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# Globally, Government Restrictions on Religion Reached Peak Levels in 2021, While Social Hostilities Went Down

*14th annual report includes a look at countries that restrict religious practices and grant benefits to religious groups at the same time*

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## How we did this

This is the 14th 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 2021 – 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 governments 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 (USCIRF), as well as reports and databases from a variety of European and United Nations bodies and several independent, nongovernmental organizations. (Refer to the [Methodology](#) for more details on sources used in the study.)

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# Globally, Government Restrictions on Religion Reached Peak Levels in 2021, While Social Hostilities Went Down

*14th annual report includes a look at countries that restrict religious practices and grant benefits to religious groups at the same time*

In 2021, government restrictions on religion – laws, policies and actions by state officials that limit religious beliefs and practices – reached a new peak globally, according to Pew Research Center’s latest analysis of government restrictions and social hostilities involving religion in 198 countries and territories around the world.

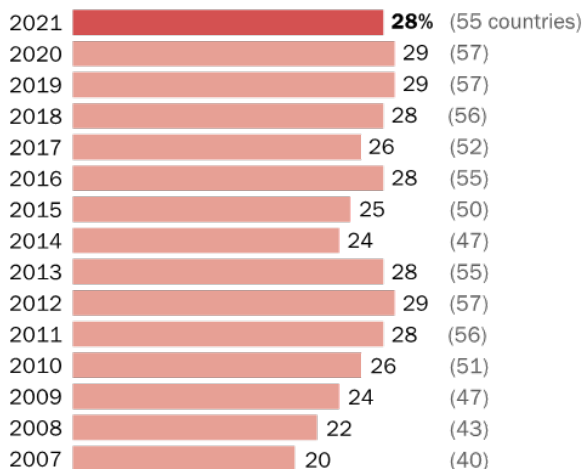
Harassment of religious groups and interference in worship were two of the most common forms of government restrictions worldwide in 2021.

### Among the study's key findings:

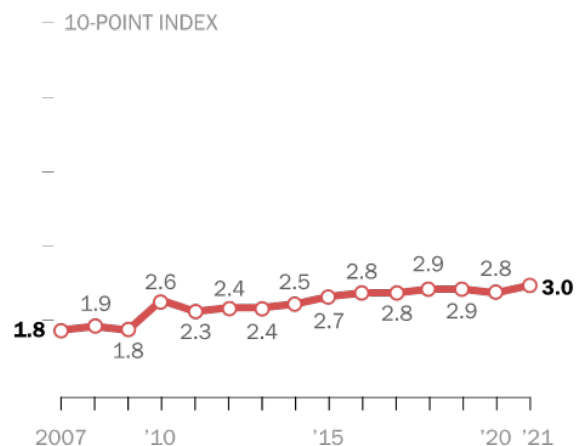
- The global median level of **government restrictions on religion** ticked up to 3.0 in 2021 from 2.8 in 2020 on the Government Restrictions Index, a 10-point scale of 20 indicators. This was the highest global median score since we began tracking restrictions in 2007.
- 55 countries (28% of the total) had “high” or “very high” levels of government restrictions in 2021, down slightly from 57 countries (29%), a level reached in 2020, 2019 and 2012. (The median index score for *all* countries rose anyway, partially because there were slightly more increases in index scores than decreases among the 198 countries and territories analyzed.)
- Religious groups faced harassment by governments in 183 countries in 2021, the largest number since the study began. Governments interfered in worship in 163 countries, down slightly from 164 in 2020 but still close to the all-time high.

### Number of countries with ‘high’ or ‘very high’ government restrictions involving religion went down in 2021, as global median level of government restrictions rose

**% 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)



Note: The number of countries and territories increased in 2011, from 197 to 198, with the addition of South Sudan.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. Refer to the Methodology for details.

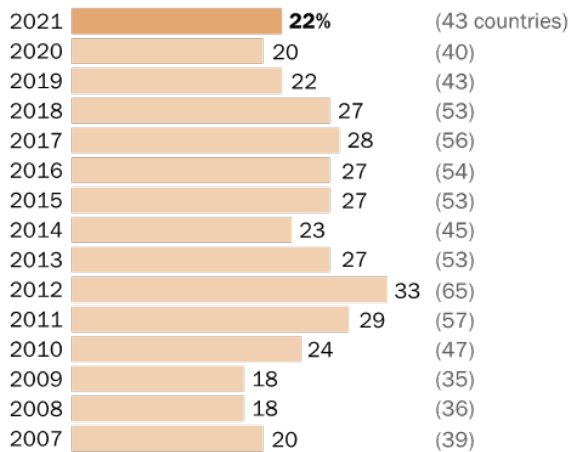
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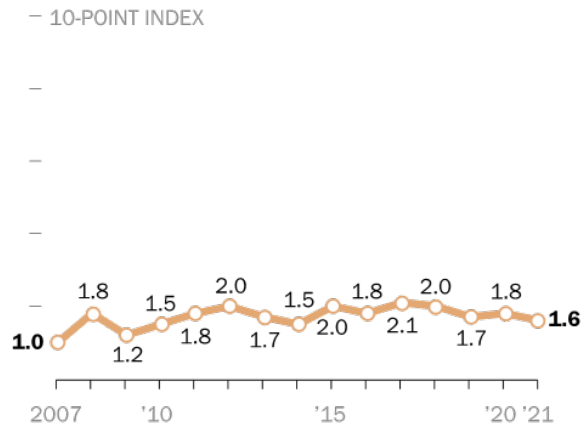
- The global median level of **social hostilities** involving religion – including violence and harassment by private individuals, organizations or groups – fell from 1.8 in 2020 to 1.6 in 2021 on the Social Hostilities Index, a 10-point scale composed of 13 indicators.
- 43 countries (22% of all studied) had “high” or “very high” levels of social hostilities in 2021, up from 40 countries (20%) in 2020 but still closer to the low point (18%) than to the high point (33%) previously recorded over the course of the study.

### Number of countries with ‘high’ or ‘very high’ social hostilities involving religion rose in 2021, while global median level of social hostilities decreased

**% of 198 countries with “high” or “very high” levels of social hostilities involving on religion**  
(Scores of 3.6 and higher)



**Social Hostilities Index global median score**  
(Based on 13 indicators)



Note: The number of countries and territories increased in 2011, from 197 to 198, with the addition of South Sudan.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. Refer to the Methodology for details.

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This report examines these and other findings from Pew Research Center’s 14th annual study of restrictions on religion around the world, including changes in the index scores at the global and regional levels. It also includes a section showing that governments in most countries simultaneously [impose restrictions on religion and grant benefits to religious groups](#).



### **Some background on the study**

Each year since 2007, Pew Research Center has tracked government restrictions and social hostilities on two 10-point indexes:

- The **Government Restrictions Index (GRI)**: Government restrictions on religion include laws, policies and actions that regulate and limit religious beliefs and practices. They also include policies that single out certain religious groups or ban certain practices; the granting of benefits to some religious groups but not others; and bureaucratic rules that require religious groups to register to receive benefits.
- The **Social Hostilities Index (SHI)**: Social hostilities include actions by private individuals or groups that target religious groups; they also include actions by groups or individuals who use religion to restrict others. The SHI captures events such as religion-related harassment, mob violence, terrorism/militant activity, and hostilities over religious conversions or the wearing of religious symbols and clothing.

Government restrictions have increased gradually over time since 2007, when the global median level on the GRI was 1.8.

Social hostilities – which capture incidents that are more likely to vary from year to year – have seen more fluctuations. On the SHI, the global median score started at 1.0 in 2007, reached a peak of 2.1 in 2017, and fell to 1.6 in 2021.

### **Countries with ‘high’ and ‘very high’ government restrictions and social hostilities in 2021**

Another way to examine restrictions and hostilities involving religion is to look at the number of countries in the “high” or “very high” categories on each index.

In 2021, 28% of countries had “high” or “very high” levels of government restrictions, a slight decline from 29% in 2020.

Meanwhile, fewer countries (22%) had “high” or “very high” levels of social hostilities.

The majority of countries in the study had “moderate” or “low” levels of government restrictions and social hostilities.

## Government harassment of religious groups, interference in worship in 2021

Two measures – government harassment of religious groups and government interference in worship – have contributed to the GRI scores in most of the countries analyzed.

Government harassment can include a wide range of actions or offenses, from the use of physical force targeting religious groups to derogatory comments by government officials. It can also include laws and policies that single out groups or make religious practice more difficult.

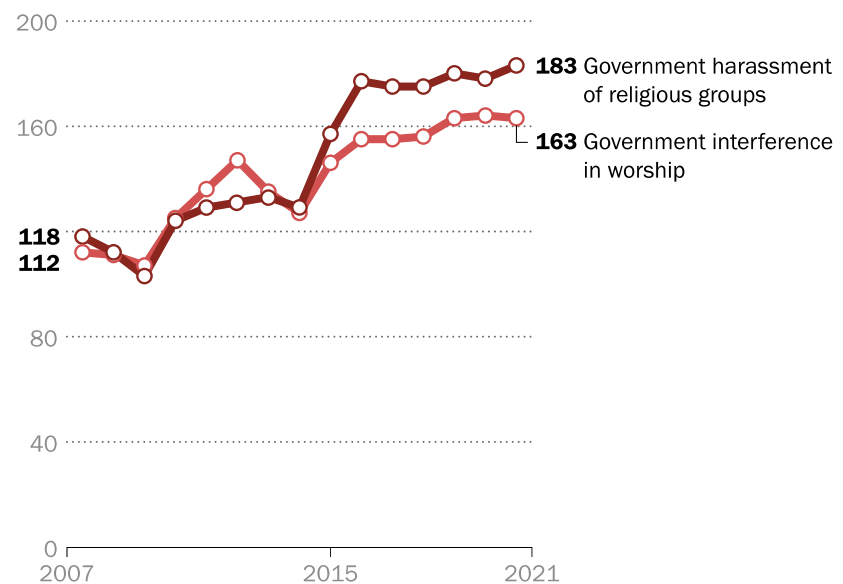
In 2021, **governments harassed religious groups in 183 countries** (92% of countries analyzed), up from 178 countries in 2020. This type of restriction was

widespread across all five regions we analyzed. For example, at least one case of government harassment was reported in each of the 20 countries in the Middle East-North Africa region. The same was true for 43 of 45 countries in Europe (96%), 33 of 35 countries in the Americas (94%), 44 of 48 countries in sub-Saharan Africa (92%) and 43 of 50 countries in the Asia-Pacific region (86%).

