

Noteworthy

The noteworthy items are structured in four groups: dates, annual reports and global surveys, regional and country reports (sorted alphabetically), and specific issues. Though we apply serious criteria in the selection of items noted, it is beyond our capacity to scrutinise the accuracy of every statement made. We therefore disclaim responsibility for the contents of the items noted. The compilation was produced by Arie de Pater of Open Doors Intl. and Prof. Dr. Christof Sauer. The position of editor for the noteworthy section is vacant. See advertisement on page 10 in this issue. Submissions welcome to: Noteworthy@iirf.eu.

Conferences

International Consultation on Religious Freedom Research

Istanbul, Turkey, 16-18 March 2013. Organizers: International Institute for Religious Freedom; Research Group for Human Geography, University of Tübingen, Germany, and others. Intended participants: All who do scholarly research on any topic related to religious freedom, persecution, suffering for faith, martyrdom etc. The intention of the consultation is to strengthen the network of religious freedom/persecution scholar or researchers and to thereby create synergy. Everybody who comes can present on relevant research. See detailed advertisement in this issue of IJRF. Contact: Christof@iirf.eu.

South Africa: Council for the protection and promotion of religious rights and freedoms.

Annual meeting, Pretoria, 19 September 2012. Speakers: Prof. Mark Hill, University of Cardiff, Wales; Judge Bertelsmann. Contact: Prof. Pieter Coertzen, pc@sun.ac.za.

Washington DC, USA: Which model, whose liberty?: Differences between the U.S. and European approaches to religious freedom

11 October 2012. Religious Freedom Project (Berkley Center) and the International Center for Law and Religion Studies at Brigham Young University's School of Law. <http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/rfp/events/list>.

Annual reports and global surveys

2011 International Religious Freedom Report

US Department of State, 30 July 2012, www.humanrights.gov. The innovations are: search functions and comparison across regions and themes improved, streamlined format which spotlights illustrative examples rather than cataloging all abuses

of religious freedom, for the first time covering the calendar year. – Related texts: Briefing on the Release by Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Suzan Johnson Cook, Release by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

UN: Annual report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief (A/HRC/19/60)

Prof Dr Heiner Bielefeldt, Geneva, December 2011, 20 p., <http://tinyurl.com/Bielefeldt-registration>.

EU: Human rights and democracy in the world 2012 – Report on EU action in 2011

EEAS, Brussels, June 2012, 322 p., <http://tinyurl.com/EU-hraction-2011>. The European External Action Service in June published its Report on EU action in 2011, covering bilateral and multilateral actions to promote human rights, and thematic issues such as freedom of thought conscience and religion or belief (3.13).

EU: European Union's Strategy on Human Rights

European Council, Brussels, 25 June 2012, 24 p., <http://tinyurl.com/EUactionplan>. On 25 June 2012 the European Union adopted the Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy to advance the protection and promotion of human rights in EU foreign policy, placing human rights at the heart of EU external policy. The Action Plan includes a mandate for appointing an EU Special Representative for Human Rights in the near future, and contains a commitment to develop guidelines on freedom of religion or belief.

UK: Human Rights and Democracy – The Foreign & Commonwealth Office report on 2011

UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, April 2012, 392 p., <http://tinyurl.com/UK-FCOreport2011>. The United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Office report of April 2012 contains a section on freedom of religion or belief under the Arab Spring section and under human rights priorities. In addition, each country in the top countries of concern contains a paragraph on freedom of religion or belief.

Female Genital Cutting: Cultural, religious, and human rights dimensions of a complex development issue

Anny Gaul, Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs, March 2012, 36 p., <http://tinyurl.com/Berkley-FGC>. According to the author, female genital cutting pits international (and often national) human rights standards against rights to cultural

identity, centralized and intellectual versus local and practical religious teachings and practice, and changing expectations about gender roles against realities of gender relationships as they are experienced at the family and community level. This is the pilot in a series of case studies intended to highlight the complex dimensions of specific global development issues. It is designed as a teaching tool for use in the classroom as a four-hour workshop.

