

FOR RELEASE SEPT. 30, 2021

Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels

Number of countries with terrorist activity related to religion declines for a fifth consecutive year

BY *Samirah Majumdar and Virginia Villa*

FOR MEDIA OR OTHER INQUIRIES:

Samirah Majumdar, Research Associate

Alan Cooperman, Director of Religion Research

Anna Schiller, Senior Communications Manager

Kelsey Beveridge, Communications Associate

202.419.4372

www.pewresearch.org

RECOMMENDED CITATION

Pew Research Center, Sept. 30, 2021, "Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels"

About Pew Research Center

Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. It does not take policy positions. The Center conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, content analysis and other data-driven social science research. It studies U.S. politics and policy; journalism and media; internet, science and technology; religion and public life; Hispanic trends; global attitudes and trends; and U.S. social and demographic trends. All of the Center's reports are available at www.pewresearch.org. Pew Research Center is a subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts, its primary funder.

This report was produced by Pew Research Center as part of the Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures project, which analyzes religious change and its impact on societies around the world. Funding for the Global Religious Futures project comes from The Pew Charitable Trusts and the John Templeton Foundation.

© Pew Research Center 2021

Acknowledgments

This report was produced by Pew Research Center as part of the Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures project, which analyzes religious change and its impact on societies around the world. Funding for the Global Religious Futures project comes from The Pew Charitable Trusts and the John Templeton Foundation.

This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals:

Primary Researcher

Samirah Majumdar, *Research Associate*

Research Team

Virginia Villa, *Research Analyst*

Alan Cooperman, *Director of Religion Research*

Anne Fengyan Shi, *Senior Researcher*

Coders

Andrea L. Tillotson, Dana Popky, Jennifer Jun, Ricki Wood and Zoe Shadan

Editorial and Graphic Design

Jeff Diamant, *Senior Writer/Editor*

Michael Lipka, *Editorial Manager*

David Kent, *Senior Copy Editor*

Rebecca Leppert, *Editorial Assistant*

Bill Webster, *Senior Information Graphics Designer*

Communications and Web Publishing

Stacy Rosenberg, *Associate Director, Digital*

Travis Mitchell, *Digital Producer*

Anna Schiller, *Senior Communications Manager*

Kelsey Beveridge, *Communications Associate*

Research Assistants Aidan Connaughton, Jacob Ausubel and Manolo Corichi provided valuable assistance with fact checking and number checking for this report.

How we did this

This is the 12th in a series of annual reports by Pew Research Center analyzing the extent to which governments and societies around the world impinge on religious beliefs and practices. The studies are part of the Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures project, which analyzes religious change and its impact on societies around the world.

To measure global restrictions on religion in 2019 – the most recent year for which data is available – the study rates 198 countries and territories by their levels of government restrictions on religion and social hostilities involving religion. The new study is based on the same 10-point indexes used in the previous studies.

- The **Government Restrictions Index (GRI)** measures government laws, policies and actions that restrict religious beliefs and practices. The GRI comprises 20 measures of restrictions, including efforts by government to ban particular faiths, prohibit conversion, limit preaching or give preferential treatment to one or more religious groups.
- The **Social Hostilities Index (SHI)** measures acts of religious hostility by private individuals, organizations or groups in society. This includes religion-related armed conflict or terrorism, mob or sectarian violence, harassment over attire for religious reasons and other forms of religion-related intimidation or abuse. The SHI includes 13 measures of social hostilities.

To track these indicators of government restrictions and social hostilities, researchers combed through more than a dozen publicly available, widely cited sources of information, including the U.S. Department of State’s annual reports on international religious freedom and annual reports from the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, as well as reports and databases from a variety of European and United Nations bodies and several independent, nongovernmental organizations. (See Methodology for more details on sources used in the study.)

Table of contents

Overview	5
Government restrictions involving religion stayed at the highest level since the study began	10
Government harassment of religious groups and interference in worship increased	12
Religion-related restrictions online and use of technology to target groups	16
1. In 2019, decline in number of countries with ‘very high’ government restrictions, social hostilities involving religion	19
Countries with the most extensive government restrictions on religion	19
Countries with the most extensive social hostilities involving religion	21
Changes in government restrictions on religion	22
Changes in social hostilities involving religion	23
Changes in overall restrictions on religion	25
2. Harassment of religious groups reaches new peak in 2019	27
Government versus social harassment of groups	30
Harassment of Christians and Muslims by region	32
Types of physical harassment of religious groups by region	33
3. Median index scores for government restrictions, social hostilities involving religion declined or remained stable in most regions in 2019	36
Government restrictions by region	36
Social hostilities by region	40
4. Restrictions on religion in the world’s 25 most populous countries in 2019	42
Methodology	42
Appendix A: Government Restrictions Index	61
Appendix B: Social Hostilities Index	64
Appendix C: Religious restrictions index scores by region	67
Appendix D: Summary of results	74

Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels

Number of countries with terrorist activity related to religion declines for a fifth consecutive year

Social hostilities involving religion, including violence and harassment against religious groups by private individuals and groups, declined in 2019, according to Pew Research Center's 12th annual study of global restrictions on religion, which examines 198 countries and territories.

In 2019 – the most recent year for which data is available, covering a period before the disruptions accompanying the coronavirus pandemic – 43 countries (22% of all those included in the study) had “high” or “very high” levels of social hostilities. That is down from 53 countries (27%) in 2018, and from a peak of 65 countries (33%) in 2012. These figures have fluctuated since the study began in 2007, but the number of countries with at least “high” levels of social hostilities related to religion is now the lowest since 2009.

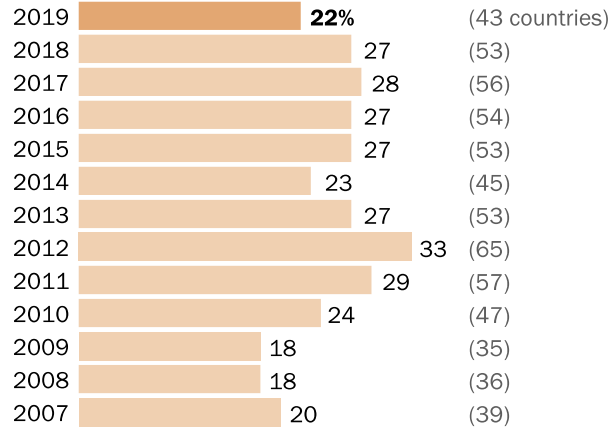
Another way of looking at the data is by examining scores on the Social Hostilities Index (SHI), a 10-point scale based on 13 indicators of social hostilities involving religion. The global median score declined from 2.0 in 2018 to 1.7 in 2019, reaching its lowest level since 2014.

Social hostilities related to religion declined in 2019

% of 198 countries with high or very high levels of ...

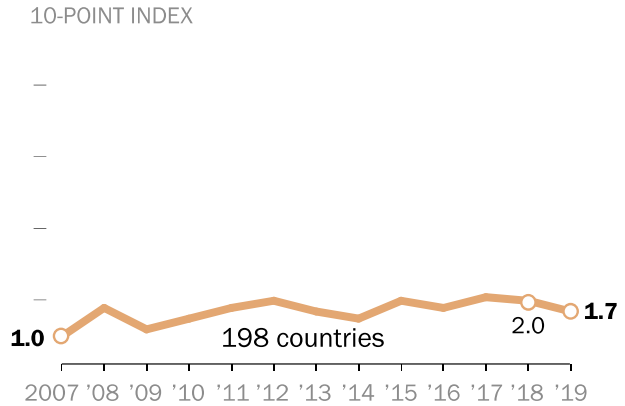
... social hostilities involving religion

(Scores of 3.6 and higher)



Social Hostilities Index global median score

(Based on 13 indicators)



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. See Methodology for details.

"Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

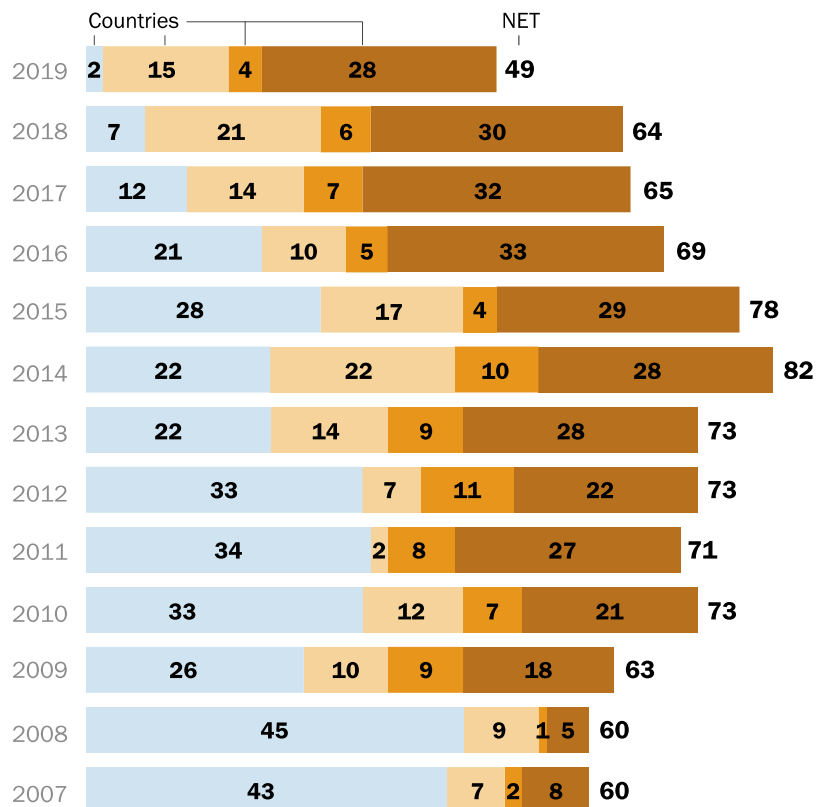
A drop in the number of countries experiencing **religion-related terrorism** (including deaths, physical abuse, displacement, detentions, destruction of property, and fundraising and recruitment by terrorist groups) is among the factors behind the decrease in social hostilities. In 2019, 49 countries experienced at least one of these types of religion-related terrorism, a record low for the study. That was down from 64 countries in 2018, and from a record high of 82 countries in 2014. The decline from 2018 occurred in four of the five regions analyzed: the Americas, the Asia-Pacific region, Europe and the Middle East-North Africa region. Only in sub-Saharan Africa did the number of countries with religion-related terrorism remain stable in 2019.

There also were fewer countries where religion-related terrorism led to deaths or injuries. In 2019, 47 countries had at least one casualty due to religion-related terrorism, down from 57 countries in 2018. In Morocco, for example, two Scandinavian hikers were murdered in 2018 by

Countries with religion-related terrorist activity fell to a record low in 2019, after five years of declines

Were religion-related terrorist groups active in the country during the year?

- Yes, but their activity was limited to recruitment and fundraising
- Yes, with violence that resulted in 1-9 injuries or deaths
- Yes, with violence that resulted in 10-50 injuries or deaths
- Yes, with violence that resulted in more than 50 injuries or deaths



Note: Since 2013, Pew Research Center has used data from the Global Terrorism Database, maintained by the University of Maryland's National Consortium for Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), along with data from the International Crisis Group's country reports, Uppsala University's Armed Conflict Database and the U.S. Department of State's annual Country Reports on Terrorism, for information on religion-related terrorism. (One source used in earlier reports, the U.S. government's Worldwide Incident Tracking System, or WITS, is no longer available online.) Prior to 2013, the report relied only on the International Crisis Group reports, the Uppsala database and the State Department reports for information on religion-related terrorism.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. See Methodology for details. "Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

perpetrators who pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group (also known as ISIS, ISIL and *Daesh*), a militant Islamist organization; in 2019, no casualties from religion-related terrorism were reported in Morocco by the sources used in this study.¹

The decline echoes a broader pattern recorded around the world in recent years. According to the Global Terrorism Database, which tracks a wide variety of terrorist incidents regardless of whether they are related to religion and is used as a source for this study, 2019 was “the fifth consecutive year of declining global terrorism” since a peak in 2014.²

That year, 2014, had many incidents of terrorist activity by the armed group ISIS and its affiliates, and by the militant Islamist group Boko Haram. ISIS formally established itself in Syria and Iraq in 2014 and engaged in a series of hostile acts – including mass executions, forced displacement of people, and the abduction and sexual abuse of thousands of women and children – against religious minorities and those viewed as opposing their group’s interpretation of Islam.³ ISIS also successfully recruited foreigners to join the fighting in Iraq and Syria and inspired affiliate groups and “lone offender” attacks globally.⁴ And Boko Haram kidnapped more than 250 schoolgirls, mainly Christians, from a school in Chibok, Nigeria, drawing international attention that year.⁵

Among the reasons for the decline in the study’s terrorism measures is that ISIS subsequently lost control of a large swath of territory in Iraq and Syria. In 2019, the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS declared that the militant group had been territorially defeated. And the number of violent attacks perpetrated by the group declined in Iraq in 2019, according to the Global Terrorism Database.

Still, ISIS’s multinational network of organizations remained active. Groups pledging allegiance to ISIS carried out bombings in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday, 2019, killing more than 250 people and injuring approximately 500 others at churches and hotels. Another exception to this overall decline in terrorism in 2019 was Afghanistan, where the number of terrorist incidents – particularly attacks carried out by the Taliban – increased amid peace talks between the group and the United States, according to the Global Terrorism Database.⁶

¹ Freedom House. February 2019. “[Morocco](#).” Freedom in the World 2019.

² National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). July 2020. “[Global Terrorism Overview: Terrorism in 2019](#).” The [Global Terrorism Database](#) is managed by the START program at the University of Maryland.

³ The United Nations declared that some of these actions amount to genocide, and other international groups have described some of these hostilities as war crimes and crimes against humanity. UN News. May 10, 2021. “[ISIL crimes against Yazidis constitute genocide, UN investigation team finds](#).” See also Amnesty International. July 30, 2020. “[Iraq: Yazidi child survivors of ‘Islamic State’ facing unprecedented health crisis](#).”

⁴ U.S. Department of State. June 2015. “[Chapter 1. Strategic Assessment](#).” Country Reports on Terrorism 2014.

⁵ U.S. Department of State. October 2015. “[Executive Summary](#).” International Religious Freedom Report for 2014. See also Strohlic, Nina. March 2020. “[Six years ago, Boko Haram kidnapped 276 schoolgirls. Where are they now?](#)” National Geographic Magazine.

⁶ National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. July 2020. “[Global Terrorism Overview: Terrorism in 2019](#).”

Beyond terrorism, other measures of religion-related social hostilities around the world also declined in 2019. For example, there were fewer countries with reports of mob violence related to religion (down from 41 countries in 2018 to 34 in 2019), hostilities over proselytizing (from 35 in 2018 to 28 in 2019), organized groups using force or coercion in an attempt to dominate public life with their perspectives on religion (104 to 94 countries), and individuals using violence or the threat of violence to enforce religious norms (85 to 74 countries). (See Appendix D for full results.)⁷

In Bolivia, for example, Protestant missionaries and pastors had been expelled in 2018 from rural areas where Indigenous spiritual beliefs are practiced, but no such expulsions were reported in 2019.⁸ And in Egypt, where social hostilities fell from “very high” to “high” in 2019, anti-Christian attacks (such as those against the Coptic Christian minority) and violence by Islamist groups declined, according to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF). Although violence toward Christians continued in the country, there were fewer abductions and displacements reported in 2019.⁹

Looking at overall social hostilities involving religion by region, the median scores on the Social Hostilities Index (SHI) fell in 2019 in the Asia-Pacific region, Europe and sub-Saharan Africa. Levels of social hostilities remained stable and relatively high in the Middle East-North Africa region, where more than half of countries (55%) continued to have “high” or “very high” levels of social hostilities. They remained steady in the Americas, where social hostilities involving religion are rare compared with the rest of the world. See Chapter 3 for details.

⁷ For a number of questions on the Social Hostilities Index, researchers look at incidents in the U.S. Department of State’s International Religious Freedom Reports from the coding year and the previous two years to capture ongoing hostilities. The decreases in some social hostilities measures in 2019 partially reflect a decline in ongoing social hostilities. See Methodology for more details on the specific questions that are coded this way.

⁸ U.S. Department of State. June 2019. “[Bolivia](#).” International Religious Freedom Report for 2018. See also U.S. Department of State. June 2020. “[Bolivia](#).” International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

⁹ U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. April 2020. “[Egypt](#).” 2020 Annual Report.

Government restrictions involving religion stayed at the highest level since the study began

In addition to looking at social hostilities relating to religion, this annual study also examines **government restrictions on religion** – including official laws, policies and actions that impinge on religious beliefs and practices – in 198 countries and territories.

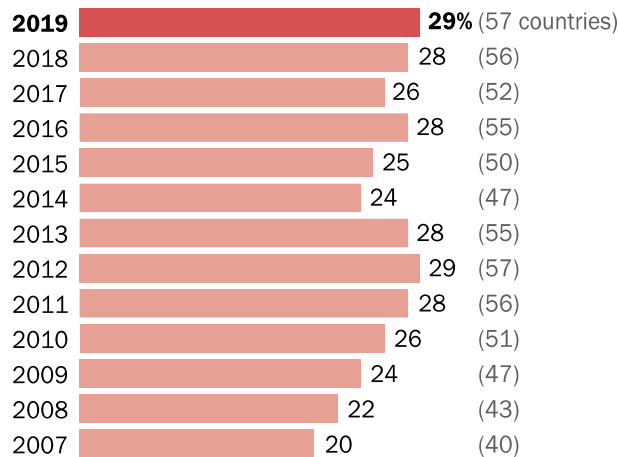
The analysis shows that government restrictions involving religion, which in 2018 had reached the highest point since the start of the study, remained at a similar level in 2019. The global median score on the Government Restrictions Index (GRI), a 10-point index based on 20 indicators, held steady at 2.9. This score has risen markedly since 2007, the first year of the study, when it was 1.8.

The total number of countries with “high” or “very high” levels of government restrictions rose in 2019 to 57 (29% of all countries in the study). This is up one country from 2018 and matches the study’s highest mark, from 2012.

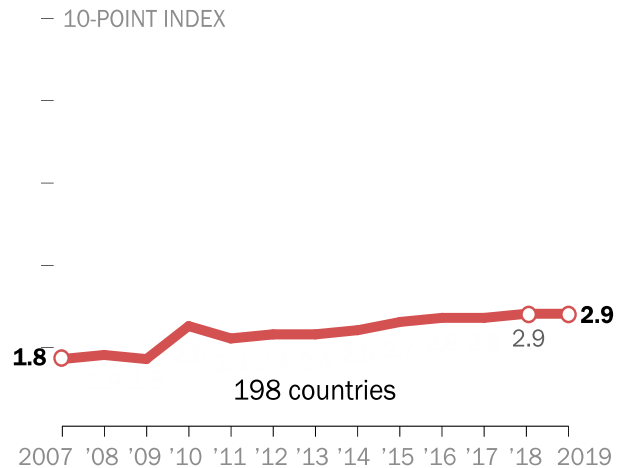
Government restrictions on religion match highest level since 2007

% of 198 countries with high or very high levels of ...

... government restrictions on religion (Scores of 4.5 and higher)



Government Restrictions Index global median score (Based on 20 indicators)



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. See Methodology for details.

“Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

As has been the case in all previous years studied, most countries with “high” or “very high” levels of government restrictions in 2019 were either in the Asia-Pacific region (25 of the 50 countries in that region) or in the Middle East-North Africa region (19 of 20 countries).

