

Noteworthy

The noteworthy items are structured in five groups: annual reports and global surveys, regional and country reports, specific issues, films, and courses. 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 Janet Epp Buckingham.

Annual Reports and Global Surveys

Government Restrictions on Religion Stayed at Peak Levels Globally in 2022

Pew Research Center, 18 December 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/yw7u22nv>

This annual report assesses the level of religious persecution in 2022 and also includes a five-year look at the relationship between religion-related government restrictions and social hostilities in each country.

Global Persecution Index 2025

International Christian Concern, 3 January 2025

<https://www.persecution.org/gpi/>

ICC's 2025 Global Persecution Index offers an in-depth analysis of drivers of persecution in 20 countries, along with stories of Christians enduring persecution for their faith in Christ.

GCR Red List 2025

Global Christian Relief, 9 January 2025

<https://globalchristianrelief.org/red-list-prayer-guide/>

The report focuses on nations that have committed the most killings, building attacks, arrests, displacements, and abductions and assaults during the reporting period of November 2022 to November 2024. It also includes policy recommendations from their advocacy team.

World Watch List 2025

Open Doors International / World Watch Research, 15 January 2025

<https://tinyurl.com/en4wv4pj>

This report is Open Doors' annual ranking of the 50 countries where Christians face the most extreme persecution. The top three countries are North Korea, Somalia and Yemen.

2025 Annual Report

USCIRF, 25 March 2025

<https://tinyurl.com/syutzbzh>

This annual report documents developments during 2024. It recommends that 16 countries be designated Countries of Particular Concern and that 12 more be put on the State Department's Special Watch List. The report urges the US government to make FoRB a priority issue.

Regional and Country Reports

Afghanistan: General Briefing

Christian Solidarity Worldwide, 25 November 2024

This report covers the legal framework for religious freedom in Afghanistan and the deteriorating situation for human rights under the Taliban, particularly restrictions on women.

Algeria: Country Update

USCIRF, 8 October 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/yz2vzdk8>

This report provides an overview of the current religious freedom conditions in Algeria. It addresses the legal framework the government utilizes in violating religious freedom and belief in the country. These frameworks include blasphemy laws and legal restrictions on the activities of religious communities, including Ahmadiyya Muslims and evangelical Christians.

China: Sinicization of Religion: China's Coercive Religious Policy

USCIRF, 23 September 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/42cxbs9x>

This report provides an overview of the Chinese government's Sinicization policy and its application to repress religious groups in the country.

China: General Briefing

Christian Solidarity Worldwide, 17 December 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/69vt4cv7>

This general briefing focuses on the legal framework of religion in China and the impact of the Sinicization policy. It addresses the repression of house churches in China. In addition, it addresses the persecution of the historic Uyghur Muslim community.

Cuba: Religious freedom conditions in Cuba

USCIRF, 6 September 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/y74wam7v>

This country update summarizes Cuba's repressive legal framework, documents the government's ongoing harassment of worshipers, and provides an update on religious prisoners of conscience.

Cuba: General Briefing

Christian Solidarity Worldwide, 25 November 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/3zhwbxwu>

This report explains how the Cuban government continues to routinely and systematically violate freedom of religion or belief. Religious leaders are regularly visited by government officials and pressured to support government policies.

Europe: Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe Report 2024

Observatory on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians in Europe, November 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/muju5vh3>

This report provides data on anti-Christian hate crimes in the countries of Europe during 2023. It also provides examples and analysis of discrimination against Christians in the workplace, at universities, and in various areas of life, as well as restrictions on the religious freedom of Christians in Europe in 2023 and 2024.

India: Country Update

USCIRF, 2 October 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/3a3v23st>

This report provides an overview of the worsening situation for religious freedom in India during 2024. It also examines the increasing frequency of attacks against religious minorities and their advocates, including the targeting of places of worship.

India: General Briefing

Christian Solidarity Worldwide, 25 November 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/e8kdvx7>

This report covers the legal framework for religious freedom, the Hindu nationalist agenda, communal violence, and the targeting of religious minorities.

**India: Hate and targeted violence against Christians in India:
Yearly report 2024**

Religious Liberty Commission of Evangelical Fellowship of India, 10 March 2025
<https://tinyurl.com/3usxkxspk>

This annual report details 840 verified incidents of violence and targeted persecution against Christians in India, which is an increase from 601 in 2023. It identifies hotspot areas and patterns of persecution.

Iran: General Briefing

Christian Solidarity Worldwide, 25 November 2024
<https://tinyurl.com/jtsf99vh>

This report describes the legal framework for religion in Iran and the impact of recent political events on the treatment of religion. It also identifies violations of the rights of Christians and other religious minorities.

**Iran: The Tip of the Iceberg: Documented rights violations against
Christians in Iran**

Article 18, Open Doors, MEC, CSW, January 2025
<https://articleeighteen.com/reports/15541/>

This annual report documents criminal cases against 96 Christians in 2024. It contains an analysis of over three million case files of the Tehran judiciary between 2008 and 2023 that were leaked.