Fundamental rights: challenges and achievements in 2011

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Luxembourg 2012, 272 p., <http://tinyurl.com/FRA-annual-report-2011>. The FRA annual report identifies achievements and challenges in the 27 EU member states and Croatia in 2011. The report identifies 'key developments', 'promising practices' and details on 'FRA activities'. Section 5.7 discusses discrimination on grounds of religion or belief.

Regional and country reports

China: The Chen Guangcheng Report – Coercive family planning in Linyi 2005

Women's Rights Without Frontiers, 2011, 36 p. <http://preview.tinyurl.com/chenreport>. WRWF has obtained a report from Chen Guangcheng's 2005 investigation into coercive family planning in Linyi County, Shandong Province. This report was drafted by celebrated human rights attorney, Teng Biao, and contains fourteen 'Notes'. Chen's investigation exposed the fact that there were 130,000 forced abortions and sterilizations in Linyi in 2005. He was jailed for four years, put under house arrest, tortured and denied medical treatment. WRWF released this report to mark Chen's 40th birthday, November 12, 2011. In the meantime Chen has been able to leave China for the US.

Egypt: Disappearance of Coptic Christian women

CSI, 18 July 2012, 32 p., www.csi-usa.org/TellMyMotherIMissHer.pdf. "Tell my mother I miss her" – The disappearance, forced conversions and forced marriages of Coptic Christian women in Egypt (II), by Michele Clark and Nadia Ghaly. – This report substantiates and confirms an earlier report from November 2009 by verifiable cases. Key findings: The numbers of disappearances and abductions are increasing. Fewer girls are returning to their families. Social media is increasingly used to communicate a victim's status. Minors and mothers of young children are increasingly targeted. Abductions continue to be organized and planned. Captors target women and girls when they are unprotected and vulnerable. Captors sever ties between victims and their families. Captors make use of measures involving force, fraud and coercion.

Eritrea: UNHRC creates new country mandate (special rapporteur)

A/HRC/20/L.19/Rev.1, Geneva, 6 July 2012, 3 p., <http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/alldocs.aspx>. The resolution, presented by Somalia, Djibouti and, Nigeria was adopted by consensus in Geneva. The Human Rights Council strongly condemns (...) The severe restrictions on freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of information, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and freedom of peaceful assembly and association, including the detention of journalists, human rights defenders, political actors, religious leaders and practitioners in Eritrea; (para 1.b) ... Calls upon the Government of Eritrea, without delay: (...) To respect everyone's right to freedom of expression and freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief, and freedom of peaceful assembly and association; (para 2.f). – This is the first time that African states have initiated the appointment of a special rapporteur on the human rights situation in another African country without the consent of the state concerned. Only Russia, China and Cuba disassociated themselves from the Council's consensus position, but did not call for a vote.

Iran: Religious freedom in Iran

Open Doors, Whitney, May 2012, 11 p., <http://tinyurl.com/Iran-RFbriefing>. The report describes the position of the recognized Christians and Christian converts. It further presents recent developments worsening the position of all Christians in Iran, including a list of incidents.

Middle East & North Africa: Hearing of the Human Rights Commission of the German Bundestag

<http://tinyurl.com/GermanBT2012>. Source: www.bundestag.de. For this hearing on 9 May 2012 on „Christians and other minorities in the Middle East and North Africa“ five experts (among them IIRF Academic Board member Prof. Dr. Christine Schirmacher) presented extensive written documentation in German. More than two hours of videos of their abbreviated presentations and the debate are also online. <http://tinyurl.com/GermanBT2012TV>.

USA: Statement on religious liberty

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty: Our First, Most Cherished Liberty – A Statement on Religious Liberty, 12 April 2012, 13 p., <http://tinyurl.com/US-Bishops>. The committee provides evidence why they see religious liberty in the US under attack, assert that religious liberty is more than freedom of worship, present their Christian teaching on the topic and call Catholics for joint action.