In Europe, for example, Geert Wilders, who leads the Party for Freedom in the Netherlands (a party that [held seats in government in 2021](#) and went on to win [more seats in 2023](#)), called for the “[de-Islamization](#)” of the country on Twitter (now known as X). He also proposed “a series of measures including closing all mosques and Islamic schools, banning the Quran, and barring all asylum seekers and immigrants from Muslim-majority countries,” according to the U.S. State

### Since 2007, number of countries where governments have harassed religious groups or interfered in worship has increased

Number of countries and territories where there was \_\_\_\_ in 2021



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. Refer to the Methodology for details.

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Department. (Statements targeting religious minorities and asylum seekers are not new in either the country or in the region and were detailed in [our report looking at restrictions in 2016](#).)

In the Americas, the government of Nicaragua has targeted Catholic clergy for supporting the country's pro-democracy movement, according to the U.S. State Department. The president and the vice president (who is also the first lady) [called priests and bishops "terrorists in cassocks"](#) and "coup-plotters." Meanwhile, a member of the National Assembly, Wilfredo Navarro Moreira, called a cardinal and several bishops "servants of the devil" in a television interview.

Other government harassment activities measured on the GRI include policies that make religious practices more difficult – such as restrictions on religious dress, which tend to affect Muslim women, and laws limiting halal or kosher meat production, which generally affect Muslims and Jews.

In several European countries, for example, authorities in recent years have imposed bans on headscarves or full-face veils that tend to affect Muslim women, even as exceptions are sometimes made for people who wear them for nonreligious reasons.

Austria, for example, [forbids full-face coverings](#) unless they are worn for "artistic, cultural, or traditional events, in sports, or for health or professional reasons." Face coverings such as [women's burqas and niqabs are also banned](#) in Denmark.

In addition, Denmark [does not allow the slaughter of animals](#) for meat unless the animals are stunned before being killed, a restriction that makes it harder for Jews and Muslims to follow their religions' dietary guidelines. (Kosher and halal meat can be imported from other European Union countries, but Jews and Muslims have expressed frustration about the law.)

**Governments interfered in worship in 163 countries** (82% of countries in the study) in 2021, down from a peak of 164 in 2020. Our definition of government interference in worship includes laws, policies and actions that disrupt religious activities, the withholding of permits for such activities, or denying access to places of worship. This measure also includes restrictions on practices and rituals that may not be specifically tied to worship, such as burial practices and conscientious objection to military service for religious reasons.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Some policies and actions that interfere with worship also can be captured by the study as forms of government harassment.

As with government harassment, there was at least one report of government interference in worship in every country in the Middle East-North Africa region, along with 91% of countries in Europe, 81% in sub-Saharan Africa, 80% in the Americas and 70% in Asia and the Pacific.

For example, in the Maldives, where Islam is the state religion, non-Muslim groups are forbidden to build places of worship or practice their faith publicly. Similarly, Egyptian law allows only members of recognized religious groups (Sunni Islam, Christianity and Judaism) to express their faith in public and construct houses of worship.

In 2021, cases of government interference in worship also included the use of force against religious leaders who violated COVID-19 restrictions. In some countries, religious groups claimed (as they had in 2020) that public health measures were unevenly or unfairly applied to their activities and places of worship, particularly in comparison with businesses like shops and restaurants.

In Canada, three churches that were finned for defying lockdown measures in British Columbia filed a legal challenge in 2021 against public health orders that limited religious gatherings, according to the U.S. State Department. The churches contended that there were fewer restrictions on restaurants and other businesses, as well as on Orthodox Jewish synagogues that were allowed to hold indoor services. In addition, several Canadian clergy were fined and arrested after holding in-person services that violated public health measures.

## Government restrictions and government benefits

This section analyzes how many countries have governments that provide benefits to religious groups and, at the same time, harass religious groups and interfere in worship.

Here's what we found in 2021:

- In 127 countries, governments provided funds or other **resources for religious education**.
- In 107 countries, governments gave funds or other **resources for religious buildings**, such as for construction, upkeep or maintenance of houses of worship.
- In 67 countries, governments provided **benefits to clergy**, such as salaries, exemptions from military service, or access to certain government jobs (such as military or prison chaplaincies).<sup>2</sup>

Overall, governments in 161 countries provided at least one of these benefits to religious organizations. Yet, at the same time, governments in most of these countries also harassed religious groups (149 countries) and/or interfered in worship (134 countries).

Our data did not allow us to discern *why* countries grant benefits to religious groups, for example, whether governments hope that paying the salaries of clergy will lead those clergy to deliver sermons that align with government views. So we cannot say whether specific governments are attempting to manipulate, entice or co-opt religious groups with incentives.

Still, the analysis adds a layer of complexity to the relationship between governments and religious groups. For example, it shows that some governments that provide benefits to clergy also, at the same time, seek to restrict and control these clergy – for example by directly restricting what they can say in sermons.

### Funds for religious education

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<sup>2</sup> Unlike the variables for government benefits for religious education and for religious buildings, the information on benefits to clergy is not a distinct variable on the Government Restrictions Index. This study has never before looked at benefits to clergy as a separate variable; typically, they are analyzed on the GRI under a broader category for any government benefits to religious groups that do not include education and property. The 2021 GRI also includes clergy benefits as part of that broader category.

In 2021, governments in 127 countries gave money to religious education initiatives in their countries. This included payments for teachers' salaries at religious schools or subsidies for the schools more broadly.

In Trinidad and Tobago, for example, the government gave money to "[religiously affiliated public schools](#)" run by Christians, Hindus and Muslims. The government also provided most construction costs for these schools.

In the Netherlands, the [government funded religious schools](#) and "other religious educational institutions" if they satisfied certain education requirements and complied with guidelines regarding class sizes. And in Sweden, the [government helped fund independent religious schools](#) through a voucher system; the schools had to abide by national curriculum guidelines.

In Singapore, even though the country does not generally allow religious education in public schools, there were 57 "[government-subsidized religiously affiliated schools](#)" in 2021. According to the sources used in this study, most of these schools were Christian; three were Buddhist.

### **Funds and tax exemptions for religious property**

In 107 countries, governments gave property-related benefits to religious groups in 2021, often through direct subsidies or tax exemptions.

In Malaysia, a federal entity devoted to Islamic affairs [provided funds for mosque projects](#). While no funds were specifically allocated for non-Muslim groups, temples and churches also received funding, according to the U.S. State Department's International Religious Freedom Report. And from December 2020 to May 2021, 1,145 Hindu temples received Malaysian government funding.

In Germany, state governments [provided funds to renovate and build synagogues](#). In the state of Baden-Wuerttemberg, the local government also signed a contract in 2021 with Jewish communities to provide funds for security for synagogues and for the establishment of a Jewish academy.

In Angola, registered religious groups [did not have to pay some property taxes](#). And in Gabon, [registered religious groups were exempt](#) from fees for land-use and construction permits.

In some cases, governments provided resources to historically significant religious sites. For example, the Egyptian government, "[in a potential boost to religious tourism,](#)" worked to restore many historic sites important to Christians, Jews and Shiite Muslims.

### **Government benefits to clergy**

In addition, our analysis showed that 67 countries gave government benefits specifically to clergy – including payments of salaries, exemption from military service, and access to certain government positions like military and prison chaplaincies – in 2021.

The most common type of benefit to clergy in 2021 was payment of salaries (found in 42 of the 67 countries). In [Jordan](#), for example, a government agency called the Ministry of Awqaf (religious endowments), managed mosques in the country and provided salaries for their staffs. In [Algeria](#), the government provided salaries and benefits for religious personnel of mosques and churches. And in [Iceland](#), in 2021, the Evangelical Lutheran Church received government funds to pay for its staff's salaries and benefits.

Sometimes clergy receive legal benefits from the government. In Honduras, for instance, high-ranking clergy in many religious groups are [exempt from court subpoenas](#). And in Canada, clergy who are part of religious groups with nonprofit status [receive benefits such as a “housing deduction”](#) and “expedited processing through the immigration system.”

In 36 countries, only clergy who are associated with a religion that is favored or preferred by the government – either through official status or various types of preferential treatment – received these types of benefits in 2021.

In Peru, for example, the [constitution recognizes the Catholic Church](#) as having an important role in the country, while a concordat with the Vatican allows the Church “certain institutional privileges in education, taxation, and immigration of religious workers.” The military hires only Catholic chaplains, Catholicism is taught in religion classes at public schools, and Catholic bishops must approve the teachers who teach these classes.

### **Restrictions in these countries**

In most of the countries that provide benefits to religious groups or clergy, the government also harassed some religious groups or interfered in worship in 2021.

For instance, in Sunni-majority Saudi Arabia, where the government funds the construction of most Sunni mosques and gives a monthly stipend to imams at the mosques, [sermons are restricted](#)

[by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs](#), which directs the imams to choose from an approved list. The content is not permitted to be “sectarian, political or extremist, promoting hatred or racism, or including commentary on foreign policy,” according to the U.S. State Department. Ministry officials have authority to attend sermons to ensure imams don’t preach about forbidden topics.

The Saudi government also has targeted Sunni clerics (along with Shiite clerics) when they express religious views deemed unacceptable by the government. One Sunni cleric, Hassan Farhan al-Maliki, remained in prison without due process for “[allegedly calling into question the fundamentals of Islam](#),” according to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. He was charged with 14 crimes and has been in prison since 2017.

A similar situation exists in Jordan, where the [government both pays the salaries of mosque employees](#) across the country and forces imams to stick to selected themes for their Friday sermons. Imams who do not follow these guidelines can be fined, suspended, imprisoned or forbidden from giving Friday sermons.

In Ethiopia, where the government funded 219 Islamic schools and 250 Catholic schools in 2021, [government security forces used teargas](#) against crowds of thousands of Muslims who had gathered in Addis Ababa for a Grand Iftar event during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.

In Austria, where buildings used by recognized groups for religious purposes are exempt from property taxes, a new anti-terrorism law allows officials [to more easily shut down mosques](#) to “protect public security.”