Iraq: Religious Freedom Challenges in Iraq 10 Years after ISIS's Genocide

USCIRF, 30 September 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/ycxxws7a>

This report provides an overview of ISIS's genocide and other crimes against Iraq's religious minorities beginning in 2014. It also highlights ongoing religious freedom challenges facing these communities 10 years later.

Mexico: General Briefing

Christian Solidarity Worldwide, 25 November 2024
<https://tinyurl.com/yzydmd67>

This report examines the legal status of religion in Mexico, identifies issues of forced displacement, and addresses the challenge of organized crime to freedom of religion.

Myanmar: General Briefing

Christian Solidarity Worldwide, 25 November 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/4ck3hzsj>

This report identifies the challenges that the ongoing civil war has had on religious minorities, including the Rohingya Muslims and Christians.

Myanmar: Country Update

USCIRF, 31 October 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/kvvn9xeb>

This report argues that the escalating conflict in Burma (Myanmar) continues to negatively affect conditions for freedom of religion or belief.

Nicaragua: General Briefing

Christian Solidarity Worldwide, 25 November 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/374hh498>

The report covers the legal framework for religious freedom, forced closure of civil society organizations, prohibitions on religious activities, and forced exile of religious leaders.

Nicaragua: The Persecution of Christians in Nicaragua 2018-2024

European Centre for Law and Justice, 7 January 2025

<https://tinyurl.com/crnaa265>

This report documents the systemic campaign of repression against Christians under President Daniel Ortega since 2018. More than 870 attacks against the Catholic Church have been recorded, while evangelical churches, initially spared, are now also targeted.

North Korea: We cannot look away

Christian Solidarity Worldwide, 11 September 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/56thnaw8>

This report looks at freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) inside the country and considers internal and external changes that have impacted human rights, including FoRB, in the DPRK over the past decade.

Pakistan: General Briefing

Christian Solidarity Worldwide, 25 November 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/mrytsutm>

This report focuses on the legal framework for religious freedom, the challenge of blasphemy laws, and the violence against religious minorities. It also addresses abduction, forced conversion and marriage of minority girls.

Pakistan: A Merciless Cycle: Abduction, forced faith conversion, and child marriage of religious minority girls in Pakistan & implications for United States Policy

Jubilee Campaign, October 2024

<https://jubileecampaign.org/a-merciless-cycle/>

This written testimony to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom focuses on cases of abductions, coerced faith conversions, and child marriages of Hindu and Christian girls in Pakistan, which receive minimal investigation or prosecution.

Spain: Annual Report on the Situation of Religious Freedom in Spain in Relation to Evangelical Churches 2023-2024

FEREDE, 20 December 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/yr5yvdx>

In this annual report, FEREDE describes a series of difficulties that Evangelicals face in their daily lives, mainly due to the low value placed by public administrations on religious diversity in the country and situations of discrimination in the treatment of non-Catholic groups.

Sri Lanka: Trend Analysis of Violence Against Christians in Sri Lanka: November 2022-October 2023

National Christian Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka, October 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/3943jcvv>

This study examines key trends in religiously motivated violence against Christians between November 2022 and October 2023, based on data collated by the National Christian Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka. A total of 63 incidents of violence against Christians are analyzed.

Sri Lanka: A Brief Examination of Contested Religious Sites in Sri Lanka

Minor Matters, 9 December 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/3y4t58fy>

This report explores land conflicts and contestations related to places of religious worship, highlighting their underlying causes and implications. It also identifies key trends, broad issues, and case studies across nine districts, while examining relevant laws, structures, and the critical players involved in these matters.

Sri Lanka: Harmful Content Against Religious Minorities on Social Media November 2022 - August 2024

National Christian Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/mrx7bv xv>

This report highlights the relationship between harmful speech and violations of freedom of religion or belief. It documents harmful expression against religious minorities in Sri Lanka.

Sudan: General Briefing

Christian Solidarity Worldwide, 25 November 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/y4rsu6js>

This report addresses the impact the conflict between the combatants in the civil war and the impact on religious minorities.

Türkiye: A Human Rights Perspective on the Multi-faceted Right (Not) to Believe in Türkiye

Norwegian Helsinki Committee, February 2025

<https://tinyurl.com/2jnjvjjm>

This report offers a comprehensive examination on the current situation of the freedoms to believe, not to believe, or to believe in “non-mainstream doctrines” in Türkiye. It also identifies areas of non-compliance with international human rights standards and provides recommendations to authorities for safeguarding everyone’s freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief.

Venezuela: General Briefing

Christian Solidarity Worldwide, 25 November 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/yc6v567n>

This report addresses how religious communities has been impacted by the authoritarian regime and how they have responded.

Vietnam: General Briefing

Christian Solidarity Worldwide, 25 November 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/49j88trn>

This report outlines the legal framework for freedom of religion in Vietnam. It identifies the repression of minority groups that have high populations of Christians, including the Montagnards, the Khmer Krom, and the Hmong.