Looking at government restrictions and social hostilities together, 75 countries (38% of those included in the study) had “high” or “very high” levels of **overall restrictions** on religion in 2019, down from 80 countries (40%) in 2018.

For full results, see [Appendix E](#).

Government harassment of religious groups and interference in worship increased

Two specific measures of government restrictions on religion increased globally in 2019: **government harassment against religious groups** and **government interference in worship**. More countries had at least one reported incident of government harassment or interference in worship in 2019 than in any other year since the study began in 2007.

While scores for these two measures of government restrictions increased in 2019, the scores for some other measures that make up the Government Restrictions Index decreased, which is why the global median score on the GRI remained stable. For example, fewer countries had limits on proselytizing and on foreign missionaries, and there were fewer reports of countries denouncing religious groups as “cults” or “sects.”

In total, 180 countries – 91% of all countries in the study – had at least one instance, at some level, of **government harassment against religious groups**, compared with 175 countries in 2018. In this study, harassment against religious groups can range from verbal intimidation to physical violence motivated at least in part by the target’s religious identity.

Governments in more than 80% of the countries *in each of the study’s five regions* harassed religious groups in some way, including all 20 countries in the Middle East-North Africa region and 44 of 45 in Europe (98% of countries in the region). In sub-Saharan Africa, 90% of the region’s 48 countries had such incidents, followed by 89% of the 35 countries in the Americas and 84% of countries in the Asia-Pacific region. In Tajikistan, for example, authorities in 2019 detained 17 Jehovah’s Witnesses – a group whose activities are banned in the country – for “possessing religious materials and participating in religious activities.”¹⁰ (For more information on government harassment of specific religious groups, see Chapter 2.)

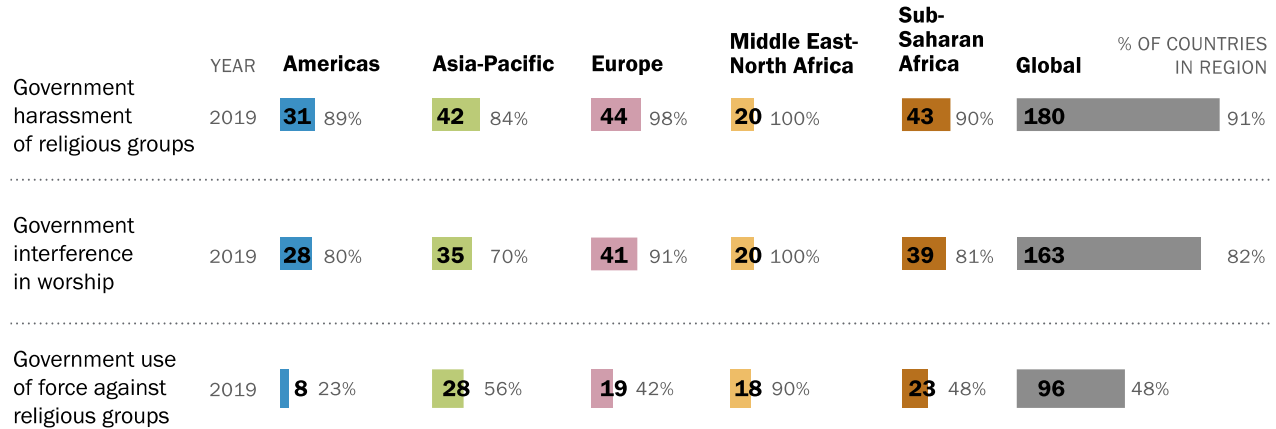
Definition: Government harassment of religious groups

Government harassment of religious groups takes place when officials at any level of government (e.g., national, provincial or municipal) target a religious group or person due to their religious identity, beliefs or practices. This may range from physical coercion to verbal statements singling out a religious group or individual with the intent of making their religious practice (or some other aspect of their lives) more difficult. For example, negative public comments by government officials about religions constitute harassment, as do government policies that target particular religious groups.

¹⁰ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. “[Tajikistan](#).” International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

Governments in more than 80% of countries in each region harassed religious groups in some way in 2019

Number of countries with ...



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. See Methodology for details.

"Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

In 163 countries (82%), government authorities **interfered in worship** in ways such as prohibiting certain religious practices, withholding access to places of worship or denying permits for religious activities or buildings. In 2018, 156 countries interfered in worship in any of these ways.

All 20 countries in the Middle East-North Africa region also had occurrences of government interference in worship in 2019. And, as with the government harassment measure, Europe had the second-highest share of countries where governments interfered in worship (91%), followed by 81% of countries in sub-Saharan Africa, 80% in the Americas and 70% in the Asia-Pacific region. In Europe, for example, there were numerous restrictions on religious symbols and clothing, such as in Austria, where laws prohibit full-face coverings in public and ban headscarves for children under age 10 in elementary school.¹¹ And in Slovenia, where animal slaughter without prior stunning is prohibited,

Definition: Government interference in worship

Government interference in worship includes withholding permission for religious activities or prohibiting particular religious practices at any level of government. Religious practices are defined broadly. They range from worship activities (such as prayer, preaching or performing rituals) to wearing religious attire, adhering to grooming customs such as maintaining a beard, conscientious objection to military service, the use of certain substances (such as peyote) in worship and following ritual burial practices.

¹¹ Freedom House. March 2020. "[Austria](#)." Freedom in the World 2020.

Muslims and Jews are not allowed to slaughter animals according to halal and kosher dietary guidelines, respectively.¹²

While some level of government harassment of religious groups or interference in religious worship is common around the world, widespread physical harassment – i.e., **government use of force** against religious groups – is less common. In 96 of the 198 countries analyzed (48%), there was at least one report of governments using force against religious groups, including property damage, detention or arrests, ongoing displacement, physical abuse, and killings. In four of these countries – China, Myanmar (also called Burma), Sudan and Syria – there were more than 10,000 cases of government force against religious groups reported.

In China’s Xinjiang province, various sources have reported the detention of almost a million Uyghur Muslims and members of other religious and ethnic minority groups, as well as the separation of children from their families to curb the influence of religion in their homes (for more details, see Chapter 3).¹³ And in Syria, the government continued the “widespread and systematic use of unlawful killings” of perceived opponents (mostly Sunni Muslims) through torture, the destruction of civilian infrastructure, and the employment of chemical weapons, according to the U.S. State Department. The government also detained tens of thousands of Syrians, mainly Sunnis, without due process, according to numerous human rights organizations.¹⁴

In addition to ongoing restrictions on Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, which have been discussed in [previous years of this study](#), renewed fighting between the military and armed ethnic organizations in the country’s states of Kachin and northern Shan “deeply impacted” Christians, according to USCIRF. In 2019, thousands were displaced – including many Christians – in addition to more than 120,000 Rohingya who already had been internally displaced, and the military damaged over 300 churches.¹⁵

In Sudan, a nongovernmental organization estimated that in the country’s capital city, Khartoum, police arrested 40 women per day for violating Islamic dress standards.¹⁶ (The “public order law” that allowed such arrests was later repealed at the end of 2019, after the administration of President Omar al-Bashir was overthrown in April of that year.) During the year, authorities also

¹² United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief. September 2019. “[Elimination of all forms of religious intolerance.](#)” Report on Combating Anti-Semitism to Eliminate Discrimination and Intolerance Based on Religion or Belief.

¹³ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. “[China-Xinjiang.](#)” International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

¹⁴ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. “[Syria.](#)” International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

¹⁵ U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. April 2020. “[Burma.](#)” 2020 Annual Report.

¹⁶ U.S. Department of State. March 2020. “[Sudan.](#)” 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices.

used force against at least 500 worshippers at a mosque for participating in antigovernment protests that eventually led to the removal of the president.¹⁷

For more information on physical harassment involving government force against religious groups by region, see Chapter 2.

¹⁷ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. "[Sudan](#)." International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

Religion-related restrictions online and use of technology to target groups

This 12th study of religious restrictions by Pew Research Center includes for the first time a measure assessing **online restrictions by governments** related to religion, as well as the **governmental use of new or advanced technologies** such as surveillance cameras, facial recognition technology or biometric data to restrict or surveil religious groups. In order to keep coding consistent with previous years, these new measures are not included when calculating GRI scores for countries.

In total, 28 countries and territories (14% of all 198 in the study) had some type of online governmental restriction in 2019 that was related to religion. Most were in either the Asia-Pacific region (15 countries) or in the Middle East-North Africa region (10 countries). For example, in Pakistan, where Islam is the official state religion, a cybercrimes court sentenced a Muslim man to five years in prison for posting “sacrilegious, blasphemous and derogatory” content online about an early Islamic leader with ties to the Prophet Muhammad.¹⁸ And in the United Arab Emirates, the country’s two main internet service providers, which are controlled by the government, blocked websites with information on Judaism, Christianity and atheism, as well as sites displaying testimonies from Muslim converts to Christianity.¹⁹

Half of countries in Middle East-North Africa had government-imposed online restrictions on religion

Did officials at any level of government restrict online activities of religious groups or individuals in 2019?



Note: The countries where the study’s sources reported online restrictions on religion by governments in 2019 are Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar (also called Burma), Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan, Vietnam (Asia-Pacific); Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen (Middle East-North Africa); Iceland, Russia (Europe); and Nicaragua (Americas).

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. See Methodology for details. “Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

¹⁸ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. “[Pakistan](#).” International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

¹⁹ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. “[United Arab Emirates](#).” International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

The study's sources reported that 10 countries used technology to surveil religious groups in 2019, with three of them – China, Russia and Vietnam – citing security or counterterrorism efforts as a reason for such restrictions. In some countries, specific religious groups were targeted. In Armenia, for instance, members of the Baha'i faith alleged that authorities wiretapped the phones of a member of their community before charging him with facilitating illegal migration to the country.²⁰

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Islamic Affairs monitored some sermon content at mosques using data from a mobile phone app it launched in 2018.²¹ In Iran, a human rights group reported that authorities launched targeted cyberattacks against religious minorities, such as Sufi Muslims, to steal their private information.²² And in China, the state installed surveillance equipment in churches, mosques, a synagogue and other houses of worship; the government also used facial recognition technology to monitor and collect biometric data on Uyghur Muslims and other groups deemed to be potential threats. Authorities in Xinjiang also required Uyghurs to install software on their phones to monitor their calls and messages.²³

Several countries use new technology to surveil religious groups

Did any level of government use new or advanced technologies such as surveillance cameras, facial recognition technology or biometric data to restrict or surveil religious groups in 2019?



Note: The countries where the study's sources reported the use of new or advanced technology to surveil religious groups are Brunei, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Vietnam (Asia-Pacific); France, Russia (Europe); Saudi Arabia and Syria (Middle East-North Africa). Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. See Methodology for details. "Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

²⁰ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. "[Armenia](#)." International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

²¹ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. "[Saudi Arabia](#)." International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

²² U.S. Department of State. June 2020. "[Iran](#)." International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

²³ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. "[China](#)." International Religious Freedom Report for 2019. See also Human Rights Watch. May 2019. "[China's Algorithms of Repression](#)."

The following sections of the report discuss other changes in restrictions on religion in 2019, including countries with the most extensive government restrictions and social hostilities involving religion, and the extent of changes in restrictions since 2018 (Chapter 1); additional details on harassment of specific religious groups and types of physical harassment by region (Chapter 2); and further analysis of restrictions on religion by region (Chapter 3), and in the world's 25 most populous countries (Chapter 4).

Full results for all countries are available in [Appendix E](#).

1. In 2019, decline in number of countries with ‘very high’ government restrictions, social hostilities involving religion

Countries with the most extensive government restrictions on religion

Government restrictions on religion vary from country to country, and some countries have much higher scores on the Government Restrictions Index (GRI) than others. While all 198 countries and territories included in this study had at least *some* restrictions on religious activity in 2019, those with higher GRI scores imposed a wider variety of restrictions, or implemented them more severely, or did both.

In 2019, 23 of the 198 countries and territories had “very high” levels of government restrictions on religion, a decrease from 26 in 2018. This is the second year in a row that the overall number of countries in the “very high” category has decreased, with the 2019 figure falling to its lowest point since 2015.

At the same time, however, the number of countries with “high” levels of government restrictions rose by four, from 30 in 2018 to 34 in 2019. Taken together, the number of countries that experienced either “high” or “very high” levels of government restrictions in 2019 increased by one to 57, matching the study’s record high from 2012. (For details about the thresholds for the “very high” and “high” categories, see Methodology.)

Countries and territories with very high government restrictions on religion

Scores of 6.6 or higher on the 10-point Government Restrictions Index

2018	2019
Algeria	Algeria
Azerbaijan	Azerbaijan
Brunei	Brunei
China	China
Egypt	Egypt
Eritrea	Eritrea
Indonesia	Indonesia
Iran	Iran
Iraq	Iraq
Kazakhstan	Kazakhstan
Malaysia	Kyrgyzstan
Maldives	Malaysia
Mauritania	Maldives
Morocco	Myanmar
Myanmar	Russia
Russia	Saudi Arabia
Saudi Arabia	Singapore
Singapore	Sudan
Syria	Syria
Tajikistan	Tajikistan
Turkey	Turkey
Turkmenistan	Turkmenistan
Uzbekistan	Uzbekistan
Vietnam	
Western Sahara	
Yemen	

Note: Gray indicates a country that had very high government restrictions in 2018 but not in 2019. Bold indicates a country that had very high government restrictions in 2019 but not in 2018. Myanmar is also called Burma.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. See Methodology for details.

“Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Five countries and territories – Mauritania, Morocco, Vietnam, Western Sahara and Yemen – moved from the “very high” into the “high” category in 2019. GRI scores for Morocco, Western Sahara and Vietnam fell by at least one whole point on the index, while Mauritania and Yemen had small decreases of less than a point.²⁴ For example, Morocco’s GRI score dropped from 7.2 to 6.2 in part because there were no reports of the government detaining religious minorities in 2019, unlike in 2018 when authorities detained and questioned a Christian and Shiite Muslims.²⁵

Two countries – Sudan and Kyrgyzstan – moved into the “very high” category of government restrictions in 2019. Sudan has been in either the “high” or “very high” category every year since the beginning of the study, but this is the first time Kyrgyzstan has been in the “very high” category. Kyrgyzstan reached this level in 2019 (climbing to 6.6 on the index, up from 6.5 in 2018) largely due to increased detentions of suspected Islamists, and also because of reported raids of homes where banned religious groups – such as Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir – were believed to be meeting.²⁶ In Sudan, meanwhile, during the anti-government protests that led to the ousting of President Omar al-Bashir, government forces targeted mosques associated with the political opposition, as well as members of religious minority groups such as Shiite Muslims, who were questioned about their faith by security officials. During this time, Sudanese authorities used rubber bullets, tear gas and, in some cases, live ammunition to disperse worshippers at mosques where protests were being held; forces also beat, arrested or threatened some worshippers and protesters.²⁷

For a complete list of all countries in each category, see the Government Restrictions Index table in Appendix A.

²⁴ When examining government restrictions in Western Sahara, this report also considers activity by the Moroccan government, which has de facto control over much of Western Sahara. Morocco and Western Sahara are examined separately when it comes to social hostilities. See Methodology for more details.

²⁵ U.S. Department of State. June 2019. “[Morocco](#).” International Religious Freedom Report for 2018.

²⁶ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. “[Kyrgyz Republic](#).” International Religious Freedom Report for 2019. See also Freedom House. February 2020. “[Kyrgyzstan](#).” Freedom in the World 2019.

²⁷ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. “[Sudan](#).” International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

Countries with the most extensive social hostilities involving religion

As with government restrictions on religion, social hostilities related to religion vary from country to country. The Social Hostilities Index (SHI) captures a wide range of activities, including but not limited to mob violence against religious minorities, individual assaults on people of particular faiths and incidents of terrorism carried out in the name of religion.

Far fewer countries score “very high” on the SHI than on the GRI. In 2019, eight of the 198 countries in the study had “very high” levels of social hostilities involving religion – the lowest figure in more than a decade, and two fewer than in 2018. The annual decrease reflected the movement of two countries, Egypt and the Central African Republic, from the “very high” category of the SHI in 2018 into the “high” category in 2019. Even with these two countries moving into the “high” category, the total number of countries categorized as having “high” levels of social hostilities dropped by eight, from 43 in 2018 to 35 in 2019.

For a complete list of all countries in each category, see the Social Hostilities Index table in Appendix B.

Countries with very high social hostilities involving religion

Scores of 7.2 or higher on the 10-point Social Hostilities Index

2018	2019
Central African Republic	India
Egypt	Iraq
India	Israel
Iraq	Libya
Israel	Nigeria
Libya	Pakistan
Nigeria	Sri Lanka
Pakistan	Syria
Sri Lanka	
Syria	

Note: Gray indicates a country that had very high social hostilities in 2018 but not in 2019.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. See Methodology for details.

“Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Changes in government restrictions on religion

This study also tracks how each country's index score changes from year to year for government restrictions and social hostilities.

In 2019, 59 countries had *increases* of 0.1 or more in their GRI scores, while 65 countries had *decreases* of 0.1 or more. This is in contrast with the previous year, when there were more countries with increases than decreases.²⁸

Fourteen countries had modest changes (1.0 to 1.9 points) in their GRI scores, with eight decreases and six increases within this range. Sri Lanka experienced the biggest change in its GRI score of any country in 2019 – an increase of 1.8 points. The rise in Sri Lanka's score reflected a slate of new restrictions imposed by the Sri Lankan government after suicide bombings targeted churches and luxury hotels on Easter Sunday, killing more than 250 people. Following the attacks, the government declared a state of emergency and temporarily banned face coverings, a move that largely impacted Muslim women and led to heightened harassment of Muslims by security forces.²⁹

A majority of countries (110 out of 198) experienced small changes (between 0.1 and 0.9) in their GRI scores, including 57 decreases and 53 increases. In addition, 74 countries had no change in their overall GRI scores in 2019. No countries had large changes (2.0 or more points) in their GRI scores in 2019.

Majority of countries experience small changes on GRI in 2019

Changes on the Government Restrictions Index (GRI) from 2018 to 2019

POINT CHANGE	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	
2.0 or more increase	0	0%	
1.0 to 1.9 increase	6	3	30%
0.1 to 0.9 increase	53	27	
No change	74	37	37%
0.1 to 0.9 decrease	57	29	33%
1.0 to 1.9 decrease	8	4	
2.0 or more decrease	0	0	
Total	198	100	

Note: Point changes are calculated by comparing GRI scores from year to year. Figures may not add to 100% or to subtotals indicated due to rounding.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. See Methodology for details.

"Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

²⁸ An index score that varies by less than 0.1 from one year to the next is considered unchanged. Changes in scores of between 0.1 and 0.9 are categorized as "small." Changes of between 1.0 and 1.9 points are considered "modest," and changes of 2.0 points or more are described as "large."

²⁹ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. "[Sri Lanka](#)." International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

Changes in social hostilities involving religion

In 2019, 87 countries experienced decreases of at least 0.1 in their scores on the Social Hostilities Index, while 60 countries had increases of at least 0.1, and 51 had no change.

Six countries saw large changes (2.0 or more points) in their SHI scores in 2019. In five of these countries – Armenia, Greece, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia and Romania – the scores went down. Armenia, Greece, Kyrgyzstan and Romania moved from the “high” to the “moderate” category. Malaysia remained in the “high” category even though its score fell from 6.4 in 2018 to 3.9 in 2019, shifting from near the upper bound of the “high” range toward the lower bound.