Pew Research Center has conducted other analyses of relationships between governments and religious groups, outside the scope of the annual restrictions reports. For example, in 2017 we published a report on [countries with official state religions](#), and in 2019, we examined [the tradition of “church taxes” in Western Europe](#).

### **Jump to the following chapters to read more on ...**

- [Changes in the Government Restrictions Index and the Social Hostilities Index \(Chapter 1\)](#)
- [Physical harassment of religious groups around the world \(Chapter 2\)](#)
- [Religion-related government restrictions and social hostilities by geographic region \(Chapter 3\)](#)



- [Restrictions in the world's 25 most populous countries \(Chapter 4\)](#)

# 1. Number of countries with ‘very high’ government restrictions stays level in 2021

## Government restrictions on religion

All 198 countries and territories in our study had at least some level of government restrictions or regulations related to religious activity reported in 2021. However, the severity of the restrictions and the extent to which governments enforced them varied from one place to another. The differences are reflected in each country’s score on the Government Restrictions Index (GRI).

**In 2021, the number of countries with “very high” government restrictions (19) stayed the same as in 2020**, remaining at its lowest point since 2014. It was the first time in four years that the number of countries in this category did not go down. (At its peak, in 2017, the number was 27.)

**The number of countries with “high” levels of government restrictions fell from 38 in 2020 to 36 in 2021**, marking the first time since 2017 that the number of countries in this category decreased.

Taken together, the number of countries with “high” or “very high” levels of government restrictions decreased from 57 in 2020 to 55 in 2021. (Read the [Methodology](#) for details on how the “high” and “very high” categories are determined.)

## Countries with the most extensive government restrictions

Two countries, Pakistan and Turkmenistan, that were in the “high” government restrictions category in 2020 moved to the “very high” category in 2021. Pakistan’s index score increased by less than 1 point on the index, while Turkmenistan’s increased by exactly 1 point.

In Turkmenistan, Human Rights Watch reported in 2021 that [government authorities physically harassed Muslims](#) and accused them of “following their ... faith too closely.” Police detained groups of men and forced them to shave their beards and drink alcohol to [demonstrate that they were not “extremists.”](#) according to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

While similar incidents in Turkmenistan had been reported in [previous years of this study](#), there were none in 2020. Turkmenistan had been in the “very high” category in 2019 before dropping to “high” in 2020. Its return to “very high” in 2021 was partially connected to these reports.

Two countries, Brunei and Eritrea, moved in the other direction in 2021 – that is, from “very high” to “high” on the GRI. Each had a decrease of less than 1 point on the index. (For a full list of all countries in each category, refer to the Government Restrictions Index in [Appendix A.](#))

## Countries with ‘very high’ government restrictions on religion

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

2020	2021
Afghanistan	Afghanistan
Algeria	Algeria
Azerbaijan	Azerbaijan
Brunei	China
China	Egypt
Egypt	Indonesia
Eritrea	Iran
Indonesia	Kazakhstan
Iran	Malaysia
Kazakhstan	Maldives
Malaysia	Myanmar
Maldives	<b>Pakistan</b>
Myanmar	Russia
Russia	Saudi Arabia
Saudi Arabia	Singapore
Singapore	Syria
Syria	Tajikistan
Tajikistan	<b>Turkmenistan</b>
Uzbekistan	Uzbekistan

Note: Gray indicates a country that had “very high” government restrictions in 2020 but not in 2021. **Bold** indicates a country that had “very high” government restrictions in 2021 but not in 2020. Myanmar is also called Burma.  
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. Refer to the Methodology for details.  
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In Brunei, there were no reports in 2021 of the government targeting religious groups or individuals with deportations. The previous year, a [U.S. citizen had been deported from Brunei](#) after “proselytizing for a religion other than Islam,” in violation of the country’s sharia-based domestic laws. (The religion wasn’t specified in the sources for the study.)

### Changes in scores on Government Restrictions Index

In 2021, 73 countries had *increases* of 0.1 point or more in their GRI scores, while 70 countries had *decreases*. An additional 55 countries had no change in their GRI score.

In 2021, only one country in the study, Sudan, had a large decrease (2 points or more) in its GRI score, which moved it from the “high” to the “moderate” category on the index. No country had a large increase. Ten countries had modest changes (1.0 to 1.9 points), including seven with modest increases and three with modest decreases. Almost two-thirds of the countries in the study – 132 in total, or 67% – had small changes (0.1 to 0.9), with 66 small decreases and 66 small increases in GRI scores.

Sudan’s decrease (from 5.8 to 3.2) between 2020 and 2021 is partially explained by [religion-related reforms](#) passed in July 2020 by the country’s civilian-led transitional government. These reforms included the decriminalization of apostasy (abandoning one’s faith) and the repeal of a law that had criminalized “indecent dress” or other violations of public morality.<sup>3</sup>

### Changes on the GRI in 2021

*Changes on the Government Restrictions Index (GRI) from 2020 to 2021*

POINT CHANGE	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	
2.0 or more increase	0	0%	
1.0 to 1.9 increase	7	4	<b>37%</b>
0.1 to 0.9 increase	66	33	
No change	55	28	<b>28%</b>
0.1 to 0.9 decrease	66	33	<b>36%</b>
1.0 to 1.9 decrease	3	2	
2.0 or more decrease	1	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	

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. Refer to the Methodology for details.

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<sup>3</sup> Since the reforms of 2020 were passed midway through the year, 2021 was the first full year in which some of the older laws – and their enforcement – no longer affected Sudan’s GRI score.

## Social hostilities related to religion

The Social Hostilities Index (SHI) captures a wide range of activities perpetrated by private individuals and social groups, including verbal and physical harassment of religious individuals; terrorism carried out in the name of religion; and conflict between religious groups.

As has been true during most years of the study, in 2021 fewer countries scored “very high” on the SHI than on the GRI. The number of countries and territories with “very high” social hostilities involving religion decreased from 11 in 2020 to seven in 2021, while the number with “high” levels increased from 29 to 36. Overall, the number of countries with “high” or “very high” levels of social hostilities rose from 40 in 2020 to 43 in 2021.

### Countries with the most extensive social hostilities

Four countries – Iraq, Libya, Mali and Somalia – moved from “very high” to “high” on the SHI in 2021. While Libya, Mali and Somalia have moved between the “high” and “very high” categories over the past several years, this is the first time Iraq has had “high” rather than “very high” social hostilities, in part because there were fewer reports of ISIS forcing [Yezidi captives in Iraq to convert to Islam](#) since the group’s territorial defeat in 2019.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> In 2021, however, there were [reports that the Iraqi government](#) forced Yezidi women who had children after being raped in captivity by ISIS members to “register those children as Muslims and convert to Islam themselves to obtain identification cards, passports, and other governmental services.” In other words, forced conversions are still occurring in Iraq, but because the government is involved, they are now captured under the Government Restrictions Index rather than the Social Hostilities Index.

### Countries with ‘very high’ social hostilities involving religion

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

2020	2021
Afghanistan	Afghanistan
Egypt	Egypt
India	India
Iraq	Israel
Israel	Nigeria
Libya	Pakistan
Mali	Syria
Nigeria	
Pakistan	
Somalia	
Syria	

Note: Gray indicates a country that had “very high” social hostilities in 2020 but not in 2021. **Bold** indicates a country that had “very high” social hostilities in 2021 but not in 2020.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. Refer to the Methodology for details.

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In Libya, the [number of casualties from religion-related terrorism and war](#) decreased in 2021. Although terrorist groups such as ISIS and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) were still present in the country, there were no reports during the year of religion-related terror attacks resulting in injuries or deaths of civilians. (Refer to the [Methodology](#) for details on changes to how we coded religion-related terrorism.) Meanwhile, in Somalia, there were fewer reports of private social actors harassing religious individuals or groups than there were in 2020, [when gunmen fired at Quran teachers](#), killing five and injuring others.

No countries moved into the “very high” social hostilities category in 2021.

For the full list of countries in each category, refer to the Social Hostilities Index in [Appendix B](#).

## Changes in scores on Social Hostilities Index

On the Social Hostilities Index, four countries had large changes (2 points or more) in their scores. Two of these countries (Montenegro and Uganda) had large *increases*, while two (Bolivia and Turkey) had large *decreases*. An additional 21 countries had modest changes (1.0 to 1.9 points), including 11 increases and 10 decreases. Meanwhile, 104 countries experienced small changes of 0.1 to 0.9 points, including 50 increases and 54 decreases.

Montenegro's increase from 1.3 to 3.5 was partially attributable to several incidents involving [social hostilities against minority religious groups](#). In the city of Niksic, unknown perpetrators vandalized the Hadzi-Ismael Mosque in 2021 with words and phrases such as "Srebrenica," "Niksic will be Srebrenica," and "Turks." (The U.S. State Department described these as references to the genocide of Bosnian Muslims in [Srebrenica](#) in 1995.)

Also in Montenegro, there was [harassment related to proselytizing](#). For example, a local news outlet published an article that was critical of an evangelical Christian woman who was distributing Bibles. The article quoted a priest from the Serbian Orthodox Church saying that members of the evangelical group were "demons who are nothing but wolves in sheep's clothing."

Bolivia's SHI score went down because, in contrast to [previous years](#), there were no reports coded in 2021 that Protestant pastors and missionaries were expelled from Indigenous communities for not observing Andean spiritual beliefs.

In total, 69 countries had no change in their SHI score in 2021.

## Changes on the SHI in 2021

*Changes on the Social Hostilities Index (SHI) from 2020 to 2021*

POINT CHANGE	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	
2.0 or more increase	2	1%	32%
1.0 to 1.9 increase	11	6	
0.1 to 0.9 increase	50	25	35%
No change	69	35	
0.1 to 0.9 decrease	54	27	33%
1.0 to 1.9 decrease	10	5	
2.0 or more decrease	2	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	

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. Refer to the Methodology for details.

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## Changes in overall restrictions on religion

Based on the combined index scores for government restrictions and social hostilities, **92 countries had overall decreases in their scores from 2020 to 2021, 84 countries had increases, and 22 had no change.** Of the countries with increases, there were 67 small upticks (between 0.1 and 0.9 points) and 16 modest increases (1.0 to 1.9 points). One country, Uganda, had a large overall increase (2 points or more).

