim of Freedom House is to provide a comprehensive annual report assessing the state of political rights and civil liberties around the world.

World Report

Human Rights Watch, 2021

<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021>

Human Rights Watch, whose aim is to defend the rights of all people, publishes an annual report examining and investigating the abuses of human rights and justice across 90 different countries. The 2021 annual report examines the major events relating to human rights that occurred in 2020.

World Watch List 2021 compilation

Open Doors International/World Watch Research, January 2021

<https://bit.ly/3pTOppd> (password: freedom)

This is a compilation of the main documents published by World Watch Research, excluding country dossiers. These reports include the ranking of countries with regard to the persecution of Christians worldwide, press releases, and statements regarding trends in religious persecution.

REGIONAL AND COUNTRY REPORTS

Afghanistan: what does the Taliban takeover mean for other jihadists?

Open Doors / World Watch Research, August 2021

<https://bit.ly/35JjBQy>

This report examines the Taliban takeover and what lessons are to be learned for other such conflicts, such as those in Africa.

Balkans: Strengthening the protection of freedom of religion or belief in Western Balkans: A roadmap for Parliamentarians

IPPFoRB, 2021

<https://westernbalkansreport.ippforb.com/>

This is a report by Dr. Mine Yildirim, commissioned by IPPFoRB.

China bans faith for all children**Jubilee Campaign, March 2021**<https://bit.ly/3hlztLQ>

This report examines the impact on children of being denied the right to participate in a faith community and how this action violates the International Covenant on the Rights of the Child.

Cuba: Freedom of religion or belief in Cuba**Christian Solidarity Worldwide, 12 January 2021**<https://www.csw.org.uk/2021/01/12/report/4940/article.htm>

This report documents 203 reports of religious freedom violations in Cuba in 2020 and the impact of COVID-19 on freedom of religion.

France: The Persecution of Ex-Muslim Christians in France**European Centre for Law and Justice, 30 March 2021**<https://bit.ly/38BDz12>

This report highlights the fact that an overwhelming majority of people leaving Islam to join Christianity undergo family and community persecutions.

India: Persecution of Christians in the curfew of Covid (2020 Report)**Evangelical Fellowship of India, 14 January 2021**<https://bit.ly/36LbXFN>

This report documents targeted violence and other forms of persecution against Christians in India. “Political excoriation, police impunity, and vigilante groups on their trail marked the experience of many Christian communities in several parts of the country at the height of the COVID-19 spread.”

Iran: The reality for Christians**Open Doors International/World Watch Research, May 2021**<https://bit.ly/3hA0M5a>

This report examines the difficult situation for Believers from a Muslim in Iran, where Christianity is seen as a condemnable Western influence and a threat to Islam.

Latin America: Bi-annual report January-June 2021**Observatory of Religious Freedom in Latin America, August 2021**<https://bit.ly/3tGpshR>

This report documents violent incidents on the basis of religion in the Latin American region. While churches have been instrumental in humanitarian assistance in response to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, corruption and economic conditions have created challenging conditions for religious minorities.

Latin America: Bi-annual report July-December 2021**Observatory of Religious Freedom in Latin America, February 2022**<https://bit.ly/3Mva3tz>

This report documents violent incidents on the basis of religion in the Latin American region. The lingering effects of COVID-19 have resulted in lack of trust in public institutions and poor economic recovery.

Nigeria: Security in Nigeria: violence by non-state actors**Christian Solidarity Worldwide, 22 September 2021**<https://www.csw.org.uk/2021/09/22/report/5416/article.htm>

This report is a briefing on attacks by diverse armed gangs, primarily Fulani, on farming communities.

Sri Lanka: Prejudice and patronage**National Christian Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka, 2021**<https://bit.ly/3InARJN>

An analysis of incidents of violence against Hindus, Muslims, and Christians in Sri Lanka (Sept. 2019 to Sept. 2020).

SPECIFIC ISSUES**The intersection of blasphemy law & institutional religious freedom:****Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan, and Turkey****FORIS Policy Report, May 2021**<https://bit.ly/3vkDSqw>

This policy paper examines how the blasphemy laws in more than half of the world's 49 Muslim-majority countries limit institutional religious freedom.

Children and youth specific persecution 2021: Preliminary findings from 50 countries**Open Doors International/World Watch Research, 1 September 2021**<https://bit.ly/3KsyVAd>

This is the first report from World Watch Research examining persecution aimed specifically at children and youth.

Freedom of religion or belief for everyone: Women in focus**Stefanus Alliance International, 8 March 2021**<https://bit.ly/3r6jne3>

A training booklet for Christians about FORB for everyone – with women in focus. An introduction about how women are targeted differently than men when FORB is violated – and synergies about women's rights and FORB.

Gender-specific religious persecution: Same faith, different persecution
Open Doors International/World Watch Research, 1 March 2021

<https://bit.ly/3hgrvU4>

This third annual WWL report examines global trends regarding gender-specific religious persecution.

Institutional religious liberty: Western societies need proactive policies to protect institutional religious freedom

FORIS Policy Reports, September 2021

<https://bit.ly/3Iq2Qsf>

This report recommends that governments adopt policies to respect and promote the existence in society of a plurality of organizations acting in accordance with their fundamental convictions.

Institutional religious liberty: Institutional religious freedom and the common good: Significance, challenges, and policy implications

FORIS Working Group Report, September 2021

<https://bit.ly/3HmwX2g>

This report argues that religious institutions have significant and important roles in society and suggests ways in which those roles can be protected and enhanced.

Institutional religious liberty: Why people need religious institutions and why religious institutions need freedom

FORIS Report, October 2021

<https://bit.ly/3K100ub>

This report explores the grounds on which religious institutions merit robust freedom in their doctrines, internal organization, and presence in society.

Killing in the name of God: State-sanctioned violations of religious freedom
Monash University Report, October 2021

<https://bit.ly/3pi4uEJ>

Focusing on the 12 nations in which offences against religion are lawfully punishable by death, the report examines four different types of state-sanctioned killings on the basis of religious offence (apostasy, blasphemy, or the like) or affiliation (most commonly, membership in a religious minority): judicial executions, extra-judicial killings, killings by civilians, and killings by extremist groups.