The reasons for these changes varied. In Armenia, for example, there were no reported incidents of harassment against Jehovah’s Witnesses in 2019; during the previous year, members of that group had reported to police that they were verbally abused and had their literature display carts overturned.³⁰ And in Greece, where an anarchist group claimed responsibility for a bomb explosion outside a church that injured multiple people in 2018, no terrorist incidents related to religion were reported in 2019.³¹

Only one country, Burkina Faso, experienced a large *increase* in social hostilities in 2019, moving from the “moderate” to the “high” category on the SHI. Multiple attacks on Christians and Muslims by Islamist militant groups, including the Islamic State in Greater Sahara and al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, led to several dozen deaths and exacerbated religious tensions in the West African country.³²

On SHI, decreases exceed number of increases in 2019

Changes on the Social Hostilities Index (SHI) from 2018 to 2019

POINT CHANGE	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	
2.0 or more increase	1	1%	31%
1.0 to 1.9 increase	10	5	
0.1 to 0.9 increase	49	25	
No change	51	26	26%
0.1 to 0.9 decrease	50	25	44%
1.0 to 1.9 decrease	32	16	
2.0 or more decrease	5	3	
Total	198	101	

Note: Point changes are calculated by comparing SHI scores from year to year. Figures may not add to 100% or to subtotals indicated due to rounding.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. See Methodology for details.

“Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

³⁰ U.S. Department of State. June 2019. “[Armenia](#).” International Religious Freedom Report for 2018.

³¹ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. “[Greece](#).” International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

³² U.S. Department of State. June 2020. “[Burkina Faso](#).” International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

Forty-two countries had modest changes (between 1.0 and 1.9 points) in their SHI scores, with 32 of them experiencing modest decreases and 10 experiencing modest increases. For example, in Uruguay, where the index score fell from 2.0 in 2018 to 0.8 in 2019, fewer incidents of vandalism of Christian churches were reported in 2019.³³

Half the countries studied (99) experienced small changes in their SHI scores (between 0.1 and 0.9), 50 of which were decreases and 49 of which were increases. There were no changes to SHI scores in 51 countries.

³³ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. "[Uruguay](#)." International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

Changes in overall restrictions on religion

To provide a more sweeping, high-level view of how religious restrictions are changing around the world each year, Pew Research Center combines the scores on the Government Restrictions and Social Hostilities Indexes into an overall, annual score for each country. In 2019, 69 countries experienced increases in their overall scores, while 99 experienced decreases and 30 countries had no change.

Of the 69 countries with *increases* in their overall scores, 58 countries experienced small increases (between 0.1 and 0.9), while 10 had modest increases (1.0 to 1.9 points). Just one country, Burkina Faso, had a large increase in its overall score (2.0 or more points).

Of the 99 countries with *decreases* in their overall scores, 63 had small decreases (between 0.1 and 0.9), while 32 had modest decreases (1.0 to 1.9 points). Four countries – Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Romania and Malaysia – had large decreases (2.0 points or more) in their overall scores. In Malaysia, there were no reports of mob violence against religious groups in the sources used by this study in 2019, unlike in 2018, when a group of 200 masked individuals injured at least a dozen people while attempting to forcibly remove worshippers from a Hindu temple.³⁴ In Romania, there were no reported instances of physical assaults on Muslim women in 2019, unlike in previous years. Additionally, 2019 was the third consecutive year there were no

Overall changes in global restrictions on religion

Changes on the Government Restrictions Index (GRI) or Social Hostilities Index (SHI) from 2018 to 2019

POINT CHANGE	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	
2.0 or more increase	1	1%	35%
1.0 to 1.9 increase	10	5	
0.1 to 0.9 increase	58	29	
No change	30	15	15%
0.1 to 0.9 decrease	63	32	50%
1.0 to 1.9 decrease	32	16	
2.0 or more decrease	4	2	
Total	198	100	

Note: Categories of overall change in restrictions are calculated by comparing a country's unrounded scores on the GRI and SHI from year to year. When a country's score on both indexes changed in the same direction (both increased or both decreased), the greater amount of change determined the category. For instance, if the country's GRI score increased by 0.8 and its SHI score increased by 1.5, the country was put into the "1.0 to 1.9 increase" category. When a country's score increased on one index but decreased on the other, the difference between the amounts of change determined the grouping. For example, if the country's GRI score increased by 2.0 and its SHI score decreased by 1.5, the country went into the "0.1 to 0.9 increase" category. When a country's score on one index stayed the same, the amount of change on the other index was used to assign the category. Figures may not add to 100% or to subtotals indicated due to rounding.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. See Methodology for details.

"Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

³⁴ U.S. Department of State. June 2019. "[Malaysia](#)." International Religious Freedom Report for 2018.

reports of public events with anti-Semitic themes held by groups associated with the Legionnaire Movement, a far-right political party active in Romania between 1927 and 1941.³⁵

³⁵ U.S. Department of State. August 2017. "[Romania](#)." International Religious Freedom Report for 2016. Some measures for social hostilities include data from the main year being examined, as well as from the two previous years to capture the impact of ongoing hostilities.

2. Harassment of religious groups reaches new peak in 2019

The number of countries and territories where religious groups experienced harassment by governments and social groups reached 190 (out of 198 analyzed) in 2019, a higher number than in any other year of the study. This figure is up from 185 in 2018.

The harassment measured in the study includes a wide variety of actions – from derogatory statements by government officials to physical acts of force such as property damage, detentions, displacements from homes, assaults and killings – that target groups or individuals at least in part because of their religion. Harassment directed against those who are religiously unaffiliated, including atheists, agnostics and humanists, also is captured by this study.

Christians and Muslims, the world's [largest and most widely dispersed religious groups](#), experienced harassment in more countries than other religious groups in 2019,

continuing a consistent pattern since the beginning of the study. In addition, both Muslims and Christians saw increases in the number of countries where they were harassed in 2019. And, as in prior years of the study, both groups faced harassment in countries where they are religious minorities as well as in countries where they are the majority. For instance, Muslims faced

Christians, Muslims harassed in more countries in 2019, most of any religious groups

Number of countries where religious groups were harassed, by year

	2007	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19
Christians	107	111	105	110	102	108	128	144	143	145	153
Muslims	96	90	101	109	99	100	125	142	140	139	147
Jews	51	68	69	71	77	81	74	87	87	88	89
Others*	33	52	42	39	38	43	50	57	50	56	68
Folk religions**	24	26	23	26	34	21	32	41	38	37	32
Hindus	21	16	12	16	9	14	18	23	23	19	21
Buddhists	10	15	9	13	12	10	7	17	19	24	25
Unaffiliated	CODING NOT DONE			3	5	4	14	14	23	18	22
Any of above	152	160	161	166	164	160	169	187	187	185	190

* Includes Sikhs, members of ancient faiths such as Zoroastrianism, members of newer faiths such as Baha'i and other religious groups.

** Includes, for example, followers of African traditional religions, Chinese folk religions, Native American religions and Australian aboriginal religions.

Note: This measure looks at the number of countries in which groups were harassed, either by the government or individuals/social groups. It does not assess the severity of the harassment. Numbers do not add to totals because multiple religious groups can be harassed in a country. The figure for other religious groups for the year ending in December 2012 and the any-of-the-above figure for the year ending in December 2011 have been updated to correct minor errors in previous reports.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. See Methodology for details.

"Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

harassment in 38 European countries where Islam is not the majority religion, as well as in all 19 countries and territories with Muslim majorities (either Sunni or Shiite) in the Middle East.³⁶

In 2019, harassment of Christians was reported in 153 countries, up from 145 countries in 2018. In Pakistan, for example, a Christian suspect in a theft case was tortured while in police custody and died a few hours after being released. The victim's brother reported that one of the police officers who arrested the man said, "I know how to deal with these infidels."³⁷ In Cuba, meanwhile, there were multiple reports of state officials threatening Christian house church leaders for conducting religious activities.³⁸

Muslims were harassed in 147 countries in 2019, up from 139 countries in 2018. In France, the Interior Ministry closed numerous Muslim-owned businesses, Islamic schools, Islamic cultural sites and mosques as the Secretary of State to the Minister of the Interior linked them to "political Islam."³⁹ And in South Africa, 80 Islamic graves were vandalized and rearranged to form the shape of a cross.⁴⁰

Jews faced harassment in more countries than any other religious groups besides Christians and Muslims, despite their relatively small population size. (Jewish people make up just [0.2% of the world's population](#).) In 2019, Jews were harassed in 89 countries – a slight uptick from 88 countries in 2018. One such incident occurred in Argentina, where a prominent rabbi was seriously injured during a home invasion in which his attackers physically assaulted him, robbed him and said they knew he was a rabbi.⁴¹

Hindus were harassed in 21 countries in 2019 – up from 19 countries the previous year. In Bangladesh, for instance, rioters ransacked a Hindu temple after two Muslims were arrested for allegedly hacking the Facebook account of a Hindu man and posting material disparaging Islam on his account.⁴²

Buddhists experienced a small increase in the number of countries where they faced harassment, from 24 in 2018 to 25 in 2019 – the highest total for this religious group since the study began in

³⁶ Muslims also faced harassment in the three European countries where Islam is the majority religion – Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo – and in Israel, the one Middle Eastern country where Islam is *not* the majority religion.

³⁷ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. "[Pakistan](#)." International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

³⁸ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. "[Cuba](#)." International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

³⁹ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. "[France](#)." International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

⁴⁰ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. "[South Africa](#)." International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

⁴¹ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. "[Argentina](#)." International Religious Freedom Report for 2019. See also Davidovich, Joshua. Feb. 26, 2019. "[Argentina chief rabbi severely beaten in 'anti-Semitic' home invasion](#)." The Times of Israel.

⁴² U.S. Department of State. June 2020. "[Bangladesh](#)." International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

2007. In Austria, for example, the construction site of a Buddhist shrine was vandalized with swastikas.⁴³

Religiously unaffiliated people (including atheists, agnostics and people who don't identify with any religion) were harassed in 22 countries in 2019, up from 18 the previous year. In Saudi Arabia, the Presidency of State Security released a video on Twitter referring to atheism as "extremist." A 2014 royal decree in the country punishes atheism with up to 20 years in prison, and in early 2019, the government criminalized "the promotion of atheistic ideologies in any form."⁴⁴

⁴³ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. "[Austria](#)." International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

⁴⁴ Freedom House. February 2020. "[Saudi Arabia](#)." Freedom in the World 2019. See also U.S. Department of State. June 2020. "[Saudi Arabia](#)." International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

Government versus social harassment of groups

Most of the religious groups analyzed individually – Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and the religiously unaffiliated – faced harassment in more countries from governments and public officials than from private actors, such as social groups or individuals.

Jews were the only religious group that faced social harassment in more countries (73) than government harassment (69) in 2019, although the gap between those two figures is at its narrowest since the study began, and the 69 countries where Jews experienced some form of government harassment is a record high since the beginning of the study in 2007.

Adherents of folk religions experienced government harassment in 20 countries and social harassment in 18 countries in 2019. In Canada, an Indigenous elder contended that airport security officials desecrated the contents of a pouch containing cedar, sage, sweet grass and tobacco, considered sacred by her tribe, by requiring her to open it for inspection in order to travel.⁴⁵ And in the United States, an Indigenous tribe called the Ramapough Mountain Indians had an ongoing lawsuit in 2019 against the township of Mahwah, New Jersey, after the township limited their religious gatherings and ordered them to remove several religious structures, including an altar and prayer circle. (The U.S. Department of Justice later supported the tribe's lawsuit against the town, and the parties eventually settled in June 2019.⁴⁶)

Other religious groups beyond those analyzed individually – including Baha'is, Scientologists, Sikhs, Rastafarians and Zoroastrians, among others – faced government harassment in more than twice as many countries (59) as they faced social hostilities (24). In Kenya, for example, a public secondary school asked a Rastafarian student to shave her dreadlocks. The school had expelled the student the previous year for wearing them in a turban and had been ordered by a court to let her return.

⁴⁵ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. "[Canada](#)." International Religious Freedom Report for 2019. See also Meloney, Nic. March 10, 2019. "[Elder says medicine pouch 'desecrated' by Halifax airport security despite asking for X-ray scan](#)." CBC.

⁴⁶ U.S. Department of Justice. April 2019. "[Justice Department Files Statement of Interest Supporting Native American Land Use Case](#)." Religious Freedom in Focus, Volume 79.

Most religious groups experienced government harassment in more countries than social harassment in 2019

Number of countries where religious groups were harassed, by year

	Government harassment in the year ...											Social harassment in the year ...										
	2007	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'07	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19
Christians	79	95	78	81	85	79	97	114	123	124	128	74	77	81	83	71	85	94	107	101	104	107
Muslims	77	74	78	83	73	80	106	127	124	126	135	64	64	82	88	84	81	94	97	105	103	115
Jews	11	21	28	28	39	31	43	56	63	59	69	46	64	63	66	72	80	67	66	75	77	73
Others*	25	40	39	34	33	39	44	49	43	50	59	15	28	18	20	17	17	18	22	21	25	24
Folk religions**	13	10	5	11	12	13	16	23	16	23	20	16	20	21	18	26	12	23	25	27	23	18
Hindus	12	13	9	13	8	9	14	18	17	14	18	12	10	6	9	4	7	11	11	11	10	10
Buddhists	7	11	5	9	7	8	5	15	15	22	23	4	7	5	7	7	3	3	6	9	10	8
Unaffiliated	CODING	NOT	DONE	2	1	1	9	11	14	12	14	CODING	NOT	DONE	2	4	3	6	5	13	8	11
Any of above	118	124	129	131	133	129	157	177	175	175	180	127	135	150	147	145	139	146	159	164	160	169

*Includes Sikhs, members of ancient faiths such as Zoroastrianism, members of newer faiths such as Baha'i and other religious groups.

**Includes, for example, followers of African traditional religions, Chinese folk religions, Native American religions and Australian aboriginal religions.

Note: This measure does not assess the severity of the harassment. Numbers do not add to totals because multiple religious groups can be harassed in a country.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. See Methodology for details.

"Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Harassment of Christians and Muslims by region

Across geographic regions, the shares of countries in which specific religious groups are harassed tend to vary.

The Middle East-North Africa region, for example, had the highest share of countries in 2019 where Christians were harassed. Of the 20 countries in the region, 19 had some form of harassment, either by governments or social groups, targeting Christians. Government harassment of Christians was reported in all 19 of these countries, while social harassment occurred in 15 countries, with both figures remaining stable since 2018.

The Asia-Pacific region had the second-highest share of countries where Christians were harassed in 2019 for their religion (82% of countries in the region). Christians also faced harassment in 79% of countries in sub-Saharan Africa and in 78% of countries in Europe. Each of these shares increased from 2018. Meanwhile, the share of countries where Christians were harassed stayed the same in the Middle East and North Africa (95% of countries in the region) and in the Americas (57%).

Christians experienced government harassment in more countries than they did social harassment in every region included in the study.

Muslims were most widely harassed in the Middle East-North Africa region and Europe (100% and 91% of countries, respectively). All 20 countries in the Middle East-North Africa region had reports of government harassment of Muslims – including against both the dominant and minority sects of Islam in each country – while 84% of European countries had reports of government harassment against Muslims. Meanwhile, social harassment of Muslims was reported in 82% of countries (37 out of 45) in Europe and 65% of countries (13 out of 20) in the Middle East and North Africa.

In sub-Saharan Africa, harassment of Muslims reportedly occurred in 77% of countries. This figure was 74% in Asia and the Pacific and 34% in the Americas. In all regions, the sources used in this study reported more countries with government harassment than with social harassment of Muslims.

Looking at both government harassment and social harassment, the share of countries where Muslims were harassed increased in 2019 in every region except in the Middle East and North Africa, where all 20 countries in the region recorded such harassment in both 2018 and 2019.

Types of physical harassment of religious groups by region

In the vast majority of countries around the world, at least one act of religion-related harassment is reported each year. To try to gauge the incidence of the most severe forms of harassment, this report looks separately at five types of harassment involving physical force or violence: property damage, detentions, displacement from homes, physical assaults and killings.

In 2019, social groups and individuals used at least one of these five forms of force against at least one religious group in 117 of the 198 countries and territories (59%) examined by the study.⁴⁷ Governments employed the same types of physical harassment against religious groups in 96 countries (48%) during the same period.

Of the five types of physical harassment measured by the study, damage to property of religious groups (or motivated by religious bias) occurred in the highest number of countries throughout the world in 2019 – 117 out of 198 countries, or 59%. This includes 91 countries where damage was caused by social groups, 67 where it was caused by government actors, and 41 where both governments and private citizens damaged property belonging to religious groups.

In Europe, the sources reported property damage in 78% of the region's countries, the largest share of the five regions. In Denmark, for instance, vandals desecrated more than 80 tombstones in a Jewish cemetery in the town of Randers on the 81st anniversary of Kristallnacht, the 1938 pogrom against Jews in Germany, as part of a series of incidents of vandalism targeting Jews across five Danish cities on the same evening.⁴⁸ A similar, though slightly smaller, share of countries in the Middle East (75%) had incidents of religion-related property damage.

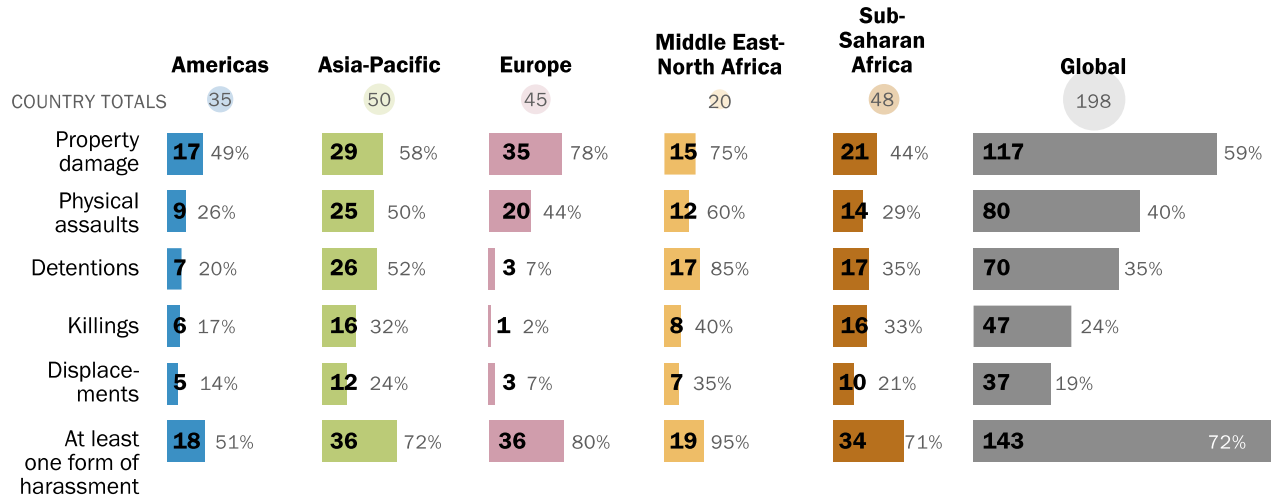
Physical assaults related to religion, including torture, took place in 80 countries, or 40% of all countries studied. Physical assaults perpetrated by individuals or social groups (including mobs) occurred in 60 countries, while assaults by government authorities occurred in 36 countries. Reports of assaults related to religion were most widespread in the Middle East and North Africa, where 12 of 20 countries in the region had such incidents (60%), followed by the Asia-Pacific region (25 of 50 countries). This measure includes incidents that range widely in severity, though none were fatal.

⁴⁷ The measure of physical harassment by social groups includes acts carried out by private individuals and social groups, but it does not include actions by designated terrorist organizations, which are captured under a separate measure. (See SHI.Q.4 in Appendix D for more information on actions by terrorist groups. See Methodology for details on how religion-related terrorism is coded.)