Reports, journals, projects, articles

EEA: Christian Engagement in the Public Arena – A Code of Conduct

Brussels, June 2011. http://www.europeanea.org/documents/EEA_Code_of_Conduct_EN.pdf. This code summarises the points in the European Evangelical Alliance's new socio-political approach. The longer document gives a biblical rationale for how EEA believes Christians should conduct themselves in the public arena. The Approach & Code were formally approved by EEA in June 2011. Available in several languages.

CEC Human Rights Training Manual for European Churches

Conference of European Churches, Brussels, 2012. <http://tinyurl.com/CECtraining>. The Civil Society Commission of the Conference of European Churches, published a Human Rights Training Manual for European Churches. The manual contains a human rights reader as well as material for training workshops and seminars.

Dutch Reformed Theological Journal. 2012 Supplement: Law and Religion in South Africa

Edited by Pieter Coertzen. Papers of the first annual conference on Law and Religion in South Africa, held in Stellenbosch, 19-23 September 2011. Online for subscribing libraries via Sabinet: http://journals.sabinet.co.za/ej/ejour_ngtt.html. For hard copies contact: P Coertzen, pc@sun.ac.za.

The Edict of Milan (313-2013): A basis for freedom of religion or belief?

Conference of European Churches, Serbia, May 2012, 2 p., <http://tinyurl.com/Milanedict>. Conclusions of a conference discussing different aspects in which the Edict of Milan could be the source of inspiration and the guideline for practical implementation of freedom of religion or belief. The text is meant to serve as a basis for future cooperation in promoting freedom of religion or belief.

IIRF Reports

www.iirf.eu/index.php?id=401

The International Institute for Religious Freedom started two new periodical publications in January 2012. *IIRF Reports* is a monthly journal with special reports, research projects, reprints and documentation in English. Each issue contains one item only. The *IIRF Bulletin* is a similar journal with different contributions in German. Suggestion of manuscripts welcome.

1. Th. Schirrmacher, The Situation of Christians and Muslims according to the Pew Forum's "Global Restrictions on Religion"
2. Tehmina Arora, India's Defiance of Religious Freedom: A Briefing on 'Anti-Conversion' Laws
3. World Evangelical Alliance, Universal Periodic Review Republic of India: 13th session of the UPR Working Group
4. World Evangelical Alliance, Universal Periodic Review of Sri Lanka: 14th session of the UPR Working Group
5. Draško Djenovic with contributions by Dr. Branko Bjelajac, Serbia: Report on Religious Freedom Issues: November 2008 - December 2011

Leadership

Hyun Sook Foley: From one "Great Leader" to many leaders who are truly great: Leadership training for North Korean defectors. *Journal of Strategic Leadership* (Regent University) Vol. 3,2:23-30. Online: <http://tinyurl.com/Foley2012>.

Opinion of the Advocate General of the Court of Justice of the European Union – Joined Cases C 71/11 and C 99/11: Understanding Freedom of Religion

Advocate General Bot, 19 April 2012, <http://tinyurl.com/opinion-adv-gnrl>. Opinion on two joined cases before the European Court of Justice relating to religious freedom within the context of asylum law, providing a more broad definition of the right to outwardly manifest faith as have courts in recent years.

www.vomclassroom.com (Open Classroom)

This is the site for online workshops sponsored by Voice of the Martyrs, Inc. USA. These courses will guide you through persecution studies, an innovative way to become informed and involved in ministry to the persecuted church. Contact: Roy Stults, PhD, VOM online classroom administrator, rstults@vom-usa.org

1. Introduction to Persecution Studies
2. Introduction to the History of Persecution
3. Steadfast under Fire: Preparing for Persecution
4. Biblical Studies in Persecution and Suffering: Old Testament
5. Biblical Studies in Persecution and Suffering: New Testament
6. Intercessory Prayer for the Persecuted Church
7. Theology of Persecution and Suffering
8. God's Mission to the World: The Occasion for Persecution – Part 1 Theology of Mission
9. God's Mission to the World: The Occasion for Persecution – Part 2 Mission to the Western World