Among the countries with decreases, 80 had small declines (0.1 to 0.9 points) and 9 were modest (1.0 to 1.9 points). Three countries – Bolivia, Sudan and Turkey – had large decreases (2 points or more) in their overall scores.

## Overall changes in global restrictions on religion in 2021

*Changes on the Government Restrictions Index (GRI) or Social Hostilities Index (SHI) from 2020 to 2021*

POINT CHANGE	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	
2.0 or more increase	1	1%	43%
1.0 to 1.9 increase	16	8	
0.1 to 0.9 increase	67	34	
No change	22	11	11%
0.1 to 0.9 decrease	80	40	47%
1.0 to 1.9 decrease	9	5	
2.0 or more decrease	3	2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	

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 do not add to 100% because subtotals in the chart have been rounded.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. Refer to the Methodology for details.

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## 2. Harassment of religious groups returned to peak level in 2021

**In 2021, religious groups faced harassment from governments or social groups and individuals in 190 out of the 198 countries and territories in our study.** This was an increase from 2020 but the same number of countries as in 2019, marking a return to the peak level since this tracking began in 2007.

Here's a breakdown:

- **Governments** harassed people because of their religious beliefs and practices in 183 countries, up from 178 in 2020. This is the highest number since the start of the study.
- **Social groups or private individuals** harassed people for religious reasons in 164 countries, the same number as in 2020.
- Religious groups experienced harassment from **governments and/or social groups and individuals** in a total of 190 countries. This includes 157 countries with reported cases of religion-related harassment committed by *both* government officials *and* nongovernmental actors.

These figures include all countries in which *at least one* incident of *any type* of harassment targeting a religious group was reported during 2021 by this study's sources. By harassment we mean a wide variety of actions from derogatory statements by government officials to physical acts of force. The data can provide a sense of how geographically widespread religious harassment is and whether certain types of harassment are rising or falling. **But this study is not designed to determine which religious group faces the most persecution.**

Examples of *physical* harassment include damage to property, assaults on people, detentions or arrests, displacements or deportations, and killings. Examples of *verbal* harassment include insults and derogatory public remarks, including statements to the press about religious groups.

People who do not identify with a religion, such as atheists or agnostics, are counted as targets of religious harassment if the sources used in the study indicate they were targeted due to their beliefs or non-beliefs. Humanists are included in a separate category from the religiously unaffiliated.

## Physical harassment against religious groups

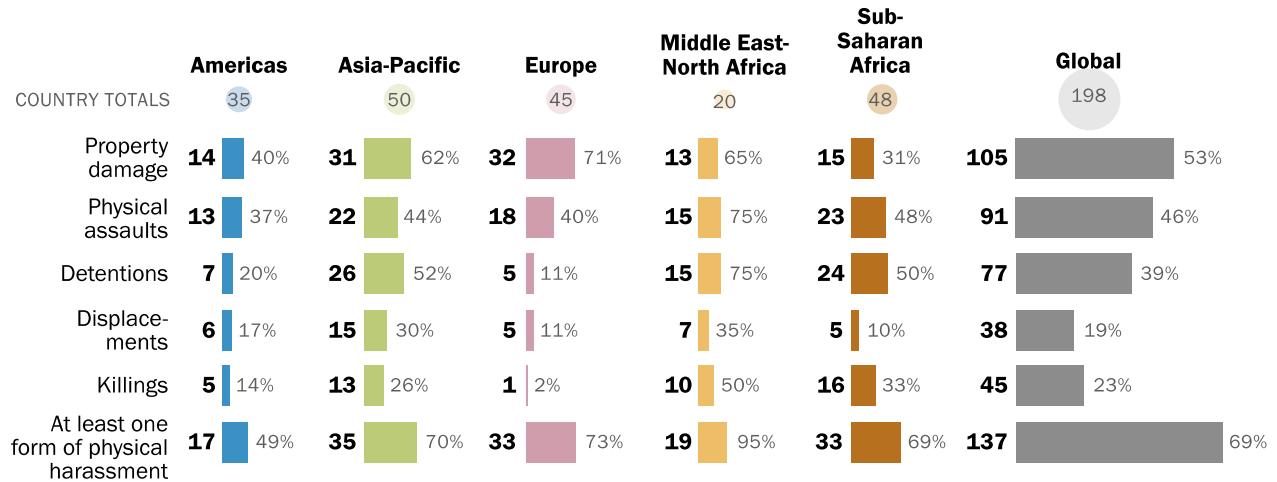
To examine incidents of religion-related harassment that are more severe, this section looks at five types of physical harassment that people faced because of their religious beliefs or practices: **property damage**, **assaults on people**, **detentions**, **displacements**, and **killings**.

In 2021, at least one of these types of physical harassment was reported against religious groups in 137 out of 198 countries and territories (69%), about the same as in 2020 (138 countries). Governments were responsible for this in 100 countries, the same number as in 2020. Private individuals or social groups physically harassed religious groups in 101 countries, a decline from 105 in 2020.

Property damage was the most common type of physical harassment reported against religious groups (in 105 countries, or 53%). Physical assaults were reported in 91 countries (46%), while detentions occurred in 77 countries (39%). Meanwhile, there were religion-related displacements in 38 countries (19%), and killings were reported in 45 countries (23%).

### Physical harassment of religious groups reported in two-thirds of countries

Number of countries and territories where religious groups encountered each type of physical harassment in 2021, by region



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. Refer to the Methodology for details.  
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## Property damage

Property damage against religious groups, occurring in **105 countries overall**, was inflicted by governments in 65 of these countries and came at the hands of social groups or private individuals in 80. This category of harassment includes raids, evictions, closures, vandalism and unresolved restitution claims for land or buildings of religious communities seized in the past.

Europe had the highest share of countries where property damage related to religion was reported (71% of the 45 countries in the region).

In France, [authorities reported in 2021 that they had shut down 21 mosques](#), accusing them of spreading radical ideology. (The government had put 92 mosques on a watchlist; it eventually removed 36 from the list after the mosques fulfilled the government's requests to remove certain preachers and to refuse foreign funds.) And in Poland, there were [multiple attacks against Catholic and Jewish sites](#) by private individuals, including vandalism of statues at several Catholic churches and damage to dozens of tombstones in Jewish cemeteries.

Europe also had several countries that faced restitution cases for properties seized during the Holocaust or during a period of communist rule. In Romania, for example, the government responded slowly to such claims, according to the U.S. State Department. In 2021, Romanian authorities [approved 23 requests for restitution](#) of land or buildings that had been taken from religious groups but denied 471 other claims.

Across the Middle East and North Africa, 65% of the region's 20 countries had reports of religion-related property damage in 2021, while the same types of incidents occurred in 62% of the 50 countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

## Physical assaults

Physical assaults targeting people for religious reasons were reported in **91 countries** in 2021. This includes 42 countries where governments were responsible for the assaults and 67 where social groups or individuals were behind them, according to the sources used in this study.

In the Middle East and North Africa, assaults were reported in 15 of 20 countries (75%), the highest share of any region. In Yemen, Houthi forces launched a missile attack on a Sunni-majority mosque on Oct. 31 and [killed and injured "dozens" of people](#), according to the U.S. State

Department.<sup>5</sup> And in Israel, during the last Friday of Ramadan in May, [police entered the holy site](#) known to Muslims as the Haram al-Sharif (and to Jews as the Temple Mount) and used “teargas, stun grenades, and rubber tipped bullets to disperse Palestinians they said were throwing rocks,” according to the U.S. State Department. A similar incident occurred the following Monday. The Palestinian Red Crescent said more than 300 people were injured. Afterward, in an effort to reduce hostilities, police temporarily prevented non-Muslims from visiting the site.

## Detentions

People were detained due to religious beliefs or practices in **77 countries**. Governments detained people in many more countries (73) than did social groups (20). Detentions include kidnappings and arrests, such as actions by law enforcement agencies that are reported as being excessive, arbitrary or conducted without due process.

The Middle East-North Africa region had the highest share of countries in this category (15 out of 20, or 75%). In the Asia-Pacific region, more than half the countries (26 out of 50) reported religion-related detentions, while in sub-Saharan Africa, 24 out of 48 countries had such incidents cited in the sources for this study.

In Libya, [15 Christians were detained](#) in an October 2021 crackdown on migrants that sources said caused other migrants to be fearful of attending church.

In Sri Lanka, [311 people remained in prison in 2021](#) – many of whom were being detained without formal charges – for “alleged connections” to the 2019 Easter Sunday bombings in the country that left more than 250 people dead and 500 wounded, according to the U.S. State Department. Authorities had arrested more than 2,000 people after the attacks, and in the following years also charged a prominent Muslim lawyer, two politicians and a poet. Attorneys and advocates for some of these well-known individuals said the government was unable to present sufficient evidence linking them to terrorism. (By the end of 2021, one was acquitted and two of the others were granted bail.)

Meanwhile, in Singapore, as of December 2021, Jehovah’s Witnesses stated on their official website that [17 of their members were being detained](#) by the government [for not complying with military conscription laws](#) for religious reasons. And in Eritrea, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) estimated that at least 1,000 people, including religious leaders, were imprisoned for [“religious activity or religious freedom advocacy.”](#) The

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<sup>5</sup> Houthi forces continued to control “approximately one-third” of Yemen’s territory in 2021, affecting 70% to 80% of the country’s population, [according to the U.S. State Department](#). For this reason, researchers categorized Houthi actions in Yemen under the Government Restrictions Index.

prisoners included the patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Church, who was ousted from his position in 2007 and kept under house arrest until he died in February 2022 (after the period covered in this report).

## Displacements

Religion-related displacements and deportations occurred in **38 countries** (19%) in 2021, with governments responsible in 29 countries. Social groups and individuals were blamed for forcing people out of their homes for religious reasons in 14 countries.

In Afghanistan, after seizing power in August 2021, the Taliban reportedly expelled at least 2,800 Shiite Hazaras from their homes and took over their properties in Daikundi and Uruzgan provinces. By the end of the year, more than 120,000 Afghans, including religious minorities, had been evacuated to the United States or other countries, while “masses” of people escaped to nearby countries out of [fear of religious persecution](#), according to USCIRF.