⁴⁸ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. "[Denmark](#)." International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

Property damage against religious groups reported in more countries than other types of physical harassment

Number of countries where religious groups encountered each type of harassment in 2019, by region



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. See Methodology for details.

“Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Meanwhile, 47 countries had at least one instance of a religion-related killing in 2019. This measure includes, but is not limited to, capital punishment, extrajudicial killings, and deaths resulting from torture or other physical injuries.

Religion-related killings perpetrated by governments were reported in three regions: the Asia-Pacific region (nine countries), the Middle East and North Africa (six countries) and sub-Saharan Africa (seven countries). Killings carried out by social groups or individuals – not including terrorists or parties to major armed conflicts – occurred in all five regions (39 countries overall). Religion-related killings by social groups or individuals were especially common in Asia and the Pacific (14 countries, or 28% of the region) and in sub-Saharan Africa (13 countries, 27%).

Detentions of individuals due to their religion took place in 70 countries, or 35% of countries included in this study. This measure picks up arrests, abductions and other kinds of physical detention reported as having been conducted arbitrarily or without due process; it does not include acts of war or mass kidnappings by terrorist groups, which are counted separately. In 2019, detentions were carried out much more often by government authorities (in 68 countries) than by nongovernment actors (in 16 countries). In the Asia-Pacific region, 26 of the region’s 50 countries (52%) had reported government detentions, while detentions carried out by social groups were reported in just six countries in the region. And government detentions were reported

in the vast majority of countries in the Middle East and North Africa (17 of the region's 20 countries), while detentions by social groups were reported in just two countries. In Algeria, for example, authorities arrested 17 Christians who were staging a peaceful sit-in to protest the closure of a church.⁴⁹

The measure of displacements related to religion includes both internal and external displacements brought on by governments and social groups.⁵⁰ In 2019, people in 37 countries around the world experienced displacement due to religious hatred or bias, with displacements caused by governments and social groups reported in an equal number of countries (21 each). Asia and the Pacific and sub-Saharan Africa were the only regions where 10 or more countries had incidents of displacement (12 and 10, respectively). In China, for example, a Jehovah's Witness missionary was arrested and subsequently deported by authorities in 2019.⁵¹

⁴⁹ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. "[Algeria](#)." International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

⁵⁰ This measure does not include displacements that arise as the result of major civil conflicts or terrorism, which are included under separate measures of data from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (see Methodology for details). Rather, displacements captured by the measure include deportations, exiles, incidents of violence that cause people to flee their homes, forced removals of people from their homes and denial of entry into a country's borders.

⁵¹ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. "[China](#)." International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

3. Median index scores for government restrictions, social hostilities involving religion declined or remained stable in most regions in 2019

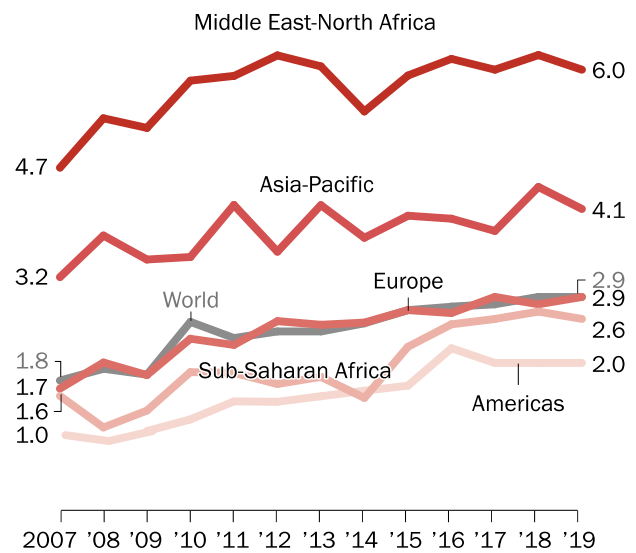
Government restrictions by region

In 2019, the median Government Restrictions Index (GRI) score of the 198 countries and territories in this study remained stable at 2.9, staying at its highest level since Pew Research Center began tracking these measures in 2007 (see Overview). The median score on the index decreased in three of the five regions examined – Asia-Pacific, Middle East-North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa – while increasing slightly in Europe and remaining about the same in the Americas.⁵²

Although the Middle East-North Africa region experienced a small decline in its median GRI score, from 6.2 in 2018 to 6.0 in 2019, it continued to have the highest GRI score of all the regions studied. All 20 countries and territories in the region officially favored a religious group: Islam in 19, and Judaism in one (Israel). In addition, governments in every country in the region interfered in worship *and* harassed religious groups. In more than half of those countries, governments used physical violence against minority groups (12 countries) and formally banned at least one religious group (11 countries). For example, in Egypt, where Islam is the state religion, the law does not formally recognize Jehovah’s Witnesses or members of the Baha’i faith, barring them from owning houses of worship, holding bank accounts and importing religious literature.⁵³

Government restrictions on religion, by region

Median scores on the Government Restrictions Index



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. See Methodology for details.
 “Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

⁵² The report uses rounded median scores when looking at year-to-year changes in global and regional GRI and SHI medians.

⁵³ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. “[Egypt](#).” International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

In the Asia-Pacific region, the median score on the GRI fell from 4.4 in 2018 to 4.1 in 2019, although it is still higher than it was in 2017 (3.8). The decline in 2019 was due in part to slightly fewer governments in the region using force against religious groups or attempting to remove a religious group from their country. (See GRI.Q.19 and GRI.Q.17 in Appendix D for more information on these measures.) Still, government force against religious groups occurred in more than half the countries in the region (28 of 50) in 2019, the second-highest share of any region studied.

In China, various sources estimated that more than a million Uyghur Muslims, ethnic Kazakhs, members of other Muslim groups and Uyghur Christians were being arbitrarily detained by government authorities in internment camps in Xinjiang province. While imprisoned, these individuals were subject to “forced disappearance, political indoctrination, torture,” and psychological and physical abuse, “including forced sterilization and sexual abuse, forced labor, and prolonged detention without trial because of their religion and ethnicity,” according to the U.S. Department of State. In addition, about half a million children in Xinjiang province were reported to have been separated from their families and relocated to boarding schools, where they were indoctrinated in the country’s dominant ethnic Han culture in an effort to stem the influence of religion from their homes.⁵⁴

Harassment or intimidation of religious groups and interference in worship remained widespread in the rest of the Asia-Pacific region as well, with such restrictions occurring in at least 70% of countries in the region. In Vietnam, for instance, Catholic bishops and priests reported that they were harassed by authorities who disrupted or prevented their services and gatherings. In April, a Catholic community in the country’s Lai Chau province was denied permission to hold Easter Mass.⁵⁵

Europe was the only region that had a small increase in its median level of government restrictions, ticking up from 2.8 in 2018 to 2.9 in 2019. According to sources used for this study, authorities in 24 of 45 European countries failed to protect religious groups from discrimination or abuse, up from 16 countries in 2018. For example, in Moldova, police initially refused to investigate a report that a Jehovah’s Witness was physically assaulted for preaching in a village, and when the authorities *did* look into the matter, they fined the Jehovah’s Witness for “insulting religious feelings” of a local Orthodox priest. (They also fined the priest, who had organized a harassment campaign against Jehovah’s Witnesses preaching in the area, for “obstructing

⁵⁴ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. “[China - Xinjiang](#).” International Religious Freedom Report for 2019. See also Human Rights Watch. July 10, 2019. “[UN: Unprecedented Joint Call for China to End Xinjiang Abuses](#).”

⁵⁵ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. “[Vietnam](#).” International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

religious freedom.”⁵⁶) Meanwhile, in the Netherlands, there were reports that people who brought claims of anti-Semitic harassment or other incidents of discrimination were not taken seriously by the police or were discouraged from filing charges. In response to these reports, the Dutch parliament passed a nonbinding resolution in 2019 that called for special detectives to address cases of anti-Semitism and other incidents of discrimination.⁵⁷

There also was a small uptick in the number of European countries where governments used force against religious groups, from 17 in 2018 to 19 in 2019, though most European countries had fewer than 10 reported cases of such incidents. Russia had the highest number of cases in the region; its government continued to enforce a 2017 ban on Jehovah’s Witnesses, labeling their activities as “extremist” and raiding nearly 500 homes of Jehovah’s Witnesses in 2019, compared with under 300 in 2018, according to Human Rights Watch.⁵⁸

In sub-Saharan Africa, the median GRI score in the region’s 48 countries declined from 2.7 in 2018 to 2.6 in 2019, due in part to slightly fewer reports of government limits on public preaching, religious conversions and foreign missionaries. At the same time, more governments in sub-Saharan Africa interfered in worship and harassed or intimidated religious groups, including by force. In Comoros, for example, authorities in 2019 arrested at least 30 Shiite Muslims for group worship that was “not conforming to the state-endorsed version of Sunni Islam.”⁵⁹ And in Togo, authorities suspended worship at five churches for failing to respond to noise complaints.⁶⁰

The median government restrictions score for the Americas remained at 2.0 in 2019, the lowest of all regions studied.

⁵⁶ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. “[Moldova](#).” International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

⁵⁷ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. “[The Netherlands](#).” International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

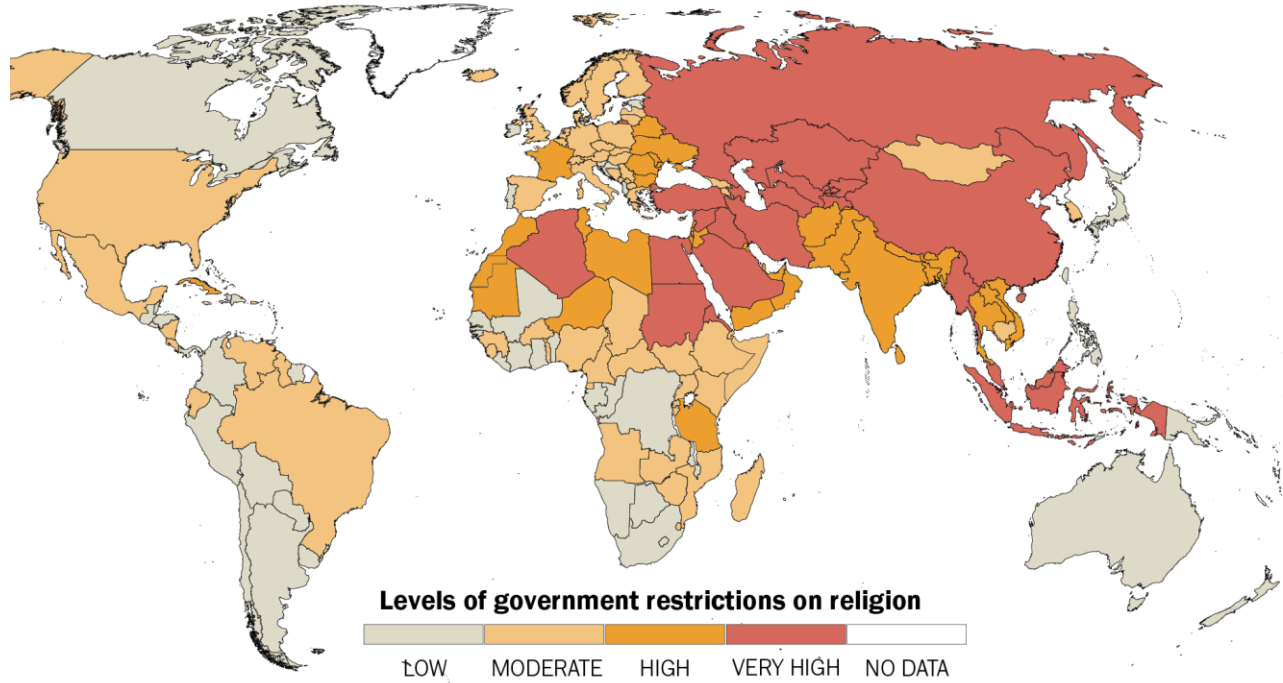
⁵⁸ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. “[Russia](#).” International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

⁵⁹ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. “[Comoros](#).” International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

⁶⁰ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. “[Togo](#).” International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

Government restrictions on religion around the world

Level of government restrictions on religion in each country as of 2019



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. See Methodology for details.

"Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Social hostilities by region

In 2019, the global median score on the Social Hostilities Index (SHI) fell to a five-year low of 1.7. The Asia-Pacific region, Europe and sub-Saharan Africa all experienced declines on this index, while the scores for the Americas and the Middle East-North Africa region remained stable.

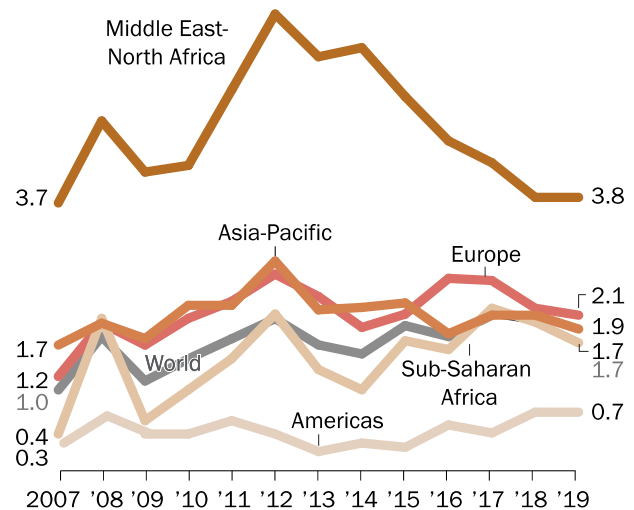
In sub-Saharan Africa, the median score on the Social Hostilities Index fell from 2.0 in 2018 to 1.7 in 2019. This was partly because fewer countries reported hostilities over conversions and fewer reported activities by organized groups that used force or coercion in an attempt to dominate public life with their perspectives on religion. (See SHI.Q.7 in Appendix D for more information on this measure and all other measures in each index of this study.)

The median level of social hostilities also decreased in the Asia-Pacific region (from 2.1 in 2018 to 1.9 in 2019), and in Europe (from 2.2 to 2.1). In both regions, there were fewer countries with groups that tried to prevent other religious groups from operating, fewer countries with religion-related terrorist incidents and fewer countries with mob violence related to religion.

Meanwhile, the median score for the Middle East-North Africa region stayed at 3.8 for the second straight year, near its lowest point (3.7 in 2007, the first year of the study). The median SHI score for the Americas also remained stable at 0.7 and was the lowest score among all regions in the study.

Social hostilities involving religion, by region

Median scores on the Social Hostilities Index



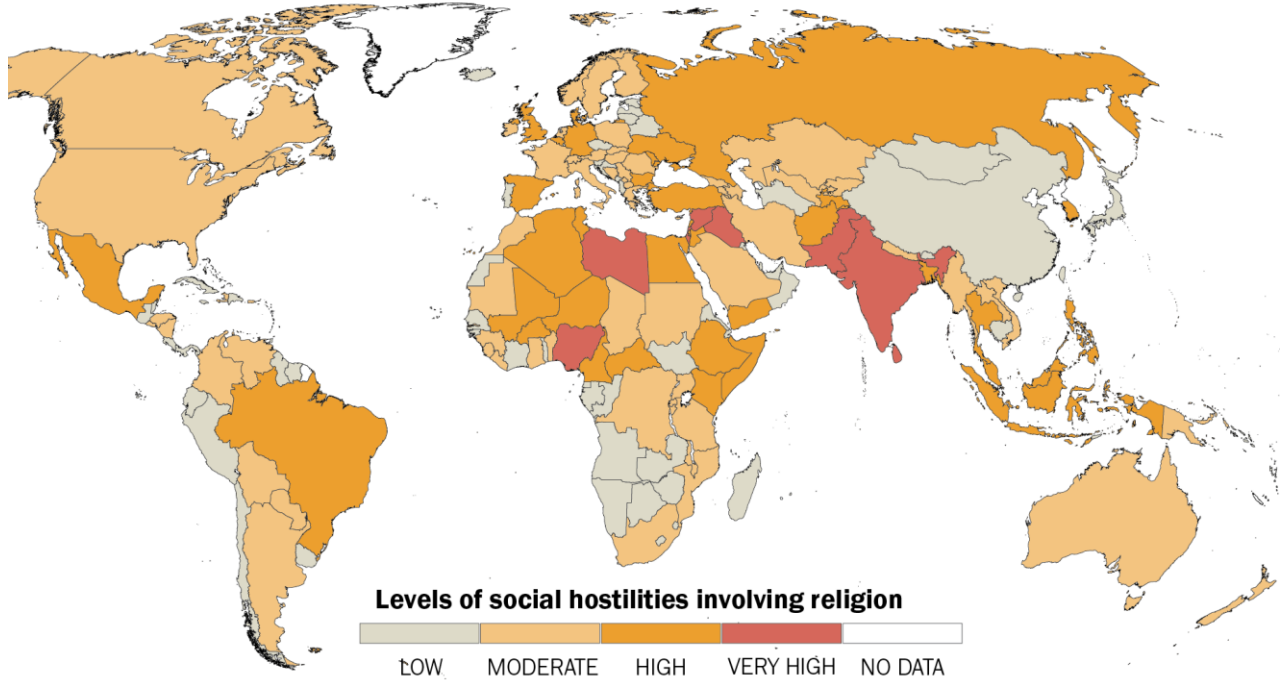
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. See Methodology for details.

"Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Social hostilities involving religion around the world

Level of social hostilities involving religion in each country as of 2019



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. See Methodology for details.

"Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

4. Restrictions on religion in the world's 25 most populous countries in 2019

One way to examine the reach of religious restrictions is to look just at the world's 25 most populous countries. Of course, religious restrictions do not affect everyone within a country equally, but looking at government restrictions and social hostilities in these 25 countries – which claim three-quarters of the global population, or more than 5 billion people – can provide insight into how a large portion of the world's population is impacted by restrictions on religion.

In 2019, Egypt, India, Pakistan, Nigeria and Russia had the highest **overall** levels of combined government restrictions and social hostilities involving religion among these 25 countries. Within this group, Japan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Africa, Italy and the United States had the lowest overall scores.⁶¹

When it comes to **government restrictions alone**, China, Egypt, Russia, Iran and Indonesia had the highest levels of restrictions and all ranked in the “very high” category. Among the 25 most populous countries in the world, the countries with the lowest levels of government restrictions were Japan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Philippines, South Africa and Brazil; all of these fell into the “low” category of government restrictions except for Brazil, which was in the “moderate” category.

The most populous countries with the highest levels of **social hostilities** involving religion were India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Egypt, all of which fell into either the “high” or “very high” category in 2019. Meanwhile, Japan, China, Iran, the United States and Italy had the lowest levels of social hostilities among the 25 most populous countries in the world, though only China and Japan were categorized as having “low” levels of social hostilities. Iran, the U.S. and Italy had “moderate” levels of social hostilities involving religion.

In some cases, a country's category for government restrictions matches its category for social hostilities. For instance, Japan had both “low” government restrictions and “low” social hostilities in 2019, while Thailand scored “high” on both measures. There also are cases when countries have GRI and SHI scores that look very different. For example, China had the highest score on the Government Restrictions Index out of all 198 countries and territories included in the study, yet it had “low” levels of social hostilities involving religion.

⁶¹ For this analysis, Pew Research Center used 2020 population estimates published by the United Nations. In previous reports, 2010 UN population estimates were used. South Korea fell out of the 25 most populous countries, while Tanzania joined the list.