Specific Issues

Employment: The Right to Freedom of Thought, Conscience, Religion or Belief of Women at Work

OSCE, 20 November 2024

<https://www.osce.org/odihr/579388>

This booklet offers OSCE participant states, businesspeople, unions, civil society organizations and religious or belief groups practical recommendations to ensure respect for and protection of women's right to FoRB in employment.

Extremism laws: Issue update: The abuse of extremism in Central Asia

USCIRF, 31 December 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/ym95v5xe>

This report argues that Central Asian governments' legislation, including extremism laws, has been influenced by decades of Soviet rule of the region. When the Central Asian governments of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan enforce extremism laws, they regularly go beyond using the legislation to address legitimate security threats and penalize individuals engaged in peaceful religious activities.

Gender: Regional challenges in the intersection of Freedom of Religion or Belief and Gender Equality: West Asia (Middle East) & North Africa

Stefanus Alliance, 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/4km7ee33>

This report presents key regional issues and opportunities in the intersection of FoRB and gender equality in the WANA region.

Hate Crime Prosecution at the Intersection of Hate Crime and Criminalized 'Hate Speech': a Practical Guide

OSCE, 15 November 2024

<https://www.osce.org/odihr/579391>

This guide supplements existing Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights guidance on prosecuting hate crimes by outlining the legal and conceptual differences between hate crime and criminalized 'hate speech'; outlining the consequences of misapplying 'hate speech' provisions to prosecute hate crimes, along with practical guidance on how to avoid this error; and making recommendations on how to improve practice at the national level.

Perpetrators: Who carries out attacks against religious communities and individuals? Insights from the VID (2022-2023)

International Institute for Religious Freedom, 12 October 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/2a4zybky>

This report uses data from the Violent Incidents Database to explore incidents that occurred in 2022-2023. It suggests that the most recurring known perpetrator category was “Organized crime” (28 percent), followed by “Government officials” (21 percent) and Ethnic group leaders” (15 percent). Fifteen percent of all incidents recorded in 2022-2023 were committed by “unknown” perpetrators.

Refugees: State of the Golden Door Report

World Relief and Open Doors USA, 14 October 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/nhzhzb4n>

This report details the current state of religious persecution around the world and its connection to US refugee resettlement and asylum policies. The report shows that while progress has been made in terms of refugee resettlement, the number of Christians who face high levels of persecution or discrimination on account of their faith has also risen to 365 million, or one in seven Christians worldwide.

Religious nationalism: Comparing Levels of Religious Nationalism Around the World

Pew Research Center, 28 January 2025

<https://tinyurl.com/3ae3bxdp>

Pew Research Center conducted this survey to examine the role of religion in public life in 36 countries across the Asia-Pacific region, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East-North Africa region, North America and sub-Saharan Africa. The countries have a variety of historically predominant religions, including Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism.

Sacred places: Actions against places of worship in 2022–2023 (VID)

International Institute for Religious Freedom, 12 October 2024

<https://tinyurl.com/p4f5xnh4>

This report documents that out of 4,338 incident records (rows) in the Violent Incidents Database (VID) in 2022-2023, 489 involved attempts to vandalize, desecrate or destroy places of worship.

Violent conflict: Faltering states and growing churches

International Institute for Religious Freedom, 7 January 2025

<https://tinyurl.com/rx3h5nfj>

This report argues that amidst the spiraling global violence, the church is suffering even more while seeking opportunities to offer assistance, relief, peace and hope.

Films

The 21

<https://www.the21film.com/>

This 13-minute animated film tells the story of the 21 Coptic Christians killed on a beach in Libya in 2015. The execution was filmed and the video was shown around the world. This film tells a different narrative; it tells the story of the faith of these martyrs. The film was on the shortlist for Academy Award consideration. It is now available for screening. See an interview with the Producer at IJRF 14(1/2):22.

A Faith Under Siege: Russia's Hidden War on Ukraine's Christians

<https://www.faithundersiege.com/>

This 60-minute documentary tells the story of Russia's targeting of Evangelical and Protestant Christians. Believers there have endured seized churches, tortured pastors, abducted children, and coerced renunciations as they struggle to keep their faith alive in secret.

Courses

Christian Theology and FoRB

The Swedish Mission Council (SMC), 29 January 2025

<https://tinyurl.com/2r8pm278>

SMC has released a new online course, "Christian Theology and FoRB," to help Christians understand why their faith commitment should call them to support freedom of religion or belief for all people. The course takes about five hours to complete and covers four themes: (1) free will and the image of God, (2) FoRB and love for our neighbours, (3) God's call to discipleship, and (4) mission and evangelism.

Book reviews

Publishers: Do you have a new book published? We have expert reviewers. Do you want to advertise your book? We have space in future issues.

Reviewers: Have you seen a recent book that you would like to review? The book review editor can get a review copy.

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