In Indonesia, [about 120 Ahmadi Muslims continued to be internally displaced](#) after mob violence forced them from their village in East Lombok in 2006. And in Myanmar (also called Burma), more than 140,000 Rohingya Muslims were living in 21 displacement camps in the country while [more than 800,000 previously displaced Rohingya](#) lived across the border in neighboring Bangladesh as of 2021. In addition, 30,000 people from the Chin ethnoreligious group, which is mostly Christian, [fled from Myanmar to India](#).

## Killings

Killings based on religion were reported in **45 countries** (23% of all countries in the study). Governments were behind such deaths in 22 countries, and social groups and individuals were responsible in 34 countries, according to the sources used in the study.

In China, members of Falun Gong, an illegal religious group, were reportedly mistreated in prison and died [“in custody, or shortly after their release.”](#) according to Freedom House. For example, a former colonel named Gong Piqi, who was arrested in 2017 for ties to Falun Gong, was said by authorities to have died in prison from a [“sudden cerebral hemorrhage.”](#) although his family and friends alleged he had marks of torture on his body. In Muslim-majority Bangladesh, [mob violence during the Hindu festival of Durga Puja](#) led to the deaths of at least four people, according to United Nations estimates. (Other sources said the number of deaths was higher.)

And in Ethiopia’s northern Tigray region, 78 priests were [killed by the army and Eritrean soldiers](#) in the first five months of 2021, as part of a [conflict between the government and Tigray forces](#) that

began in November 2020. Also in 2021, in the Oromia region of Ethiopia, soldiers from the Oromo Liberation Army [reportedly killed 29 people in a church](#) where worshippers had gathered for the beginning of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church's fasting period.

## Which religious groups were harassed?

In 2021, Christians were harassed by governments or private actors in 160 countries, up from 155 in 2020. Meanwhile, Muslims faced harassment in 141 countries, down from 145 in 2020.

Christians and Muslims are the [largest religious groups in the world](#), and since the beginning of the study, they generally have faced harassment in a larger number of countries than any other group. (However, this figure is not a measure of the *severity* of harassment, and it should not be interpreted to mean that these religious groups are necessarily the world's "most persecuted.")

Jews were harassed by governments and social groups or individuals in 91 countries in 2021 (down from 94 countries in 2020), the third highest total of any religious group, although Jews make up just [0.2% of the world's population](#).

### Most religious groups analyzed in the study were harassed in more countries in 2021 than in 2020.

This was the case for Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, practitioners of folk religions and adherents of other small groups (including Baha'is, Scientologists, Sikhs, Rastafarians, Zoroastrians and others).

Muslims and Jews faced harassment in fewer countries in 2021 than in 2020, according to the sources analyzed. People who are religiously unaffiliated, including atheists and agnostics, faced discrimination in the same number of countries as in 2020 (27).

Most religious groups faced harassment in more countries from governments than from social groups or individuals in 2021.

### Religious groups were harassed in 190 countries in 2021

*Number of countries and territories where religious groups were harassed, by year*

	2007	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21
Christians	107	110	102	108	128	144	143	145	153	155	160
Muslims	96	109	99	100	125	142	140	139	147	145	141
Jews	51	71	77	81	74	87	87	88	89	94	91
Others*	33	39	38	43	50	57	50	56	68	62	64
Folk religions**	24	26	34	21	32	41	38	37	32	33	40
Hindus	21	16	9	14	18	23	23	19	21	21	24
Buddhists	10	13	12	10	7	17	19	24	25	21	28
Religiously unaffiliated	N/A	3	5	4	14	14	23	18	22	27	27
<b>Any of above</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>190</b>

\* 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 "Others" figure 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. Refer to the Methodology for details.

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However, Jews and adherents of folk religions were harassed by governments and social groups or private individuals in almost the same number of countries. For example, Jews faced government harassment in 72 countries and social harassment in 73, while practitioners of folk religions faced government harassment in 25 countries and social harassment in 24 countries.

### 3. Median scores for government restrictions peak, social hostilities involving religion tick down in 2021

#### Government restrictions on religion, by region

The global median score on the Government Restrictions Index (GRI) rose from 2.8 in 2020 to 3.0 in 2021, the highest it's been since Pew Research Center created the index in 2007. Both Europe and the Americas saw increases in their regional GRI scores, though their median scores remained lower than in the Asia-Pacific and Middle East-North Africa regions. Index scores remained the same from 2020 to 2021 in the Asia-Pacific, Middle East-North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa regions.

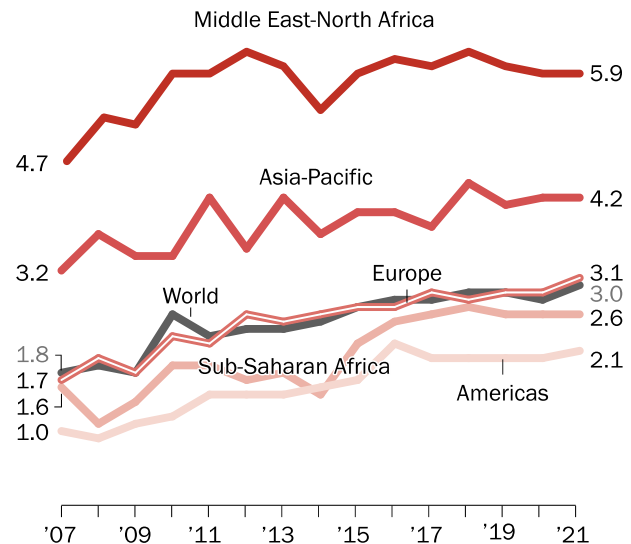
In Europe, the median GRI score ticked up from 2.9 to 3.1, while the score for the Americas rose from 2.0 to 2.1. Part of what drove these small increases, in both regions, were accusations that governments failed to intervene to prevent discrimination or abuses against religious people.

For example, in Finland, a member of an interfaith dialogue group said that [verbal and physical abuse against Muslim women went unaddressed](#) by authorities and that, as a result, many Muslims – especially women who wear hijabs – did not report harassment they faced in 2021. And Jewish community representatives in Finland said police had video and photo evidence but made no arrests of vandals who posted antisemitic posters and stickers at a synagogue, on public property and in Helsinki neighborhoods with large Jewish populations.

**Harassment of religious groups remained widespread across Europe, occurring in 43 of the region's 45 countries in 2021.** In Germany, where several states already [banned schoolteachers from wearing headscarves](#), a new federal law came into effect that allowed authorities to restrict tattoos, clothing, hair and other symbols for civil servants. [Religious symbols](#)

#### Median level of government restrictions increased in Americas and Europe in 2021

Median scores on the Government Restrictions Index



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. Refer to the Methodology for details.  
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[could be restricted under this law](#) if employers said they “adversely” affected public perceptions of how civil servants did their jobs. Furthermore, the Court of Justice of the European Union ruled in two appellate cases brought in Hamburg and Bavaria that employers could ban employees from wearing headscarves so that they would appear neutral to clients.

**The Americas continued to have the lowest levels of religion-related government restrictions of any region in the study.** Still, in Haiti, the media reported that police did not open cases or make arrests after [multiple religious leaders and congregants were kidnapped](#) for ransom in 2021. In one instance, after [seven Catholic clergy were kidnapped by gang members](#), the Catholic Church stopped all church activities in the country for three days, shutting down parishes, schools, nonprofit organizations and Catholic-owned businesses to protest the lack of progress in negotiations for the hostages’ release. (The hostages eventually were released.)

In addition, government interference in worship was reported in 28 of the 35 countries in the Americas. In Colombia, where conscientious objectors have been exempt from military service under certain conditions, [religious groups continued to complain](#) about a law mandating that a commission review applications for these exemptions. The religious groups said some objectors were denied exemptions (though they did not have to carry weapons during their military service).

**The Middle East-North Africa region once again had the highest median GRI score of any region analyzed (5.9).** The region has held this record every year of the study so far. As in previous years, government favoritism of religion remained prevalent, with 19 of 20 countries in the region recognizing a favored religion in its constitution. Sudan is the only country in the region whose constitution did not recognize a favored religion in 2021. An interim Sudanese constitution, from 2019, [does not rely on sharia as a source of law](#), and it has [provisions for freedom of worship](#).<sup>6</sup> (Sudan’s previous constitution was suspended in 2019 when the military deposed the country’s former leader.)

As in previous years, all countries in the Middle East-North Africa region reported at least one case of government harassment against religious groups in 2021, as well as at least one case of government interference in worship. In Saudi Arabia, the government continued to [forbid the public practice of religions other than Islam](#) and banned promotion of atheism. People who practiced religions other than the form of Sunni Islam favored by the government were “vulnerable to detention, discrimination, harassment, and, for noncitizens, deportation,”

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<sup>6</sup> [According to the U.S. State Department](#), while the interim constitution does not rely on sharia as a source of law, “the clause restricting the death penalty permits its imposition as sharia-sanctioned ... punishment for certain crimes.” In contrast, Sudan’s former constitution “stated all national legislation should be based on sharia.”

according to the U.S. State Department. Most countries in the region also continued to place restrictions on public preaching, proselytizing and religious conversions.

**The median score on the Government Restrictions Index remained at 4.2 in the Asia-Pacific region and at 2.6 in sub-Saharan Africa.** Asia and the Pacific included several countries with “very high” levels of government restrictions, including China, Afghanistan and Iran. As in previous years, China continued to [restrict the activities of religious groups](#) that were deemed a threat to the Chinese Communist Party. And since 2017, according to U.S. government estimates, more than one million Uyghur Muslims, ethnic Kazakhs, Hui and other Muslim groups, along with some Christians, were [detained in internment camps in China](#).

In Afghanistan, the [Taliban took power in August 2021](#) and imposed its interpretation of Islamic law with decrees that included rules for women’s clothing, men’s facial hair and gender segregation. In Iran, the [parliament criminalized the act of insulting Islamic schools of thought](#) as well as any proselytizing activity that “contradicts or interferes” with Islam, which nongovernmental organizations said made religious minorities more vulnerable to restrictions. The group United for Iran said the government either imprisoned or executed at least 62 people in 2021 on charges of “enmity against God” or “armed rebellion against Islamic rule.”