In 2019, none of the world's 25 most populous countries experienced large changes (2.0 points or more) in their GRI scores, and most experienced small changes (less than 1 point). Four of the 25 most populous countries shifted from one category to another on the GRI: Vietnam dropped from the "very high" to the "high" category, while Nigeria dropped from "high" to "moderate" and the Democratic Republic of the Congo dropped from "moderate" to "low." Brazil, which experienced an increase in its GRI score, rose from "low" to "moderate" levels of government restrictions on religion. Brazil's score rose due to reports that authorities enforced restrictions on religious head coverings in 2019, while the score fell in the Democratic Republic of the Congo because there were no reports of detentions, physical assaults or killings of Christians.⁶² (In 2018, security forces in the country targeted Catholics and Protestants protesting in support of credible elections.⁶³)

Similarly, looking at changes in Social Hostilities Index (SHI) scores, none of the 25 most populous countries experienced large changes of 2.0 points or more. However, nine countries – the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, France, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Mexico, South Africa and the U.S. – had modest declines between 1.0 and 1.9 points. Egypt fell from the "very high" to the "high" category on the SHI, while the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Africa and France went from having "high" to "moderate" social hostilities involving religion. Egypt's score on the index fell partially because there were no reports of abductions of Coptic Christian women, unlike in previous years.⁶⁴ And in South Africa, there was a decline in injuries and killings resulting from terrorism related to religion between 2018 and 2019.⁶⁵

⁶² U.S. Department of State. June 2020. "[Brazil](#)." International Religious Freedom Report for 2019.

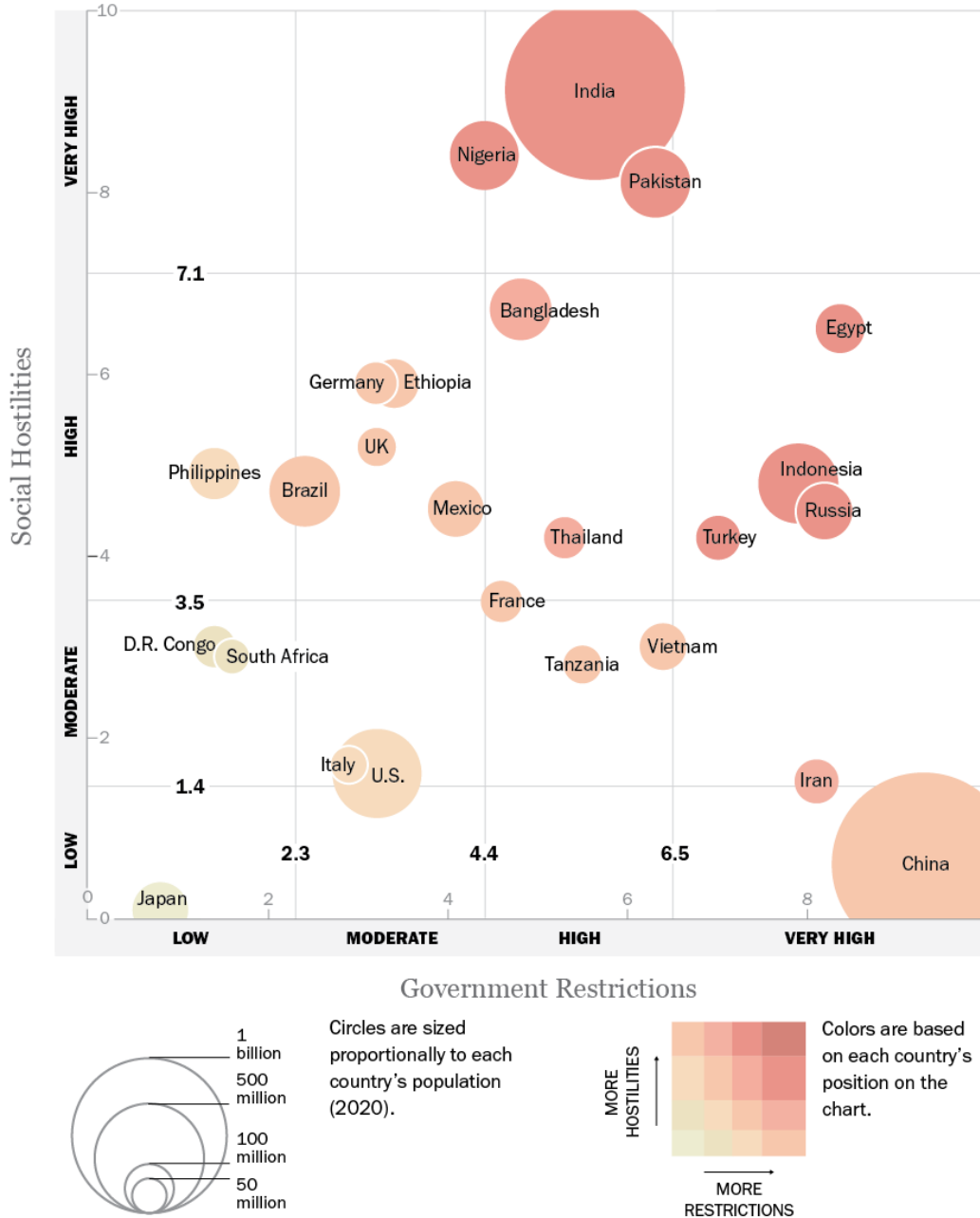
⁶³ U.S. Department of State. June 2019. "[Democratic Republic of the Congo](#)." International Religious Freedom Report for 2018

⁶⁴ Human Rights Without Frontiers. December 2018. "[Egypt 2018](#)." 2018 Freedom of Religion or Belief News Database.

⁶⁵ U.S. Department of State. June 2019. "[South Africa](#)." International Religious Freedom Report for 2018.

Restrictions on religion among the world's 25 most populous countries

Among the world's most populous 25 countries, Egypt, India, Pakistan, Nigeria and Russia stand out as having the most restrictions on religion (as of 2019) when both government restrictions and social hostilities are taken into account. (Countries in the upper right of the chart have the most restrictions and hostilities.) Japan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Africa, Italy and the United States have the least restrictions and hostilities. (Countries in the lower left of the chart have the least restrictions and hostilities.) Scores are for calendar year 2019.



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. See Methodology for details.
 "Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Methodology

This is the 12th time Pew Research Center has measured restrictions on religion around the globe.⁶⁶ This report, which includes data for the year ending Dec. 31, 2019, generally follows the same methodology as previous reports.

Pew Research Center uses two 10-point indexes – the Government Restrictions Index (GRI) and the Social Hostilities Index (SHI) – to rate 198 countries and self-governing territories on their levels of restrictions.⁶⁷ This report analyzes changes in restrictions on an annual basis, focusing on the 2019 calendar year.

The study categorizes the direction and degree of change in each country’s scores in two ways: numerically and by percentile. First, countries are grouped into categories depending on the size of the numeric change in their scores from year to year on the two indexes: changes of 2 points or more in either direction, changes of at least 1 point but less than 2 points, changes of less than 1 point, or no change at all. (See chart at right.)

Changes in overall levels of restrictions are calculated for each country by comparing its scores on both indexes (the GRI and the SHI) from year to year. When a country’s scores on the GRI and the SHI changed in the same direction (both increased or both decreased), the greater amount of change determines the category. For instance, if the country’s GRI score increased by 0.8 and its SHI score increased by 1.5, the country was put into the overall “1.0-1.9 increase” category. When a country’s score increased on one index but decreased on the other, the difference between the amounts of change determines the grouping. For example, if the country’s GRI score increased by 2.0 and its SHI score decreased by 1.5, the country went into the overall “0.1-0.9 increase” category. When a country’s score on one index stayed the same, the amount of change on the other index was used to assign the category.

Index point change

Categories for assessing index score changes between years

2.0 or more increase
1.0 to 1.9 increase
0.1 to 0.9 increase
No change
0.1 to 0.9 decrease
1.0 to 1.9 decrease
2.0 or more decrease

“Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

⁶⁶ See Methodology of Pew Research Center’s 2009 report “[Global Restrictions on Religion](#)” for a discussion of the conceptual basis for measuring restrictions on religion.

⁶⁷ Some earlier reports provided scores for 197 countries and territories. This report includes South Sudan (which separated from Sudan in July 2011), bringing the total to 198 countries and territories.

Second, this report categorizes the levels of government restrictions and social hostilities in each country by percentiles. As the benchmark, it uses the results from the baseline year of the study (the year ending in mid-2007). Scores in the top 5% on each index in mid-2007 were categorized as “very high.” The next highest 15% of scores were categorized as “high,” and the following 20% were categorized as “moderate.” The bottom 60% of scores were categorized as “low.” See the table to the right for the index score thresholds as determined from the mid-2007 data. These thresholds are applied to all subsequent years of data.

Overview of procedures

The methodology used by Pew Research Center to assess and compare restrictions on religion was developed by former Pew Research Center senior researcher and director of cross-national data Brian J. Grim, in consultation with other Pew Research Center staff members, building on a methodology that Grim and Professor Roger Finke developed while at Penn State University’s Association of Religion Data Archives.⁶⁸ The goal was to devise quantifiable, objective and transparent measures of the extent to which governments and societal groups impinge on the practice of religion. The findings were used to rate countries and self-governing territories on two indexes that are reproducible and can be periodically updated.

This research goes beyond previous efforts to assess restrictions on religion in several ways. First, the Center coded (categorized and counted) data from more than a dozen published cross-national sources, providing a high degree of confidence in the findings. Pew Research Center coders looked to the sources for only specific, well-documented facts, not opinions or commentary.

Second, Pew Research Center staff used extensive data-verification checks that reflect generally accepted best practices for such studies, such as double-blind coding (coders do not see each other’s ratings), inter-rater reliability assessments (checking for consistency among coders) and carefully monitored protocols to reconcile discrepancies among coders.

Level of restrictions on religion

	GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS INDEX	SOCIAL HOSTILITIES INDEX
Very high	6.6 to 10.0	7.2 to 10.0
High	4.5 to 6.5	3.6 to 7.1
Moderate	2.4 to 4.4	1.5 to 3.5
Low	0.0 to 2.3	0.0 to 1.4

Note: Based on distribution of index scores in the baseline year, ending mid-2007.

“Globally, Social Hostilities Related to Religion Decline in 2019, While Government Restrictions Remain at Highest Levels”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

⁶⁸ See Grim, Brian J., and Roger Finke. 2006. “[International Religion Indexes: Government Regulation, Government Favoritism, and Social Regulation of Religion.](#)” *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion.*

Third, the coding took into account whether the perpetrators of religion-related violence were government or private actors. The coding also identified how widespread and intensive the restrictions were in each country.

Fourth, one of the most valuable contributions of the indexes and the questions used to construct them (see “The coding instrument” later in the Methodology) is their ability to chart change over time.

Countries and territories

The 198 countries and territories covered by the study contain more than 99.5% of the world’s population. They include 192 of the 193 member states of the United Nations as of 2019, plus six territories – Kosovo, Hong Kong, Macao, the Palestinian territories, Taiwan and Western Sahara.⁶⁹ Reporting on these territories does not imply any position on what their international political status should be, only recognition that the de facto situations in these territories require separate analysis.

Although the 198 countries and territories vary widely in size, population, wealth, ethnic diversity, religious makeup and form of government, the study does not attempt to adjust for such differences. Poor countries are not scored differently on the indexes than wealthy ones. Countries with diverse ethnic and religious populations are not “expected” to have more social hostilities than countries with more homogeneous populations. And democracies are not assessed more leniently or harshly than authoritarian regimes.

Western Sahara coding

Western Sahara is considered a non-self-governing territory by the United Nations. Morocco administers part of the territory using the Moroccan constitution and its laws, including laws affecting religious freedom.⁷⁰ As a consequence, this report considers the policies and actions of the Moroccan government when assessing government restrictions on religion in Western Sahara. The government restrictions coding reflects Morocco’s de facto control over parts of Western

⁶⁹ The one member state of the United Nations not included in the study is North Korea. The sources clearly indicate that North Korea’s government is among the most repressive in the world with respect to religion as well as other civil and political liberties. The U.S. Department of State’s 2015 Report on International Religious Freedom, for example, says that “Religious freedom does not exist in North Korea despite the constitutional guarantee for the freedom of religion,” and there are no indications that this changed in 2019. But because North Korean society is effectively closed to outsiders and independent observers lack regular access to the country, the sources were unable to provide the kind of specific, timely information that Pew Research Center categorized and counted (“coded,” in social science parlance) for this quantitative study. Therefore, the report does not include scores for North Korea. See also U.S. Department of State. August 2016. “[Democratic People’s Republic of Korea](#).” International Religious Freedom Report for 2015.

⁷⁰ U.S. Department of State. June 2020. “[Western Sahara](#).” International Religious Freedom Report for 2019. See also United Nations. “[Non-Self-Governing Territories](#).” The United Nations and Decolonization.

Sahara and is not intended as a Pew Research Center position on the status of the territory. When researchers evaluate social hostilities involving religion, Western Sahara and Morocco are coded separately.

Information sources

In the latest year of the study, Pew Research Center identified 19 widely available, frequently cited sources of information on government restrictions and social hostilities involving religion around the world. This study includes four sources that were not used in the baseline report on religious restrictions.

The primary and secondary sources, which are listed below, include reports from U.S. government agencies, several independent, nongovernmental organizations and a variety of European and United Nations bodies. Although most of these organizations are based in Western countries, many of them depend on local staff to collect information across the globe. As previously noted, Pew Research Center did not use the commentaries, opinions or normative judgments of the sources; the sources were combed only for factual information on specific policies and actions.

Primary and secondary sources for 2019

1. Country constitutions
2. U.S. Department of State annual reports on International Religious Freedom
3. U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom annual reports
4. U.N. Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief reports
5. Human Rights First reports in first and second years of coding; Freedom House reports in subsequent years of coding
6. Human Rights Watch topical reports
7. International Crisis Group country reports
8. United Kingdom Foreign & Commonwealth Office annual report on human rights
9. Council of the European Union annual report on human rights

10. START Global Terrorism Database at the University of Maryland
11. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports
12. U.S. Department of State annual Country Reports on Terrorism
13. Anti-Defamation League reports
14. U.S. Department of State Country Reports on Human Rights Practices
15. Uppsala University's Uppsala Conflict Data Program, Armed Conflict Database
16. Human Rights Without Frontiers "Freedom of Religion or Belief" newsletters
17. Amnesty International Country Profiles
18. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Population Statistics Database
19. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre Global Internal Displacement Database

U.S. government reports with information on the situation in the United States

- U.S. Department of Justice "Religious Freedom in Focus" newsletters and reports
- FBI Hate Crime Reports

As noted, this study includes four sources that were not included in Pew Research Center's first report on global restrictions on religion: Freedom House reports, Uppsala University's Armed Conflict Database, the "Freedom of Religion or Belief" newsletters of Human Rights Without Frontiers, and the Global Terrorism Database.

The Freedom House reports have replaced Human Rights First reports, which have not been updated since mid-2008. The Uppsala Armed Conflict Database provides information on the number of people affected by religion-related armed conflicts, supplementing other sources. The Human Rights Without Frontiers "Freedom of Religion or Belief" newsletters have replaced the Hudson Institute publication "Religious Freedom in the World" (by Paul Marshall), which has not been updated since its release in 2008. Human Rights Without Frontiers is a nongovernmental organization based in Brussels that has affiliated offices throughout the world.

Since 2013, Pew Research Center has used data from the Global Terrorism Database, maintained by the University of Maryland’s National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), along with the International Crisis Group’s country reports, Uppsala University’s Armed Conflict Database and the U.S. State Department annual Country Reports on Terrorism, for information on religion-related terrorism. (One source used in earlier reports, the U.S. government’s Worldwide Incident Tracking System, or WITS, is no longer available online.) Prior to 2013, the report relied only on the International Crisis Group reports, the Uppsala database and the State Department reports for information on religion-related terrorism. The Global Terrorism Database is one of the most comprehensive sources on terrorism around the world and is the source for the State Department Country Reports on Terrorism. The addition of this source thus provides greater context and information on terrorism without biasing the reporting through the addition of information that was not previously available.

While some of the increases in religious restrictions noted in this study could reflect the use of more up-to-date and/or better informational sources, Pew Research Center staff monitor the impact of source information variability each year and have found no evidence of overall informational bias. (For additional discussion, see the “Potential Biases” section in the 2014 report, “[Religious Hostilities Reach Six-Year High](#).”)

In most years, Pew Research Center has included Amnesty International’s country profiles as one of the sources used for this study. These profiles were not updated for the year 2018, so they are absent as a source for the report covering 2018 events. Amnesty International reports were used for this report covering 2019 events, however.

The coding instrument

As explained in more detail below, Pew Research Center staff developed a battery of questions similar to a survey questionnaire. Coders consulted the primary and secondary sources in order to answer the questions separately for each country. While the U.S. State Department’s annual reports on International Religious Freedom generally contained the most comprehensive information, the other sources provided additional factual detail that was used to settle ambiguities, resolve contradictions and help in the proper scoring of each question.

The questionnaire, or coding instrument, generated a set of numerical measures on restrictions in each country. It also made it possible to see how government restrictions intersect with broader social tensions and incidents of violence or intimidation by private actors. The coding instrument with the list of questions used for this report is shown in the summary of results (see Appendix D for more).

The coding process required the coders to check all the sources for each country. Coders determined whether each source provided information critical to assigning a score; had supporting information but did not result in new facts; or had no available information on that particular country. Multiple sources of information were available for all countries and territories with populations greater than 1 million. Most of the countries and territories analyzed by Pew Research Center had multiple sources; only small (predominantly island) countries had a single source, namely the State Department reports.

Coding the United States presented a special problem since it is not included in the State Department's annual reports on International Religious Freedom. Accordingly, Pew Research Center coders also looked at reports from the U.S. Department of Justice and the FBI on violations of religious freedom in the United States, in addition to consulting all the primary and secondary sources, including reports by the United Nations, Human Rights Watch, Freedom House, the International Crisis Group and the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office, many of which contain data on the U.S.

The coding process

Pew Research Center employed strict training and rigorous coding protocols to make its coding as objective and reproducible as possible. Coders worked directly under an experienced researcher's supervision, with additional direction and support provided by other Pew Research Center researchers. The coders underwent an intensive training period that included a thorough overview of the research objectives, information sources and methodology.

Countries were double-blind coded by two coders (coders did not see each other's ratings), and the initial ratings were entered into an electronic document (coding instrument) including details on each incident. The coders began by filling out the coding instrument for each country using the information source that had the most comprehensive information. The protocol for each coder was to answer every question on which information was available in the initial source. Once a coder had completed that process, they then turned to the other sources. As new information was found, this was also coded and the source duly noted. Whenever ambiguities or contradictions arose, the source providing the most detailed, clearly documented evidence was used.

After two coders had separately completed the coding instrument for a particular country, their scores were compared by a research analyst. Areas of discrepancy were discussed at length with the coders and were reconciled in order to arrive at a single score on each question for each country. The data for each country was then combined into a master file, and the answers and substantiating evidence were entered into a database.

After data collection for all countries was completed, Pew Research Center coders and researchers compared the scores from calendar year 2019 with those from the previous year, ending Dec. 31, 2018. They identified scores that had changed and analyzed the substantiating evidence for each year to make sure the change was substantive and not the result of coder error. Throughout this process, the coding instrument itself was continually monitored for possible defects. The questions were designed to be precise, comprehensive and objective so that, based on the same data and definitions, the coding could be reliably reproduced by others with the same results. At the same time, the Center has attempted to minimize changes to the coding instrument as much as is possible to ensure all changes between years are the result of actual changes in restrictions and hostilities, not changes in methodology.

Pew Research Center staff generally found few cases in which one source contradicted another. When contradictions did arise – such as when sources provided differing estimates of the number of people displaced due to religion-related violence – the source that cited the most specific documentation was used. The coders were instructed to disregard broad, unsubstantiated generalizations regarding abuses and to focus on reports that contained clear, precise documentation and factual details, such as names, dates and places where incidents occurred.

Pew Research Center staff compared coders' scores for all questions for each of the 198 countries and territories included in the study, computing the degree to which the scores matched. The inter-rater reliability score across all variables was 0.78. Scores at or above 0.7 are generally considered good.

The data-verification procedures went beyond the inter-rater reliability statistics. They also involved comparing the answers on the main measures for each country with other closely related questions in the data set. This provided a practical way to test the internal reliability of the data.

In previous years, Pew Research Center staff also checked the reliability of the coded data by comparing it with similar, though more limited, religious restrictions datasets. In particular, published government and social regulation of religion index scores are available from the Association of Religion Data Archives (for three years of data) and the Hudson Institute (for one year of data), which makes them ideal measures for cross-validation. The review process found very few significant discrepancies in the coded data; changes were made only if warranted by a further review of the primary and secondary sources.

Restriction of religion indexes

The Government Restrictions Index (GRI) is based on 20 indicators of ways that national and local governments restrict religion, including through coercion and force. The Social Hostilities Index (SHI) is based on 13 indicators of ways in which private individuals and social groups infringe upon religious beliefs and practices, including religiously biased crimes, mob violence and efforts to stop particular religious groups from growing or operating. The study also counted the number and types of documented incidents of religion-related violence, including terrorism and armed conflict.

Government Restrictions Index

Coding multiple indicators makes it possible to construct a Government Restrictions Index of sufficient gradation to allow for meaningful cross-national comparisons. An additional advantage of using multiple indicators is that it helps mitigate the effects of measurement error in any one variable, providing greater confidence in the overall measure.

Pew Research Center coded 20 indicators of government restrictions on religion (see the summary of results in Appendix D). These 20 items were added together to create the GRI. In two cases, these items represent an aggregation of several closely related questions: Measures of five types of physical abuses are combined into a single variable (GRI Q.19), and seven questions measuring aspects of government favoritism are combined into an overall favoritism scale (GRI Q.20 is a summary variable showing whether a country received the maximum score on one or more of the seven questions).

The GRI is a fine-grained measure created by adding the 20 items on a zero-to-10 metric, with zero indicating very low levels of government restrictions on religion and 10 indicating very high levels of restrictions. The 20 questions that form the GRI are coded in a standard scale from zero to 1 point, while gradations among the answers allowed for partial points to be given for lesser degrees of the particular government restriction being measured. The overall value of the index was calculated and proportionally adjusted – so that it had a maximum value of 10 and a possible range of zero to 10 – by dividing the sum of the variables by two.

A test of whether the 20 items were statistically reliable as a single index produced a scale reliability coefficient of 0.90 for calendar year 2019. Since coefficients of 0.7 or higher are generally considered acceptable, it was statistically appropriate to combine these 20 items into a single index.

Social Hostilities Index

In addition to government restrictions, violence and intimidation in societies also can limit religious beliefs and practices. Accordingly, Pew Research Center staff tracked more than a dozen indicators of social impediments on religion. Once again, coding multiple indicators made it possible to construct an index that shows gradations of severity or intensity and allows for comparisons among countries. The summary of results contains the 13 items used by Pew Research Center staff to create the Social Hostilities Index.

The SHI was constructed by adding together the 13 indicators based on a zero-to-10 metric, with zero indicating very low impediments to religious beliefs and practices, and 10 indicating very high impediments. The various questions that form the index are coded in a standard scale from zero to 1 point, while gradations among the answers allow for partial points to be given for lesser degrees of the particular hostilities being measured. The indicators were added together and set to have a possible range of zero to 10 by dividing the sum of the variables by 1.3.

As with the Government Restrictions Index, various types of violence and intimidation were combined. A test of whether these 13 items were statistically reliable as a single index produced a scale reliability coefficient of 0.86. Since coefficients of 0.7 or higher are generally considered acceptable, it was statistically appropriate to combine these items into a single index.

How examples are coded

Examples of each type of government restriction or social hostility are generally counted in a single measure on the GRI or SHI. For instance, a restriction on proselytizing (sharing one's faith with the intent of persuading another to join the faith) is not also counted as a restriction on conversion (an individual changing their religion). In some situations, however, an individual restriction or hostility may be part of a broader set of restrictions or hostilities. For instance, a mob attack by members of one religious group on an individual of another religion may be an isolated event and counted just under question SHI Q.2: "Was there mob violence related to religion?" However, if such an attack triggers repeated attacks between religious groups, it also might be an indication of sectarian or communal violence, which by definition involves two or more religious groups facing off in repeated clashes. In such a case, the mob attack also would be counted under question SHI Q.3: "Were there acts of sectarian or communal violence between religious groups?" (See the summary of results in Appendix D.)

For a number of questions on the Social Hostilities Index (SHI. Q.6, Q.7, Q.8, Q.9, Q.10, Q.11, Q.12 and Q.13), coders look at incidents in the State Department's International Religious Freedom Reports from the previous two calendar years to capture ongoing social hostilities in a country.

Social harassment and intimidation coding

Beginning with data for 2017, researchers updated the way social harassment and intimidation of religion is calculated. There are six components that encompass question SHI Q.1.a: “Were there crimes, malicious acts or violence motivated by religious hatred or bias?” The six components include harassment/intimidation, property damage, detentions/abductions, displacement from homes, physical assaults and deaths (see Appendix D). For the “harassment/intimidation” measure, researchers made an update to count “limited” harassment as 0.5 points and “widespread” harassment as 1.0 point for data covering 2017 onward. “Limited” means infrequent or isolated and indicates that the harassment seems unlikely to continue. “Widespread” does not necessarily mean the whole country, but it could be present in certain regions, have potential of spreading to other regions, affect several groups, indicate a substantial uptick in the number of cases of abuse or indicate a possible campaign against a certain religion(s) or practices.

The other five components of SHI.Q.1.a are coded as yes (1.0 point) or no (0.0 points) based on whether incidents in each subcategory occurred. Compared with the previous method, this update to coding “limited” and “widespread” intimidation and harassment resulted in a change of no more than 0.1 points to the SHI score of 53 countries in 2017.

Effects of consolidating to a new database

For the first few years of this study, information on the number, types and locations of incidents of government force and social violence toward religious groups, as well as deference to religious authorities in matters of law, were coded at the province level. (See “Example of Data Coding: India” in the Methodology section of the December 2009 baseline report.) Each year, the province numbers were summed and put into separate country-level files. Following the publication of the August 2011 report, Pew Research Center staff created a database that integrated all province- and country-level data on religious restrictions. During this process, Pew Research Center staff reviewed any discrepancies between province files and the sums that had been transferred to the country files and made appropriate corrections. The adjustments made were relatively minor and had small effects on index scores for countries, on average less than 0.005 on the 10-point indexes. Consolidating the data into a database also entailed a review of the data on harassment of religious groups. In particular, instances of harassment from the year ending in mid-2007 were stored as open-ended questions, and in a few cases, they were recoded to match the categories used in subsequent years.

Beginning with data covering 2012, Pew Research Center stopped collecting data at the province level; all data was coded at the country level.

Changing time period of analysis

This is the ninth time Pew Research Center has analyzed restrictions on religion in a calendar year. Previous reports analyzed 12-month periods from July 1-June 30 (e.g., July 1, 2009-June 30, 2010). The shift to calendar years was made, in part, because most of the primary and secondary sources used in this study are based on calendar years.

Because of the shift in time frame, previous studies did not report directly on incidents that occurred during the period from July 1-Dec. 31, 2010. While this misses some incidents that occurred during the second half of 2010, events that had an ongoing impact – such as a change to a country’s constitution or the outbreak of a religion-related war – were captured by the coding. Researchers for the study carefully reviewed the situation in each country and territory during this six-month period and ensured that restrictions with an ongoing impact were not overlooked.

Religion-related terrorism and armed conflict

Terrorism and war can have huge direct and indirect effects on religious groups, including destroying religious sites, displacing whole communities and inflaming sectarian passions. Accordingly, Pew Research Center tallied the number, location and consequences of religion-related terrorism and armed conflict around the world, as reported in the same primary and secondary sources used to document other forms of intimidation and violence. However, war and terrorism are sufficiently complex that it is not always possible to determine the degree to which they are religiously motivated or state sponsored. Out of an abundance of caution, this study does not include them in the Government Restrictions Index. They are factored instead into the index of social hostilities involving religion, which includes one question specifically about religion-related terrorism and one question specifically about religion-related war or armed conflict. In addition, other measures in both indexes are likely to pick up spillover effects of war and terrorism on the level of religious tensions in society. For example, hate crimes, mob violence and sectarian fighting that occur in the aftermath of a terrorist attack or in the context of a religion-related war would be counted in the Social Hostilities Index, and laws or policies that clearly discriminate against a particular religious group would be registered on the Government Restrictions Index.

For the purposes of this study, the term “religion-related terrorism” is defined as premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatants by subnational groups or clandestine agents that have some identifiable religious ideology or religious motivation. It also includes acts carried out by groups that have a nonreligious identity but affect religious personnel, such as clergy. Readers should note that it is the political character and motivation of the groups, not the type of violence, that is at issue here. For instance, a bombing would not be classified as religion-related terrorism if there was no clearly discernible religious ideology or bias behind it,

unless it was directed at religious personnel. Religion-related war or armed conflict is defined as armed conflict (a conflict that involves sustained casualties over time or more than 1,000 battle deaths) in which religious rhetoric is commonly used to justify the use of force, or in which one or more of the combatants primarily identifies itself or the opposing side by religion.

Changes to Somalia's coding

Starting with data covering 2013, researchers changed the way they coded government restrictions in Somalia. In previous years of the study, researchers had coded actions by the al-Shabab rebel group as government restrictions, largely because the group effectively controlled large swathes of Somali territory. The extent of al-Shabaab control over Somali territory decreased in calendar year 2013, so researchers did not code their actions as government restrictions but rather as social hostilities. Researchers continued to follow this policy when coding data for 2019.

Crimea coding

Starting with data covering 2015, researchers coded incidents occurring in Crimea as part of Russia's GRI and SHI score. This is to reflect Russia's de facto control over Crimea and is not intended as a Pew Research Center position on the de jure status of the territory, which the United Nations recognizes as part of Ukraine.⁷¹

Changes to Yemen's coding

Starting with data covering 2016, researchers changed the way they coded social hostilities in Yemen. In previous years of the study, researchers had coded actions by Houthi rebels as social hostilities. In 2016, however, Houthis formed their own government and had control of territory that is home to more than half of Yemen's population.⁷² For this reason, researchers coded actions by the Houthi in 2016 as government restrictions rather than social hostilities and continued to do so in 2019.

Displacement coding

Starting with data covering 2016, researchers changed the way they coded displacement caused by religion-related conflict or terrorism. Previously, researchers would record displacement figures that were reported in any sources. During the coding period covering 2015, researchers continued to code displacement figures in this way but also recorded displacement figures from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as well as the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), in order to compare the results. Researchers found that the figures

⁷¹ United Nations. March 2014. "[Territorial integrity of Ukraine](#)." Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 27 March 2014.

⁷² Nov. 28, 2016. "[Yemen: Houthi rebels form new government](#)." Al Jazeera.

from the UNHCR and IDMC more closely matched United Nations estimates for new displacements in the calendar year than did the previous method of capturing displacements, which tended to overestimate the number of new displacements in a coding year because the figures often included the *total* number of displaced people from a country and not necessarily the *newly* displaced. Therefore, beginning with the data covering 2016, researchers exclusively used UNHCR and IDMC figures to more conservatively estimate the number of new displacements in the coding year. Displacement was only coded in countries with active religion-related conflict or terrorism in order to avoid including displacements from other types of conflicts or terrorism.

Country constitution audit

Researchers conducted an audit of country constitutions for coding covering the years 2007-2014. While the vast majority of country constitutions were correctly coded as to whether they included religious freedom provisions, there were a few countries where the coding was amended. These included Mexico, Costa Rica, Fiji, Iran, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Cameroon, Kenya and Mozambique. These amendments resulted in minimal changes in these countries' overall GRI scores and did not alter overall trends represented in previous reports. Two countries – Mexico and Costa Rica – had score changes that pushed them from one category to another in 2014. Mexico's 2014 GRI score decreased from "high" to "moderate," while Costa Rica's 2014 GRI score increased from "low" to "moderate."

Potential biases

As noted earlier, the primary and secondary sources indicate that the North Korean government is among the most repressive in the world, including toward religion. But because independent observers lack regular access to North Korea, the sources are unable to provide the kind of specific, timely information that forms the basis of this report. Therefore, North Korea is not included on either index.

This raises two important issues concerning potential information bias in the sources. The first is whether other countries that limit outsiders' access and that may seek to obscure or distort their record on religious restrictions were adequately covered by the sources. Countries with relatively limited access have multiple primary and secondary sources of information that the Center used for its coding. Each is also covered by other secondary quantitative data sets on religious restrictions that have used a similar coding scheme, including earlier years of coded State Department report data produced by Brian J. Grim at Penn State University's Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA) project (four data sets); independent coding by experts at the Hudson Institute's Center for Religious Liberty using indexes also available from ARDA (one data set); and content analysis of country constitutions conducted by the Becket Fund for Religious

Liberty (one data set). Pew Research Center staff used these for cross-validation. Thus, contrary to what one might expect, even most countries that limit access to information tend to receive fairly extensive coverage by groups that monitor religious restrictions.

The second key question – the flipside of the first – is whether countries that provide freer access to information receive worse scores simply because more information is available on them. As described more fully in the Methodology in the 2009 baseline report, Pew Research Center staff compared the length of State Department reports on freer-access countries with those of less-free-access countries. The comparison found that the median number of words was approximately three times as large for the limited-access countries as for the open-access countries. This suggests that problems in freer-access countries are generally not overreported in the State Department reports.

Only when it comes to religion-related violence and intimidation in society do the sources report more problems in the freer-access countries than in the limited-access ones. However, the Social Hostilities Index includes several measures – such as SHI Q.8 (“Did religious groups themselves attempt to prevent other religious groups from being able to operate?”) and SHI Q.11 (“Were women harassed for violating religious dress codes?”) – that are less susceptible to such reporting bias because they capture general social trends or attitudes as well as specific incidents. With these limitations in mind, it appears that the coded information on social hostilities is a fair gauge of the situation in the vast majority of countries and a valuable complement to the information on government restrictions.

Data on social impediments to religious practice can more confidently be used to make comparisons among countries with sufficient openness, which includes more than nine-in-ten countries covered in the coding. An analysis by Grim and Richard Wike, Pew Research Center’s director of global attitudes research, tested the reliability of the State Department reports on social impediments to religious practice by comparing public opinion data with data coded from the reports in previous years by Grim and experts at Penn State University. They concluded that “the understanding of social religious intolerance embodied in the State Department reports is comparable with the results of population surveys and individual expert opinion.”⁷³

⁷³ See Grim, Brian J., and Richard Wike. 2010. “[Cross-Validating Measures of Global Religious Intolerance: Comparing Coded State Department Reports with Survey Data and Expert Opinion.](#)” Politics and Religion.

Coding harassment of specific religious groups

As in previous reports, this study provides a summary of the number of countries where specific religious groups faced government or social harassment. This is essentially a cross-tabulation of GRI.Q.11 (“Was there harassment or intimidation of religious groups by any level of government?”) and the first type of religious hatred or bias measured in SHI.Q.1.a. (“Did individuals face harassment or intimidation motivated by religious hatred or bias?”). For the purposes of this study, the definition of harassment includes any mention in the primary and secondary sources of an offense against an individual or group based on religious identity. Such offenses may range from physical attacks and direct coercion to more subtle forms of discrimination. But prejudicial opinions or attitudes, in and of themselves, do not constitute harassment unless they are acted upon in a palpable way.

As noted above, this study provides data on the number of countries in which different religious groups are harassed or intimidated. But the study does not assess either the severity or the frequency of the harassment in each country. Therefore, the results should not be interpreted as gauging which religious group faces the most harassment or persecution around the world.

Government Restrictions Index (cont.)

Equatorial Guinea
 Somalia
 Cameroon
 Cyprus
 Germany
 Norway
 United Kingdom
 United States
 Kenya
 Mongolia
 Sierra Leone
 Zambia
 Slovakia
 Uganda
 Central African Republic
 Italy
 Kosovo
 Luxembourg
 Montenegro ▲
 Bosnia-Herzegovina
 Hungary
 Lithuania
 Madagascar
 Nicaragua
 North Macedonia
 Burkina Faso ▲
 Costa Rica
 Eswatini
 Guinea
 Latvia
 Monaco
 Seychelles
 South Korea
 Sweden
 Switzerland
 Togo
 Ecuador
 Finland
 Guyana
 Andorra
 Brazil ▲

Czech Republic
 Dominica
 South Sudan

Low

SCORES 0.0 TO 2.3

Barbados
 El Salvador
 Croatia
 Haiti
 Malawi
 Malta
 Argentina
 Jamaica
 Canada
 Grenada
 Honduras
 Liechtenstein
 Republic of the Congo
 Tuvalu
 Albania
 Guatemala
 St. Lucia
 Hong Kong
 Nauru
 Slovenia
 Mali
 Paraguay
 Taiwan
 Ghana
 Papua New Guinea
 Peru
 South Africa
 St. Kitts and Nevis
 Tonga
 Uruguay
 Cape Verde
 Chile
 Dominican Republic

Fiji
 Ireland
 Mauritius
 Panama ▼
 Colombia
 Democratic Rep. of the Congo ▼
 Estonia
 Ivory Coast
 Liberia
 Philippines
 Samoa
 St. Vincent and the Grenadines
 Botswana
 Namibia
 Vanuatu
 Australia
 Belize
 Gabon
 Gambia
 Macao
 Bolivia
 Portugal
 Solomon Islands
 Timor-Leste
 Trinidad and Tobago
 Kiribati
 Sao Tome and Principe
 Suriname
 Antigua and Barbuda
 Japan
 Benin
 Guinea-Bissau
 Senegal
 Lesotho
 Marshall Islands
 San Marino
 New Zealand
 Palau
 Federated States of Micronesia

NORTH KOREA: The sources used for this study clearly indicate that the government of North Korea is among the most repressive in the world with respect to religion as well as other civil liberties. But because North Korean society is effectively closed to outsiders, the sources are unable to provide the kind of specific and timely information that Pew Research Center coded in this quantitative study. Therefore, the report does not include a score for North Korea on either index.

SOMALIA: Starting with data covering 2013, researchers changed the way they coded government restrictions in Somalia. See the Methodology for more details.

Note: Myanmar is also called Burma. Eswatini was formerly known as Swaziland.

Social Hostilities Index (cont.)