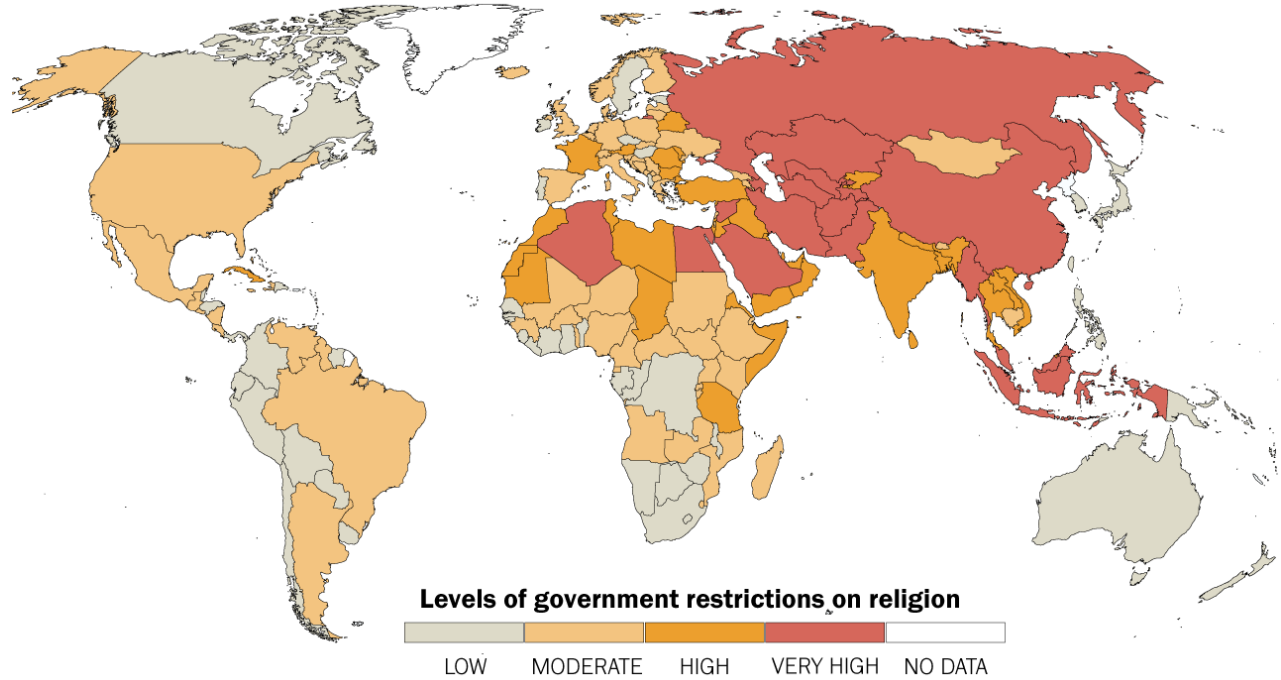
**In sub-Saharan Africa, governments harassed religious groups in 44 of 48 countries and interfered in worship in 39 countries.** For example, in the [Central African Republic](#), where there has been renewed [conflict along sectarian lines](#) since late 2012, government security forces and Russian-backed mercenaries “[disproportionately targeted](#)” and “indiscriminately” killed Muslim civilians in 2021 while fighting against rebel groups, according to the U.S. State Department. A media source reported in February that pro-government forces killed 14 people at a mosque, and that military forces and the Russian-backed mercenaries “raped, tortured, and killed Muslim civilians.”

In Mozambique, in response to attacks by the Islamic State that began in 2017, government forces arbitrarily [detained people who they believed to be Muslim](#) based on appearance, according to media and Islamic organizations in the country. Nongovernmental organizations and the media said this government response “exacerbate[ed] existing grievances among historically marginalized majority-Muslim populations,” according to the U.S. State Department.

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## Government restrictions on religion around the world

*Levels of government restrictions on religion in each country and territory studied as of 2021*



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. Refer to the Methodology for details.  
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## Social hostilities involving religion, by region

Worldwide, social hostilities involving religion fell slightly; **the global median score on the Social Hostilities Index (SHI) dropped from 1.8 in 2020 to 1.6 in 2021.**<sup>7</sup>

Regionally, sub-Saharan Africa, the Asia-Pacific region, and the Middle East and North Africa saw slight *increases* in their SHI index scores, while Europe experienced a decline and the median SHI score in the Americas stayed the same.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the median score ticked up from 1.2 in 2020 to 1.3 in 2021. In the Asia-Pacific region, the median score rose from 1.8 to 1.9 in 2021, while in the Middle East and North Africa, it went from 3.5 to 3.6.

### **Nigeria had the highest levels of social hostilities in 2021 among the countries analyzed.**

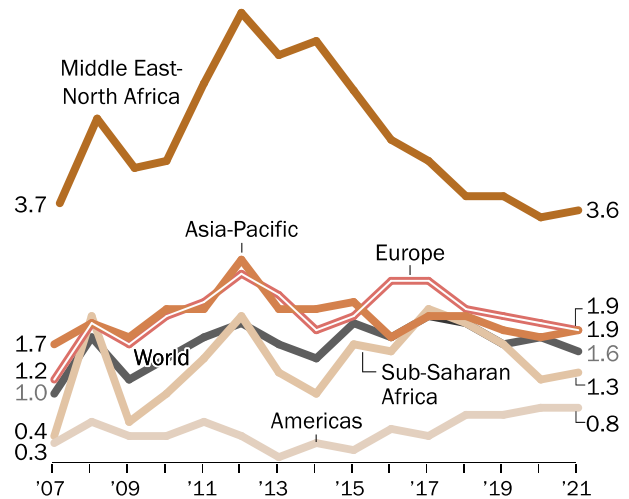
According to the U.S. State Department, [“intercommunal clashes”](#) – driven by competition for natural resources – occurred

throughout the year between “predominantly” Christian farmers and Muslim herders, who have both formed armed groups. In August, for instance, ethnic Irigwe Christians killed 27 people and injured 14 others when they attacked five buses transporting Muslims as they traveled through Plateau State. And in September, Muslim herdsmen killed 49 people and kidnapped 27 others (most of whom were Christian) in attacks carried out in three areas in the state of Kaduna. In addition, there was continued [violence by Boko Haram and Islamic State militants](#) throughout 2021, which contributed to social hostilities in the country.

**India had the second-highest level of social hostilities among the countries in the study.** Although the SHI score in India declined from 2020 to 2021, the country continued to have the highest levels of social hostilities in the Asia-Pacific region, followed by Afghanistan and Pakistan. In all three countries, members of religious minorities faced violence. In India, a NGO

### **Europe was the only region to see a decrease in median level of social hostilities involving religion in 2021**

*Median scores on the Social Hostilities Index*



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. Refer to the Methodology for details.

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<sup>7</sup> Part of the decline could be due to our phasing out the use of the Global Terrorism Database to code for religion-related social hostilities. Refer to the [Methodology](#) for details.

called the United Christian Forum said the [number of “violent attacks” targeting Christians increased](#) from 279 in 2020 to 486 in 2021. Attacks on Muslim properties by Hindu nationalist groups were also reported during the year, including incidents in October targeting mosques and Muslim-owned shops and houses in Tripura state. The media reported that these attacks were in retaliation for violence against Hindu minorities in the neighboring country of Bangladesh.

In Afghanistan, [attacks by the Islamic State increased](#), targeting the Taliban as well as Shiite minorities and other civilians. In October 2021, suicide bombers struck a Shiite mosque in Kunduz province, [killing dozens of people](#) from the Shiite Hazara community. In a separate October attack on the largest Shiite mosque in the province of Kandahar, the Islamic State killed 47 people and injured almost 70, according to the U.S. State Department.

The [Shiite Hazara community was also targeted in Pakistan](#) by the Islamic State and another armed group, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). And Pakistan experienced mob violence related to religion: In December, hundreds of Muslim workers attacked a factory manager – a Sri Lankan Christian – after he allegedly removed the posters of a far-right political party which included Islamic prayers. Accused of blasphemy, the man was beaten and stoned to death, and his corpse was set on fire. The country’s prime minister described what happened as “horrific” and ordered an investigation that led to more than 100 arrests. Other minorities such as Hindus and Ahmadi Muslims were also targeted in Pakistan throughout the year.

**In the Middle East-North Africa region, Syria had the highest levels of social hostilities in 2021, followed by Israel, Egypt and the Palestinian territories.** In Syria, which in 2021 entered its 10th year of conflict since [uprisings began against the ruling Assad regime](#), armed Syrian opposition groups backed by Turkey – known as “TSOs” – targeted religious and ethnic minorities such as Yezidis in what the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom described as [“acts of religious and ethnic cleansing.”](#)

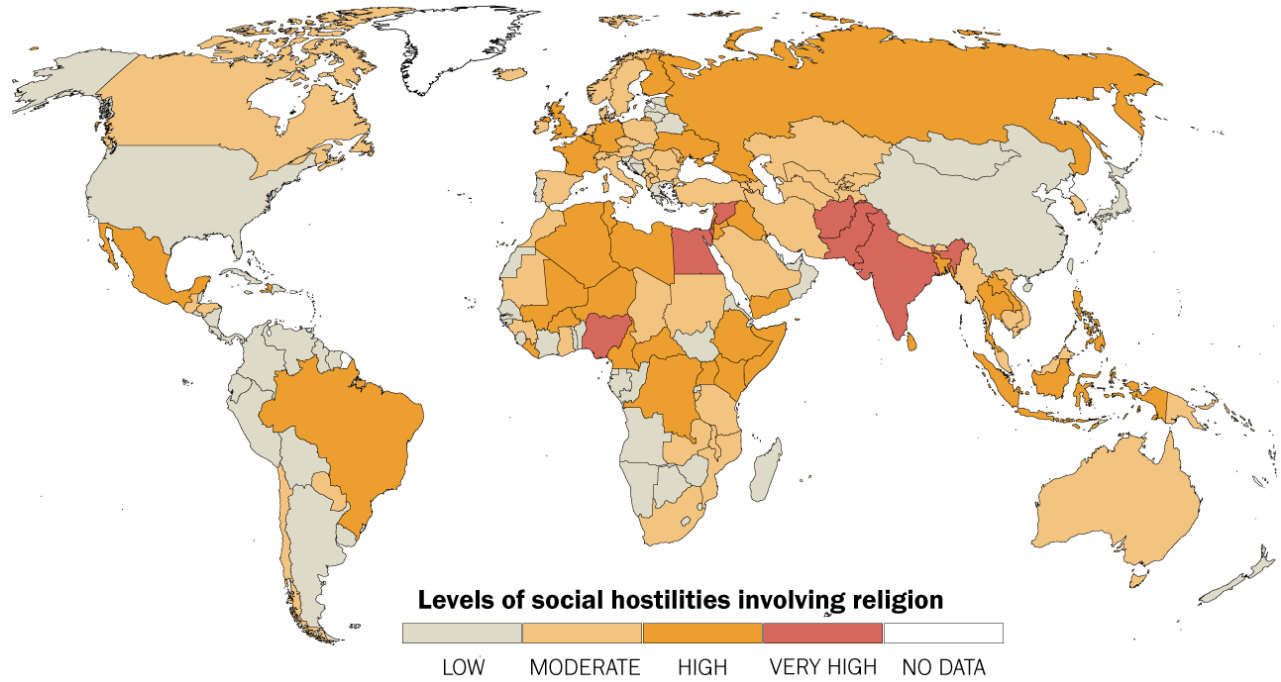
In Israel and the Palestinian territories, several [attacks against clergy and religious properties](#) were reported. For example, an escalation of hostilities in Jerusalem and Gaza led to a weeklong period of civil unrest in “mixed Jewish-Arab” cities where synagogues, a mosque and Muslim gravesites were attacked, according to the U.S. State Department. Attacks by ultra-Orthodox Jews were also reported against Christian clergy and pilgrims in Jerusalem, and against Jewish women worshipping at the Western Wall prayer site.