Chad			
Serbia	▲		
Kazakhstan			
Mauritania			
Sudan			
Armenia	▼		
Canada			
Gambia			
Ghana			
Liberia			
Malawi	▲		
Rwanda			
Samoa			
Argentina			
Italy	▼		
Nicaragua			
Romania	▼		
Azerbaijan			
Bahrain			
Burundi			
United States	▼		
Venezuela			
Iran	▼		
Norway			
Sweden	▼		
Zimbabwe			
Czech Republic			
Guinea-Bissau			
Belize			
Fiji			
Gabon			
Guatemala			
Iceland			
Luxembourg			
Ivory Coast			
Madagascar			
Qatar	▼		
Slovenia			
Solomon Islands			
Timor-Leste			
Kuwait			
Liechtenstein			
Malta			
Senegal			
Togo			
Trinidad and Tobago	▼		
Uruguay	▼		
Zambia	▼		
Cambodia			
Chile			
Marshall Islands			
Angola			
China			
Lithuania			
Comoros			
Croatia			
Federated States of Micronesia			
Montenegro			
Bhutan			
Djibouti	▼		
Estonia			
Eswatini			
Hong Kong			
Mauritius			
Oman			
Western Sahara			
Ecuador			
Republic of the Congo			
Taiwan			
Tonga			
Costa Rica			
Cuba			
Latvia			
Peru			
Barbados			
Eritrea			
Jamaica			
Japan			
Portugal			
St. Kitts and Nevis			
St. Lucia			
St. Vincent and the Grenadines			
Albania			
Andorra			
Antigua and Barbuda			
Bahamas			
Botswana			
Cape Verde			
Dominica			
Dominican Republic			
Equatorial Guinea			
Grenada			
Guyana			
Lesotho			
Macao			
Monaco			
Namibia			
Nauru			
Palau			
Panama			
San Marino			
Seychelles			
Suriname			
Vanuatu			
Low			
SCORES 0 TO 1.4			
Belarus			
Brunei	▼		
Sao Tome and Principe	▲		
Kiribati			
Mongolia			
Singapore			
South Sudan	▼		
Turkmenistan			
Tuvalu			
United Arab Emirates			

NORTH KOREA: The sources used for this study clearly indicate that the government of North Korea is among the most repressive in the world with respect to religion as well as other civil liberties. But because North Korean society is effectively closed to outsiders, the sources are unable to provide the kind of specific and timely information that Pew Research Center coded in this quantitative study. Therefore, the report does not include a score for North Korea on either index.

YEMEN: Starting with data covering 2016, researchers changed the way they coded social hostilities in Yemen. See the Methodology for more details.

Note: Myanmar is also called Burma. Eswatini was formerly known as Swaziland.

Appendix C: Religious restrictions index scores by region

Scores in the table below express the levels of religious restrictions according to Pew Research Center's Government Restrictions Index (GRI) and Social Hostilities Index (SHI).

Americas 35 countries	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	GRI	SHI	GRI	SHI	GRI	SHI
Antigua and Barbuda	1.1	0.3	1.3	0.0	0.8	0.0
Argentina	1.7	0.6	2.3	1.3	2.1	1.7
Bahamas	1.4	0.5	3.1	0.0	3.4	0.0
Barbados	0.8	0.3	2.3	0.1	2.3	0.1
Belize	1.3	0.0	1.1	0.3	1.1	1.0
Bolivia	1.0	0.0	1.0	3.0	1.0	2.9
Brazil	0.4	0.8	1.3	4.5	2.4	4.7
Canada	1.0	1.2	1.2	2.3	2.0	1.9
Chile	1.2	0.4	1.3	0.8	1.5	0.7
Colombia	1.8	3.3	1.4	3.3	1.4	2.6
Costa Rica	1.0	0.0	2.7	0.1	2.7	0.2
Cuba	4.5	0.0	4.3	0.1	5.3	0.2
Dominica	0.8	0.3	1.6	0.0	2.4	0.0
Dominican Republic	0.6	0.0	1.3	0.0	1.5	0.0
Ecuador	1.1	0.6	2.2	0.4	2.5	0.3
El Salvador	0.6	0.4	2.3	3.1	2.3	2.7
Grenada	0.5	0.0	2.0	0.0	2.0	0.0
Guatemala	1.2	1.0	2.3	1.2	1.9	1.0
Guyana	0.7	0.0	2.5	0.0	2.5	0.0
Haiti	1.8	0.6	2.9	2.0	2.2	3.1
Honduras	1.3	0.3	2.0	1.4	2.0	2.5
Jamaica	1.0	0.0	1.4	0.1	2.1	0.1
Mexico	4.7	5.5	4.1	5.5	4.1	4.5
Nicaragua	2.1	0.5	3.2	1.8	2.8	1.7
Panama	0.7	0.0	2.6	0.0	1.5	0.0
Paraguay	0.6	0.7	1.9	1.5	1.7	2.2
Peru	1.8	0.0	2.0	0.7	1.6	0.2
St. Kitts and Nevis	0.6	0.3	1.5	0.1	1.6	0.1
St. Lucia	0.6	0.3	1.9	0.1	1.9	0.1
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	0.6	0.3	1.6	0.1	1.4	0.1
Suriname	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.9	0.0

Religious restrictions index scores by region (cont.)

Americas 35 countries (cont.)	<i>baseline</i> year, ending JUN 2007		<i>previous</i> year, ending DEC 2018		<i>latest</i> year, ending DEC 2019	
	COUNTRY		GRI	SHI	GRI	SHI
	Trinidad and Tobago	0.3	0.6	0.9	2.0	1.0
United States	1.6	1.9	3.2	2.6	3.2	1.6
Uruguay	0.3	0.6	1.6	2.0	1.6	0.8
Venezuela	3.6	0.8	4.1	0.8	3.8	1.6

Asia-Pacific 50 countries	<i>baseline</i> year, ending JUN 2007		<i>previous</i> year, ending DEC 2018		<i>latest</i> year, ending DEC 2019	
	COUNTRY		GRI	SHI	GRI	SHI
	Afghanistan	5.3	8.5	6.5	6.9	6.3
Armenia	3.4	2.7	4.8	4.2	3.5	1.9
Australia	1.3	1.8	1.8	2.7	1.1	2.4
Azerbaijan	5.0	2.9	6.9	0.8	7.0	1.6
Bangladesh	4.0	8.3	4.7	6.9	4.8	6.7
Bhutan	4.4	1.9	4.7	0.4	4.6	0.4
Brunei	7.2	4.2	6.6	2.4	6.6	1.3
Cambodia	2.9	0.8	4.0	1.5	3.5	0.7
China	7.8	0.9	9.3	1.5	9.3	0.6
Cyprus	1.2	0.9	3.3	2.8	3.2	3.3
Federated States of Micronesia	0.2	0.0	1.0	0.4	0.3	0.5
Fiji	0.9	2.6	1.5	0.2	1.5	1.0
Hong Kong	1.0	0.8	1.8	0.3	1.8	0.4
India	4.8	8.8	5.9	9.6	5.6	9.1
Indonesia	6.2	8.3	7.7	6.7	7.9	4.8
Iran	7.9	6.0	8.5	2.6	8.1	1.5
Japan	0.2	0.4	0.8	0.1	0.8	0.1
Kazakhstan	5.6	3.1	7.0	1.2	7.0	2.0
Kiribati	0.3	0.8	0.9	1.2	0.9	1.2
Kyrgyzstan	3.9	5.5	6.5	4.6	6.6	2.2

Religious restrictions index scores by region (cont.)

Asia-Pacific 50 countries (cont.)	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	GRI	SHI	GRI	SHI	GRI	SHI
Laos	6.3	1.0	6.2	3.1	6.1	2.2
Macao	1.3	0.3	1.1	0.0	1.1	0.0
Malaysia	6.4	1.0	8.2	6.4	8.5	3.9
Maldives	6.5	2.6	8.2	1.7	7.7	2.9
Marshall Islands	0.2	0.0	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.7
Mongolia	1.9	0.6	3.1	1.1	3.1	1.2
Myanmar	7.9	4.9	7.3	4.4	7.6	2.7
Nauru	2.0	0.3	1.6	0.0	1.8	0.0
Nepal	3.4	4.2	5.2	4.9	5.2	3.0
New Zealand	0.3	0.4	1.0	2.6	0.5	3.4
Pakistan	5.8	8.9	6.5	7.5	6.3	8.1
Palau	0.6	0.3	0.7	0.0	0.5	0.0
Papua New Guinea	0.8	0.0	1.5	2.9	1.6	2.7
Philippines	1.6	3.7	1.9	4.2	1.4	4.9
Samoa	0.8	0.4	1.4	2.8	1.4	1.8
Singapore	4.6	0.2	7.1	1.9	6.9	1.2
Solomon Islands	0.6	0.4	1.0	0.8	1.0	0.9
South Korea	1.6	0.0	2.5	3.4	2.6	5.0
Sri Lanka	4.0	7.8	4.2	7.2	6.0	8.0
Taiwan	0.5	0.0	1.7	0.7	1.7	0.3
Tajikistan	4.5	2.2	7.9	3.1	6.9	3.9
Thailand	2.6	2.6	5.4	4.6	5.3	4.2
Timor-Leste	0.9	4.2	1.1	0.8	1.0	0.9
Tonga	2.0	0.0	1.6	0.3	1.6	0.3
Turkey	6.6	4.7	6.9	3.6	7.0	4.2
Turkmenistan	5.6	1.5	7.9	2.0	7.6	1.2
Tuvalu	1.8	2.1	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.2
Uzbekistan	7.7	3.3	7.5	2.2	7.2	2.9
Vanuatu	1.0	1.0	1.3	0.3	1.3	0.0
Vietnam	6.6	1.2	7.5	2.1	6.4	3.0

Religious restrictions index scores by region (cont.)

Europe <i>45 countries</i>	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	GRI	SHI	GRI	SHI	GRI	SHI
Albania	0.8	0.2	2.4	0.0	1.9	0.0
Andorra	0.9	0.0	2.4	0.0	2.4	0.0
Austria	2.6	1.1	4.3	2.4	4.4	2.1
Belarus	5.9	1.4	6.2	1.3	5.7	1.4
Belgium	4.0	0.9	3.3	4.0	3.9	3.9
Bosnia-Herzegovina	1.5	2.4	2.8	2.2	2.8	2.5
Bulgaria	4.0	2.2	5.7	4.2	5.6	4.0
Croatia	0.7	2.0	2.9	0.6	2.2	0.5
Czech Republic	1.0	1.2	2.8	1.9	2.4	1.1
Denmark	2.5	1.2	4.7	3.6	4.1	3.7
Estonia	1.1	0.8	0.9	0.4	1.4	0.4
Finland	0.6	0.8	2.6	2.2	2.5	3.0
France	3.3	3.4	5.0	5.4	4.6	3.5
Georgia	2.2	4.7	3.5	4.3	3.6	3.3
Germany	3.1	2.1	3.3	5.8	3.2	5.9
Greece	5.2	4.4	3.9	5.5	4.4	3.2
Hungary	0.3	1.0	2.7	3.7	2.8	3.0
Iceland	2.6	0.4	3.7	0.2	3.7	1.0
Ireland	0.6	0.4	1.0	1.4	1.5	3.0
Italy	2.0	1.9	2.9	2.8	2.9	1.7
Kosovo	1.9	2.4	2.4	4.1	2.9	3.1
Latvia	2.3	1.4	2.6	0.1	2.6	0.2
Liechtenstein	1.3	0.1	2.0	1.6	2.0	0.8
Lithuania	1.7	0.8	2.8	0.8	2.8	0.6
Luxembourg	0.8	0.0	3.1	0.8	2.9	1.0
Malta	1.2	0.4	2.1	0.3	2.2	0.8
Moldova	4.2	3.8	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.3
Monaco	2.5	0.0	2.8	0.0	2.6	0.0
Montenegro	0.9	2.4	1.7	0.3	2.9	0.5

Religious restrictions index scores by region (cont.)

Europe 45 countries (cont.)	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	GRI	SHI	GRI	SHI	GRI	SHI
Netherlands	0.4	1.0	2.8	3.6	3.8	2.6
North Macedonia	2.2	1.5	3.3	3.1	2.8	2.8
Norway	1.5	1.0	3.2	1.7	3.2	1.5
Poland	1.0	0.9	2.6	2.2	3.5	2.6
Portugal	0.3	0.0	1.0	0.3	1.0	0.1
Romania	4.8	5.5	4.8	4.0	4.8	1.7
Russia	5.8	3.7	8.1	5.3	8.2	4.5
San Marino	0.1	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.6	0.0
Serbia	3.1	1.5	3.6	1.1	3.4	2.1
Slovakia	2.8	1.9	3.0	2.8	3.0	2.9
Slovenia	0.6	1.0	1.8	0.1	1.8	0.9
Spain	2.0	1.6	4.0	3.3	4.3	4.2
Sweden	1.2	0.7	2.8	3.3	2.6	1.5
Switzerland	1.2	1.7	2.6	4.0	2.6	3.5
Ukraine	2.6	1.9	4.8	5.9	4.7	4.8
United Kingdom	1.6	1.6	2.8	4.6	3.2	5.2

Middle East-North Africa 20 countries	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	GRI	SHI	GRI	SHI	GRI	SHI
Algeria	5.6	3.6	8.0	6.0	8.0	4.9
Bahrain	4.3	3.0	6.3	1.7	6.4	1.6
Egypt	7.2	6.1	7.7	7.5	8.4	6.5
Iraq	5.1	10.0	7.2	9.1	7.1	7.7
Israel	3.9	7.8	6.0	8.5	6.0	7.4
Jordan	4.6	3.5	4.9	3.8	4.9	3.7
Kuwait	4.8	1.9	5.6	1.5	6.2	0.8
Lebanon	1.4	5.1	4.1	3.8	4.6	3.9
Libya	5.1	1.4	5.5	7.6	5.8	7.7

Religious restrictions index scores by region (cont.)

Middle East-North Africa 20 countries (cont.)	<i>baseline</i> year, ending JUN 2007		<i>previous</i> year, ending DEC 2018		<i>latest</i> year, ending DEC 2019	
	GRI	SHI	GRI	SHI	GRI	SHI
Morocco	4.9	3.7	7.2	2.9	6.2	2.3
Oman	3.9	0.3	5.4	0.4	5.4	0.4
Palestinian territories	3.3	6.4	4.3	6.2	4.3	5.1
Qatar	3.3	0.3	5.5	2.6	5.4	0.9
Saudi Arabia	8.0	7.2	7.5	3.1	7.2	2.5
Sudan	5.7	6.5	6.2	1.9	6.8	2.0
Syria	4.5	5.3	8.2	9.1	8.3	7.8
Tunisia	4.8	3.8	6.3	4.5	5.6	4.6
United Arab Emirates	3.9	0.1	5.8	1.1	5.8	1.2
Western Sahara	4.8	3.3	6.6	0.0	5.5	0.4
Yemen	4.3	6.2	6.6	6.7	6.0	5.1

Sub-Saharan Africa 48 countries	<i>baseline</i> year, ending JUN 2007		<i>previous</i> year, ending DEC 2018		<i>latest</i> year, ending DEC 2019	
	GRI	SHI	GRI	SHI	GRI	SHI
Angola	3.3	3.7	4.3	1.3	4.3	0.6
Benin	0.3	0.0	0.7	2.8	0.7	2.6
Botswana	0.9	0.1	1.3	0.0	1.3	0.0
Burkina Faso	0.3	1.5	1.4	2.8	2.7	5.5
Burundi	0.4	0.9	3.2	2.0	3.8	1.6
Cameroon	1.1	1.4	2.9	4.2	3.2	4.8
Cape Verde	0.3	0.1	0.9	0.0	1.5	0.0
Central African Republic	3.7	3.3	3.5	7.3	2.9	6.2
Chad	4.2	3.3	3.8	2.1	3.7	2.1
Comoros	5.4	6.2	5.8	0.5	5.4	0.5
Democratic Republic of the Congo	1.3	2.6	3.0	4.5	1.4	3.0
Djibouti	2.4	1.8	3.9	1.6	3.6	0.4
Equatorial Guinea	2.6	0.0	3.3	0.0	3.3	0.0
Eritrea	7.0	0.4	7.7	0.2	6.7	0.1
Eswatini	1.5	0.0	2.2	0.3	2.6	0.4
Ethiopia	2.6	5.3	3.9	5.2	3.4	5.9

Religious restrictions index scores by region (cont.)

Sub-Saharan Africa 48 countries (cont.)	<i>baseline</i> <i>year, ending</i> JUN 2007		<i>previous</i> <i>year, ending</i> DEC 2018		<i>latest</i> <i>year, ending</i> DEC 2019	
	COUNTRY	GRI	SHI	GRI	SHI	GRI
Gabon	1.7	0.1	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.0
Gambia	0.5	0.8	0.9	2.2	1.1	1.8
Ghana	1.2	4.9	1.6	2.6	1.6	1.8
Guinea	1.5	1.7	2.6	3.2	2.6	2.7
Guinea-Bissau	1.6	0.0	0.7	0.8	0.7	1.1
Ivory Coast	1.9	3.1	1.3	0.4	1.4	0.9
Kenya	2.9	2.4	3.2	6.4	3.1	6.4
Lesotho	0.4	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.6	0.0
Liberia	1.7	3.8	2.1	2.2	1.4	1.8
Madagascar	1.8	0.0	2.8	1.6	2.8	0.9
Malawi	0.4	0.3	2.2	0.8	2.2	1.8
Mali	0.9	0.3	2.2	5.9	1.7	6.9
Mauritania	6.5	0.9	6.6	2.1	6.1	2.0
Mauritius	1.4	0.3	1.5	0.3	1.5	0.4
Mozambique	1.0	0.3	3.0	2.8	3.6	2.2
Namibia	0.3	0.0	0.9	0.0	1.3	0.0
Niger	1.7	1.5	3.7	2.3	4.5	3.7
Nigeria	3.7	4.4	4.9	8.5	4.4	8.4
Republic of the Congo	0.7	0.4	2.0	0.0	2.0	0.3
Rwanda	2.0	0.0	3.6	1.9	3.8	1.8
Sao Tome and Principe	0.2	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.9	1.3
Senegal	0.5	0.0	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.8
Seychelles	1.3	0.0	2.6	0.0	2.6	0.0
Sierra Leone	0.0	0.0	2.6	2.5	3.1	2.8
Somalia	4.4	7.4	4.2	7.1	3.3	7.0
South Africa	0.6	2.2	1.4	4.1	1.6	2.9
South Sudan	*	*	3.3	2.8	2.4	1.2
Tanzania	2.1	3.5	5.1	3.3	5.5	2.8
Togo	2.8	0.0	2.0	0.8	2.6	0.8
Uganda	2.4	0.4	3.0	4.4	3.0	3.2
Zambia	2.0	0.0	3.1	2.0	3.1	0.8
Zimbabwe	2.9	1.2	3.0	1.0	3.6	1.2

* South Sudan was coded for the first time in 2011. Note: Myanmar is also called Burma. Eswatini was formerly known as Swaziland.

Appendix D: Summary of results

Government restrictions on religion

To assess the level of restrictions on religion by governments around the world, Pew Research Center selected the following 20 questions for the Government Restrictions Index (GRI). Pew Research Center staff then combed through 19 published sources of information, including reports by the U.S. Department of State, the United Nations and various nongovernmental organizations, to answer the questions on a country-by-country basis. (For more details, see the Methodology.)

This summary shows the questions, followed by various possible answers, and the number and percentage of countries that fell into each category, according to the multiple sources analyzed by the Center. For example, on Question No. 5 (“Is public preaching by religious groups limited by any level of government?”), the study found that for the latest year, ending on Dec. 31, 2019, 116 countries (59%) had no reported limits on preaching, 38 countries (19%) had limits on preaching for some religious groups and 44 countries (22%) had limits on preaching for all religious groups.

Additionally, the summary shows whether particular religious restrictions occurred during the previous year, ending Dec. 31, 2018, or in the study’s baseline year, ending in mid-2007. A total of 197 countries are shown for the baseline year; South Sudan was coded for the first time in 2011, bringing the total number of countries in more recent years of the study to 198. To see how each country scored on each question, see Appendix E.

When comparing these results with the Center’s previous reports, readers should keep in mind that reports before 2011 showed the number of countries in which particular religious restrictions occurred at any time during two overlapping periods: July 1, 2006-June 30, 2008, and July 1, 2007-June 30, 2009. Because this report presents data on an annual basis, the number of incidents reported for a single year may be less than when two years were taken into account.

Some differences from year to year might not be as significant as they appear due to minor changes in coding procedures and changes in the amount of information available between years. For example, sources for the most recent period studied sometimes had less information on incidents in a country than sources previously had reported. Such additional information may reflect either an actual decrease in restrictions in a country, streamlined reporting for that country or both. (For more details, see the Methodology.)

Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

GRI.Q.1

Does the constitution, or law that functions in the place of a constitution (basic law), specifically provide for “freedom of religion” or include language used in Article 18 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights?¹

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
Yes	143	73%	146	74%	146	74%
The constitution or basic law does not specifically provide for freedom of religion but does protect some religious practices	47	24	46	23	46	23
No	7	4	6	3	6	3
	197	100	198	100	198	100

GRI.Q.2

Does the constitution or basic law include stipulations that appear to qualify or substantially contradict the concept of “religious freedom”?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	42	21%	24	12%	27	14%
Yes, there is a qualification	38	19	45	23	42	21
Yes, there is a substantial contradiction and only some religious practices are protected	110	56	123	62	123	62
Religious freedom is not provided in the first place	7	4	6	3	6	3
	197	100	198	100	198	100

Note: This report corrects the way constitutions were coded for 10 countries: Cameroon, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Fiji, Iran, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, Mozambique and Uruguay. The corrections were applied to all applicable previous years to ensure consistency, and the updates resulted in changes to distribution of the GRI.Q.1 and GRI.Q.2 variables in various years. Users of the data should note this update when comparing these results with those printed in previous reports.

¹ Article 18 states: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”

GRI.Q.3

Taken together, how do the constitution/basic law and other national laws and policies affect religious freedom?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
National laws and policies provide for religious freedom, and the national government respects religious freedom in practice	63	32%	64	32%	65	33%
National laws and policies provide for religious freedom, and the national government generally respects religious freedom in practice; but there are some instances (e.g., in certain localities) where religious freedom is not respected in practice	94	48	91	46	93	47
There are limited national legal protections for religious freedom, but the national government does not generally respect religious freedom in practice	38	19	35	18	32	16
National laws and policies do not provide for religious freedom and the national government does not respect religious freedom in practice	2	1	8	4	8	4
	197	100	198	100	198	100

GRI.Q.4*Does any level of government interfere with worship or other religious practices?*

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	85	43%	42	21%	35	18%
Yes, in a few cases	44	22	33	17	42	21
Yes, in many cases	32	16	63	32	63	32
Government prohibits worship or religious practices of one or more religious groups as a general policy	36	18	60	30	58	29
	197	100	198	100	198	100

GRI.Q.5*Is public preaching by religious groups limited by any level of government?*

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	141	72%	116	59%	116	59%
Yes, for some religious groups	32	16	37	19	38	19
Yes, for all religious groups	24	12	45	23	44	22
	197	100	198	100	198	100

GRI.Q.6*Is proselytizing limited by any level of government?*

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	132	67%	117	59%	121	61%
Yes, for some religious groups	39	20	42	21	40	20
Yes, for all religious groups	26	13	39	20	37	19
	197	100	198	100	198	100

GRI.Q.7*Is converting from one religion to another limited by any level of government?*

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	166	84%	152	77%	153	77%
Yes	31	16	46	23	45	23
	197	100	198	100	198	100

GRI.Q.8*Is religious literature or broadcasting limited by any level of government?*

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	130	66%	118	60%	117	59%
Yes	67	34	80	40	81	41
	197	100	198	100	198	100

GRI.Q.9*Are foreign missionaries allowed to operate?*

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
Yes	117	59%	117	59%	121	61%
Yes, but with restrictions	72	37	71	36	69	35
No	8	4	10	5	8	4
	197	100	198	100	198	100

GRI.Q.10

Is the wearing of religious symbols, such as head coverings for women and facial hair for men, regulated by law or by any level of government?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	176	89%	133	67%	133	67%
Yes	21	11	65	33	65	33
	197	100	198	100	198	100

GRI.Q.11

Was there harassment or intimidation of religious groups by any level of government?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	79	40%	23	12%	18	9%
Yes, there was limited intimidation	82	42	52	26	56	28
Yes, there was widespread intimidation	36	18	123	62	124	63
	197	100	198	100	198	100

GRI.Q.12

Did the national government display hostility involving physical violence toward minority or nonapproved religious groups?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	152	77%	140	71%	144	73%
Yes	45	23	58	29	54	27
	197	100	198	100	198	100

GRI.Q.13

Were there instances when the national government did not intervene in cases of discrimination or abuses against religious groups?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	157	80%	143	72%	138	70%
Yes	40	20	55	28	60	30
	197	100	198	100	198	100

GRI.Q.14

Does the national government have an established organization to regulate or manage religious affairs?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	106	54%	71	36%	74	37%
No, but the government consults a nongovernmental advisory board	12	6	13	7	11	6
Yes, but the organization is non-coercive toward religious groups	54	27	57	29	61	31
Yes, and the organization is coercive toward religious groups	25	13	57	29	52	26
	197	100	198	100	198	100

GRI.Q.15

Did the national government denounce one or more religious groups by characterizing them as dangerous “cults” or “sects”?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	180	91%	168	85%	172	87%
Yes	17	9	30	15	26	13
	197	100	198	100	198	100

GRI.Q.16*Does any level of government formally ban any religious group?*

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	162	82%	158	80%	157	79%
Yes	35	18	40	20	41	21
Security reasons stated as rationale	11	6	8	4	8	4
Nonsecurity reasons stated as rationale	18	9	19	10	19	10
Both security and nonsecurity reasons stated as rationale	6	3	13	7	14	7
	197	100	198	100	198	100

GRI.Q.17*Were there instances when the national government attempted to eliminate an entire religious group's presence in the country?*

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	181	92%	178	90%	181	91%
Yes	16	8	20	10	17	9
	197	100	198	100	198	100

GRI.Q.18

Does any level of government ask religious groups to register for any reason, including to be eligible for benefits such as tax exemption?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	38	19%	9	5%	9	5%
Yes, but in a nondiscriminatory way	71	36	65	33	65	33
Yes, and the process adversely affects the ability of some religious groups to operate	34	17	26	13	25	13
Yes, and the process clearly discriminates against some religious groups	54	27	98	49	99	50
	197	100	198	100	198	100

GRI.Q.19

Did any level of government use force toward religious groups that resulted in individuals being killed, physically abused, imprisoned, detained or displaced from their homes, or having their personal or religious properties damaged or destroyed?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	136	69%	103	52%	102	52%
Yes	61	31	95	48	96	48
1-9 cases of government force	18	9	47	24	39	20
10-200 cases of government force	35	18	30	15	37	19
201-1,000 cases of government force	4	2	9	5	8	4
1,001-9,999 cases of government force	2	1	6	3	8	4
10,000+ cases of government force	2	1	3	2	4	2
	197	100	198	100	198	100

GRI.Q.19b

Did any level of government use force toward religious groups that resulted in individuals being killed, physically abused, imprisoned, detained or displaced from their homes, or having their personal or religious properties damaged or destroyed?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	136	69%	103	52%	102	52%
Yes ^	61	31	95	48	96	48
Property damage	7	4	69	35	67	34
Detentions/abductions	47	24	68	34	68	34
Displacement from homes	20	10	26	13	21	11
Physical assaults	25	13	40	20	36	18
Deaths	15	8	20	10	22	11
	197	100	198	100	198	100

Nested categories add to more than total because countries can have multiple types of cases of government force.

^ This line represents the number or percentage of countries in which at least one of the following types of government force occurred.

GRI.Q.20

Do some religious groups receive government support or favors, such as funding, official recognition or special access?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	17	9%	1	1%	1	1%
Yes, the government provides support to religious groups, but it does so on a more-or-less fair and equal basis	37	19	43	22	41	21
Yes, the government gives preferential support or favors to some religious group(s) and clearly discriminates against others	143	73	154	78	156	79
	197	100	198	100	198	100

This is a summary table that puts the restrictions identified in Questions 20.1, 20.2, 20.3.a-c, 20.4 and 20.5 into a single measure indicating the level to which a government supports religious groups in the country. Government support of a religion or religions is considered restrictive only when preferential treatment of one or more religious groups puts other religious groups at a disadvantage.

GRI.Q.20.1

Does the country's constitution or basic law recognize a favored religion or religions?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	141	72%	109	55%	109	55%
Yes	56	28	89	45	89	45
	197	100	198	100	198	100

This question is a component of GRI.Q.20.

For GRI.Q.20.1, the differences between the coding periods may not be as significant as they appear due to minor changes in coding procedures.

GRI.Q.20.2

Do all religious groups receive the same level of government access and privileges?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
All religious groups are generally treated the same	39	20%	24	12%	23	12%
Some religious groups have minimal privileges unavailable to other religious groups, limited to things such as inheriting buildings or properties	7	4	33	17	29	15
Some religious groups have general privileges or government access unavailable to other religious groups	62	31	43	22	49	25
One religious group has privileges or government access unavailable to other religious groups, but it is not recognized as the country's official religion	48	24	52	26	53	27
One religious group has privileges or government access unavailable to other religious groups, and it is recognized by the national government as the official religion	41	21	46	23	44	22
	197	100	198	100	198	100

This question is a component of GRI.Q.20.

GRI.Q.20.3

Does any level of government provide funds or other resources to religious groups?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	45	23%	15	8%	15	8%
Yes, but with no obvious favoritism to a particular group or groups	23	12	42	21	43	22
Yes, and with obvious favoritism to a particular group or groups	129	65	141	71	140	71
	197	100	198	100	198	100

This question is a component of GRI.Q.20. This is a summary table that puts the restrictions identified in Questions 20.3.a-c into a single measure indicating the level to which a government supports religious groups in the country. Government support of a religion or religions is considered restrictive only when preferential treatment of one or more religious groups puts other religious groups at a disadvantage.

GRI.Q.20.3.a

Does any level of government provide funds or other resources for religious education programs and/or religious schools?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	71	36%	61	31%	61	31%
Yes, but with no obvious favoritism to a particular group or groups	24	12	35	18	36	18
Yes, and with obvious favoritism to a particular group or groups	102	52	102	52	101	51
	197	100	198	100	198	100

This question is a component of GRI.Q.20.3.

GRI.Q.20.3.b

Does any level of government provide funds or other resources for religious property (e.g., buildings, upkeep, repair or land)?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	128	65%	97	49%	94	47%
Yes, but with no obvious favoritism to a particular group or groups	10	5	24	12	25	13
Yes, and with obvious favoritism to a particular group or groups	59	30	77	39	79	40
	197	100	198	100	198	100

This question is a component of GRI.Q.20.3.

GRI.Q.20.3.c

Does any level of government provide funds or other resources for religious activities other than education or property?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	106	54%	29	15%	32	16%
Yes, but with no obvious favoritism to a particular group or groups	7	4	60	30	58	29
Yes, and with obvious favoritism to a particular group or groups	84	43	109	55	108	55
	197	100	198	100	198	100

This question is a component of GRI.Q.20.3.

GRI.Q.20.4*Is religious education required in public schools?*

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	134	68%	115	58%	112	57%
Yes, by at least some local governments	6	3	7	4	8	4
Yes, by the national government	57	29	76	38	78	39
	197	100	198	100	198	100

This question is a component of GRI.Q.20.

GRI.Q.20.5*Does the national government defer in some way to religious authorities, texts or doctrines on legal issues?*

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	150	76%	132	67%	132	67%
Yes	47	24	66	33	66	33
	197	100	198	100	198	100

This question is a component of GRI.Q.20.

Note: Figures may not add to 100% or to subtotals indicated due to rounding.

Social hostilities involving religion

To assess the level of social hostilities involving religion around the world, Pew Research Center used the following 13 questions for the Social Hostilities Index (SHI). Pew Research Center staff then combed through 19 published sources of information, including reports by the U.S. Department of State, the United Nations and various nongovernmental organizations, to answer the questions on a country-by-country basis. (For more details, see the Methodology.)

This summary shows the questions, followed by various possible answers, and the number and percentage of countries that fell into each category, according to the multiple sources analyzed by Pew Research Center. For example, on Question No. 12 (“Were there incidents of hostility over proselytizing?”), the study found that for the latest year, ending on Dec. 31, 2019, 170 countries (86%) had no reported incidents of hostility over proselytizing, 18 countries (9%) had incidents that fell short of physical violence and 10 countries (5%) had incidents involving violence.

Additionally, the summary shows whether particular religious hostilities occurred during the previous year, ending Dec. 31, 2018, or in the study’s baseline year, ending in mid-2007. A total of 197 countries are shown for the baseline year; South Sudan was coded for the first time in 2011, bringing the total number of countries in more recent years of the study to 198. To see how each country scored on each question, see Appendix E.

When comparing these results with the Center’s previous reports, readers should keep in mind that previous reports showed the number of countries in which particular religious hostilities occurred at any time during two overlapping periods: July 1, 2006-June 30, 2008, and July 1, 2007-June 30, 2009. Because this report presents data on an annual basis, the number of incidents reported for a single year may be less than when two years were taken into account.

Some differences from year to year might not be as significant as they appear due to minor changes in coding procedures and changes in the amount of information available between years. For example, sources for the most recent period studied sometimes had more information on incidents in a country than sources previously had reported. Such additional information may reflect either an actual increase in hostilities in a country, improved reporting for that country or both. (For more details, see the Methodology.)

Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

SHI.Q.1.a

Were there crimes, malicious acts or violence motivated by religious hatred or bias?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	67	34%	38	19%	29	15%
Yes ^	130	66	160	81	169	85
Harassment/intimidation	127	64	160	81	169	85
Property damage	40	20	86	43	91	46
Detentions/abductions	12	6	23	12	16	8
Displacement from homes	19	10	26	13	21	11
Physical assaults	55	28	66	33	60	30
Deaths	25	13	39	20	39	20
	197	100	198	100	198	100

This is a summary table that captures the types of religious hatred or bias.

Nested categories add to more than total because countries can have multiple types of hostilities.

^ This line represents the number or percentage of countries in which at least one of the following hostilities occurred.

Each country's score for each type of religious hatred or bias is available in SHI.Q.1a-f in the Results by Country (online).

SHI.Q.1.b

*How many different types of crimes, malicious acts or violence motivated by religious hatred or bias occurred?
The six different types considered include: harassment/intimidation, property damage, detentions/abductions, displacement from homes, physical assaults and killings.*

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	67	34%	38	19%	29	15%
Yes: one type	56	28	55	28	52	26
Yes: two types	30	15	35	18	53	27
Yes: three types	25	13	33	17	33	17
Yes: four types	11	6	19	10	18	9
Yes: five types	5	3	8	4	11	6
Yes: six types	3	2	10	5	2	1
	197	100	198	100	198	100

This is a summary table that captures the severity of religious hatred or bias.

Each country's score based on how many of the six types of religious hatred or bias were documented is available in SHI.Q.1 in the Results by Country (online).

SHI.Q.2*Was there mob violence related to religion?*

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	174	88%	157	79%	164	83%
Yes, but there were no deaths reported	14	7	26	13	23	12
Yes, and there were deaths reported	9	5	15	8	11	6
	197	100	198	100	198	100

SHI.Q.3*Were there acts of sectarian or communal violence between religious groups?*

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	181	92%	186	94%	185	93%
Yes	16	8	12	6	13	7
	197	100	198	100	198	100

Sectarian or communal violence involves two or more religious groups facing off in repeated clashes.

SHI.Q.4*Were religion-related terrorist groups active in the country?*

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	137	70%	134	68%	149	75%
Yes	60	30	64	32	49	25
Yes, but their activity was limited to recruitment and fundraising	43	22	7	4	2	1
Yes, with violence that resulted in some casualties (1-9 injuries or deaths)	7	4	21	11	15	8
Yes, with violence that resulted in multiple casualties (10-50 injuries or deaths)	2	1	6	3	4	2
Yes, with violence that resulted in many casualties (more than 50 injuries or deaths)	8	4	30	15	28	14
	197	100	198	100	198	100

Religion-related terrorism is defined as politically motivated violence against noncombatants by subnational groups or clandestine agents with a religious justification or intent.

SHI.Q.5

Was there a religion-related war or armed conflict in the country?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	176	89%	185	93%	184	93%
Yes	21	11	13	7	14	7
Yes, with fewer than 10,000 casualties or people displaced	9	5	3	2	2	1
Yes, with tens of thousands of casualties or people displaced	6	3	5	3	6	3
Yes, with hundreds of thousands of casualties or people displaced	3	2	4	2	6	3
Yes, with millions of casualties or people displaced	3	2	1	1	0	0
	197	100	198	100	198	100

Religion-related war is defined as armed conflict (involving sustained casualties over time or more than 1,000 battle deaths) in which religious rhetoric is commonly employed to justify the use of force, or in which one or more of the combatants primarily identifies itself or the opposing side by religion.

SHI.Q.6

Did violence result from tensions between religious groups?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	50	25%	91	46%	92	46%
There were public tensions between religious groups, but they fell short of hostilities involving physical violence	56	28	56	28	62	31
Yes, with physical violence in a few cases	69	35	27	14	20	10
Yes, with physical violence in numerous cases	22	11	24	12	24	12
	197	100	198	100	198	100

The data for each year also takes into account information from the two previous years.

SHI.Q.7

Did organized groups use force or coercion in an attempt to dominate public life with their perspective on religion, including preventing some religious groups from operating in the country?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	113	57%	94	47%	104	53%
Yes	84	43	104	53	94	47
At the local level	22	11	28	14	20	10
At the regional level	31	16	11	6	10	5
At the national level	31	16	65	33	64	32
	197	100	198	100	198	100

The data for each year also takes into account information from the two previous years.

SHI.Q.8

Did religious groups themselves attempt to prevent other religious groups from being able to operate?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	130	66%	139	70%	145	73%
Yes	67	34	59	30	53	27
	197	100	198	100	198	100

The data for each year also takes into account information from the two previous years.

SHI.Q.9

Did individuals or groups use violence or the threat of violence, including so-called honor killings, to try to enforce religious norms?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	162	82%	113	37%	124	63%
Yes	35	18	85	43	74	37
	197	100	198	100	198	100

The data for each year also takes into account information from the two previous years.

SHI.Q.10

Were individuals assaulted or displaced from their homes in retaliation for religious activities, including preaching and other forms of religious expression, considered offensive or threatening to the majority faith?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	149	76%	136	69%	146	74%
Yes	48	24	62	31	52	26
	197	100	198	100	198	100

The data for each year also takes into account information from the two previous years.

SHI.Q.11

Were women harassed for violating religious dress codes?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	183	93%	142	72%	139	70%
Yes	14	7	56	28	59	30
	197	100	198	100	198	100

The data for each year also takes into account information from the two previous years.

SHI.Q.12

Were there incidents of hostility over proselytizing?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	148	75%	163	82%	170	86%
Yes, but they fell short of physical violence	30	15	22	11	18	9
Yes, and they included physical violence	19	10	13	7	10	5
	197	100	198	100	198	100

The data for each year also takes into account information from the two previous years.

SHI.Q.13

Were there incidents of hostility over conversions from one religion to another?

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2018</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2019</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	153	78%	140	71%	143	72%
Yes, but they fell short of physical violence	23	12	29	15	31	16
Yes, and they included physical violence	21	11	29	15	24	12
	197	100	198	100	198	100

The data for each year also takes into account information from the two previous years.

Note: Figures may not add to 100% or to subtotals indicated due to rounding.