**In Europe, the median level of social hostilities fell from 2.0 in 2020 to 1.9 in 2021, while the Americas’ score remained at 0.8 – the lowest of all the regions analyzed.**

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## Social hostilities involving religion around the world

*Level of social hostilities involving religion in each country and territory studied as of 2021*



Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. Refer to the Methodology for details.  
"Globally, Government Restrictions on Religion Reached Peak Levels in 2021, While Social Hostilities Went Down"

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## 4. Restrictions on religion in the world's 25 most populous countries in 2021

Egypt, Pakistan, India, Indonesia and Nigeria had the highest levels of overall restrictions (both government restrictions and social hostilities) among the 25 most populous countries in 2021. Japan, the United States, South Africa, Italy and Brazil had the lowest levels of overall restrictions among these countries.

Each year we look separately at the 25 most populous countries, some of which have multiple religious and ethnic minorities, because together they account for nearly three-quarters of the world's population (that is, about 5.8 billion people out of the 7.8 billion alive in 2020).<sup>8</sup> Analyzing how many of these large countries have restrictions, then, sheds light on how large swaths of the global population may be affected by government policies or social hostilities involving religion.

At the same time, it is important to note that these restrictions and hostilities typically do not impact everybody in a country equally; for example, they may affect members of minority religious groups more than they affect people in majority religious groups.

### Government Restrictions Index (GRI)

Among the 25 largest countries, China, Russia, Iran, Egypt and Indonesia had the highest levels of government restrictions on religion. All had “very high” GRI scores. On the other hand, the *lowest* levels of government restrictions in this group were recorded in Japan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Africa, the Philippines and the U.S. The United States had “moderate” levels of government restrictions while the other four had “low” levels.

### Social Hostilities Index (SHI)

Among the 25 most populous countries, Nigeria, India, Egypt, Pakistan and Bangladesh had the highest levels of social hostilities relating to religion.

Nigeria, India, Egypt and Pakistan had “very high” SHI scores while Bangladesh fell into the “high” category. Japan, China, the U.S., Turkey and South Africa had the *lowest* levels of social hostilities in this group. Turkey and South Africa had “moderate” levels of social hostilities, while the other three countries had “low” levels.

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<sup>8</sup> The population figures used for this report are estimates for 2020 that were published in the 2022 revision of the UN Population Division's [World Population Prospects](#).



**Several of the most populous countries had similar levels of government restrictions and social hostilities involving religion.** For example, Japan had “low” scores on both the GRI and SHI, Italy was “moderate” on both indexes, and Pakistan had “very high” levels of government restrictions and social hostilities.

**However, other countries had GRI and SHI scores at different ends of the spectrum from one another.** In China, for example, government restrictions once again fell into the “very high” category, while social hostilities remained at a “low” level. On the other hand, the Philippines was in the “high” category on the SHI and the “low” category on the GRI. Iran, meanwhile, had “very high” government restrictions and “moderate” social hostilities.

### **How GRI scores changed from 2020 to 2021**

None of the 25 most populous countries experienced a large change (defined as 2.0 points or more) in their GRI scores. The Democratic Republic of the Congo had a modest decrease (defined as a change of 1.0-1.9 points), while most countries had small changes (less than 1.0 point).

When looking at *category* changes within the GRI, Pakistan moved from “high” to “very high” levels in 2021. None of the other 24 most populous countries moved to different categories on the GRI in 2021.

### **How SHI scores changed from 2020 to 2021**

There were more changes from 2020 to 2021 on the Social Hostilities Index. Turkey’s SHI score dropped significantly (more than 2.0 points), while South Africa had a modest decrease and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania and Thailand experienced modest *increases*.

The decrease in Turkey was partially due to there being [no reported abductions or targeted killings of Christians](#) in 2021. [The previous year](#), the mother of a Chaldean Catholic priest was abducted and later found dead.

Several of the 25 most populous countries fell into different categories on the SHI in 2021 than in the previous year. For example, Turkey and South Africa’s levels of social hostilities both fell from “high” to “moderate” and the U.S. went from “moderate” to “low.”

Conversely, Russia and Thailand both rose from “moderate” to “high” levels of social hostilities involving religion. In Thailand, the SHI score went up modestly in 2021, in part due to incidents involving physical harassment. For example, the U.S. State Department reported that a group

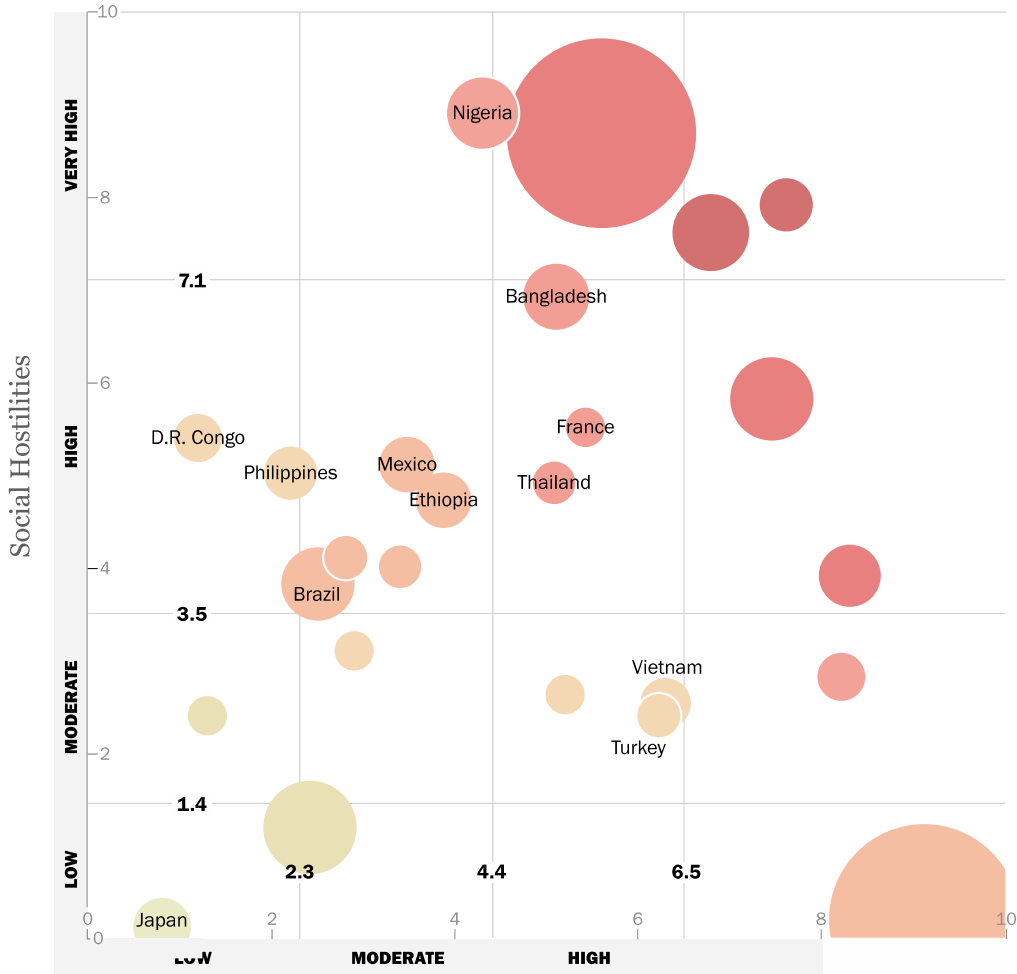


called the Buddhism Protection Organization for Peace “[protested and obstructed](#)” the building of a mosque. (The mosque construction continued after the group left the area).

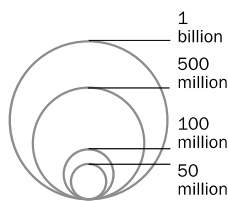
In Russia, where the actual SHI score increase was small, an [unidentified man assaulted an 82-year-old scientist on a bus](#) and shouted antisemitic insults at him. Antisemitic incidents involving physical assault had not been reported in 2020.

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

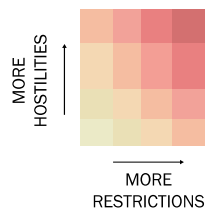
Among the world's 25 most populous countries, Egypt, Pakistan, India, Indonesia and Nigeria had the highest levels of overall restrictions on religion (when considering both government restrictions and social hostilities). Japan, the United States, South Africa, Italy and Brazil had the lowest levels. Scores are for calendar year 2021.



Government Restrictions



Circles are sized proportionally to each country's population (2020).



Colors are based on each country's position on the chart.

Note: Countries in the upper right have the most restrictions and hostilities; those in the lower left have the least restrictions and hostilities. Source: Pew Research Center analysis of external data. Refer to the Methodology for details. Population figures are UN estimates for 2020. "Globally, Government Restrictions on Religion Reached Peak Levels in 2021, While Social Hostilities Went Down"

## Methodology

This is the 14th time Pew Research Center has measured restrictions on religion around the globe.<sup>9</sup> This report, which includes data for the year ending Dec. 31, 2021, 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.<sup>10</sup> This report analyzes changes in restrictions on an annual basis, focusing on the 2021 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 (refer to the 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.

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### 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

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<sup>9</sup> Refer to the Methodology of Pew Research Center’s 2009 report [“Global Restrictions on Religion”](#) for a discussion of the conceptual basis for measuring restrictions on religion.

<sup>10</sup> 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.”

Refer to 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 Brian J. Grim, former Pew Research Center senior researcher and director of cross-national data, in consultation with other 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.<sup>11</sup> 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.

### 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.

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<sup>11</sup> Refer to 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*.

Second, 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.

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 (read the [section on 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 2021, plus six territories – Kosovo, Hong Kong, Macao, the Palestinian territories, Taiwan and Western Sahara.<sup>12</sup> 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.

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<sup>12</sup> The one United Nations member state 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. State Department'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 2021. 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.

## 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.<sup>13</sup> 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 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.

In 2020 and 2021, the U.S. State Department did not include a separate analysis on Western Sahara in its annual report on International Religious Freedom, one of the widely used sources in this study.

## 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. (Read the section below for more details on the new information sources.)

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, the 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 2021

1. Country constitutions
2. U.S. State Department annual Reports on International Religious Freedom
3. U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom annual reports

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<sup>13</sup> U.S. State Department. June 2020. "[Western Sahara](#)." International Religious Freedom Report for 2019. Refer also to United Nations. "[Non-Self-Governing Territories](#)." The United Nations and Decolonization.

4. UN 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 and database
8. United Kingdom Foreign & Commonwealth Office annual reports on human rights
9. Council of the European Union annual reports on human rights
10. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports
11. U.S. State Department annual Country Reports on Terrorism
12. Anti-Defamation League reports
13. U.S. State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices
14. Uppsala University's Uppsala Conflict Data Program, Armed Conflict Database
15. Human Rights Without Frontiers "Freedom of Religion or Belief" newsletters
16. Amnesty International Country Profiles
17. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Population Statistics Database
18. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre Global Internal Displacement Database
19. FBI Hate Crime Reports (for information on the situation in the United States)

As noted, this study includes three 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, and the "Freedom of Religion or Belief" newsletters of Human Rights Without Frontiers.

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.

### **A note on previous sources that were unavailable in 2021**

Pew Research Center used data from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), maintained by the University of Maryland’s National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, to code and categorize information on religion-related terrorism that took place from 2013 to 2020. However, GTD data was not available at the time researchers collected information for the current report, covering 2021 events. To analyze religion-related terrorism that took place in 2021, Pew Research Center used information from the sources we typically use for our annual studies, including the International Crisis Group’s CrisisWatch Database and the U.S. State Department’s annual Country Reports on Terrorism, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices and worldwide reports on International Religious Freedom. Researchers also used annual reports from Freedom House, Amnesty International, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and Human Rights Watch. (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, Uppsala University’s Armed Conflict Database and the U.S. State Department reports for information on religion-related terrorism.

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 2021 events, however.

The study also has used the U.S. Department of Justice’s “Religious Freedom in Focus” newsletters and reports to code information for the United States in most years. These reports were not available for 2021.

While some of the changes 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, read the “Potential Biases” section in the 2014 report, [“Religious Hostilities Reach Six-Year High.”](#))

## 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](#).

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 the Center had multiple sources; only small (predominantly island) countries had a single source, namely the U.S. State Department reports.

Coding the United States presented a special problem since it is not included in the U.S. 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 U.S., 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 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 2021 with those from the previous year, ending Dec. 31, 2020. 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 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 0.77. Scores near 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 dataset. 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 (refer to the [summary of results](#)). 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 scale of 0.0 to 10.0, with 0.0 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 0.0 to 1.0 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 10.0 and a possible range of 0.0 to 10.0 – 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 2021. 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 Center staff to create the Social Hostilities Index.

The SHI was constructed by adding together the 13 indicators based on a scale of 0.0 to 10.0, with 0.0 indicating very low impediments to religious beliefs and practices, and 10.0 indicating very high impediments. The various questions that form the index are coded in a standard scale from 0.0 to 1.0 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 0.0 to 10.0 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, counted only 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?” (Refer to the [summary of results](#).)

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 U.S. State Department 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 (refer to [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. (Refer to the [example of data coding](#) in 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, 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 11th 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 Social Hostilities Index, 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 committed against noncombatants by subnational groups or clandestine agents that have some religious ideology or religious motivation. It can also include acts carried out by groups that have a nonreligious identity but that target religious personnel, such as clergy, or religious sites, such as a synagogue or mosque. 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 discernible religious ideology or motive behind it and if it was not directed at religious personnel or a religious site.

For the 2013-2020 coding years, the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) was used to find information on religion-related terrorism. The GTD’s classification of terrorist incidents counts attacks on military targets as terrorism. For 2021 events, we did *not* count attacks on police or military targets, because they would not qualify as noncombatants.

“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-Shabab 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 2021.

### **Crimea coding**

Starting with data covering 2015, researchers coded incidents occurring in Crimea as part of Russia's GRI and SHI scores. 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.<sup>14</sup>

### **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.<sup>15</sup> For this reason, researchers coded actions by the Houthi in 2016 as government restrictions rather than social hostilities and continued to do so in 2021.

### **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 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

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<sup>14</sup> United Nations. March 2014. "[General Assembly Adopts Resolution Calling upon States Not to Recognize Changes in Status of Crimea Region.](#)"

<sup>15</sup> Nov. 28, 2016. "[Yemen: Houthi rebels form new government.](#)" Al Jazeera.



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 Pew Research Center used for its coding.

Each is also covered by other secondary quantitative datasets on religious restrictions that have used a similar coding scheme, including earlier years of coded U.S. State Department report data produced by Brian J. Grim at Penn State University's Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA) project (four datasets); independent coding by experts at the Hudson Institute's Center for Religious Liberty using indexes also available from ARDA (one dataset); and content analysis of country constitutions conducted by the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty (one dataset). 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 baseline report](#), Pew Research Center staff compared the length of U.S. 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 U.S. 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 U.S. 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 U.S. State Department reports is comparable with the results of population surveys and individual expert opinion.”<sup>16</sup>

## **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

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<sup>16</sup> Refer to 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.

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.

## Appendix A: Government Restrictions Index

The following table shows all 198 countries and territories in descending order of their scores on Pew Research Center's index of government restrictions on religion as of the end of 2021. The Center has not attached numerical rankings to the countries because there are numerous tied scores and the differences between the scores of countries that are close to each other on this table are not necessarily meaningful.

Very high SCORES 6.6 AND HIGHER		Moderate SCORES 2.4 TO 4.4
China	Belarus	Bhutan
Russia	Morocco	Denmark
Afghanistan ▲	Turkey	Nigeria
Iran	Mauritania	Greece
Algeria	Qatar	Cyprus ▲
Syria	Libya	Ukraine
Uzbekistan	United Arab Emirates	Ethiopia
Tajikistan	Tunisia	South Sudan
Malaysia	Western Sahara	Spain
Myanmar	Israel	Georgia
Egypt	Kyrgyzstan	Hong Kong ▲
Indonesia	India	Lebanon
Turkmenistan ▲	Kuwait	Netherlands ▲
Kazakhstan	Jordan	Nicaragua ▲
Singapore	Yemen	Niger
Pakistan	France	Palestinian territories ▼
Azerbaijan	Nepal	Armenia
Maldives	Oman	Djibouti
Saudi Arabia	Cuba	North Macedonia ▲
	Tanzania	Belgium
	Bangladesh	Equatorial Guinea
	Thailand	Iceland
	Romania	Central African Republic
	Bulgaria	Finland
	Moldova	Kenya
	Somalia	Mexico
	Austria	Zambia
	Chad	Bahamas
	Comoros	Cambodia
		Croatia
		United Kingdom

▲ Denotes an increase of 1.0 point or more from 2020 to 2021.

▼ Denotes a decrease of 1.0 point or more from 2020 to 2021.

## Government Restrictions Index (cont.)

Bosnia-Herzegovina

Burundi

Madagascar

Poland

Serbia

Rwanda

Sudan ▼

Angola

Guinea

Guyana

Luxembourg

Mongolia

Burkina Faso

Norway

Slovakia

Italy

Mozambique

Germany

Haiti

Kosovo

Lithuania

Montenegro

Venezuela

Argentina

Costa Rica

El Salvador

Guatemala

Seychelles

Togo

Cameroon

Eswatini

Switzerland

Andorra

Brazil

Slovenia

Uganda

Dominica

Jamaica

Latvia

Mali

United States

### Low

#### SCORES 0.0 TO 2.3

Czech Republic

Fiji

Hungary

St. Lucia

Sweden

Malawi

Philippines

South Korea

Tuvalu

Canada

Colombia

Monaco

Paraguay

Sierra Leone

Zimbabwe

Liechtenstein

Malta

Tonga

Albania

Grenada

Honduras

Mauritius

Australia

Botswana

Dominican Republic

Ecuador

Nauru

Peru

Chile

Republic of the Congo

Vanuatu

Belize

Kiribati

Liberia

Benin

Estonia

Panama

South Africa

D.R. Congo ▼

Ivory Coast

Trinidad and Tobago

Ghana

Lesotho

Namibia

Solomon Islands

Suriname

Ireland

Samoa

St. Kitts and Nevis

St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Taiwan

Bolivia

Gambia

Papua New Guinea

São Tomé and Príncipe

Timor-Leste

Uruguay

Antigua and Barbuda

Cape Verde

Gabon

Guinea-Bissau

Japan

Barbados ▼

Senegal

Portugal

San Marino

Palau

Federated States of Micronesia

Macao

Marshall Islands

New Zealand

**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. Read the Methodology for more details.

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



## Social Hostilities Index (cont.)

Paraguay  
 Zambia  
 Chad  
 Chile  
 Malawi  
 Singapore  
 Albania ▲  
 Romania  
 Sudan  
 Switzerland ▼  
 Azerbaijan  
 Czech Republic  
 Iceland  
 Kazakhstan ▼  
 Mauritius ▲  
 Bhutan  
 Cambodia  
 North Macedonia

### Low

SCORES 0.0 TO 1.4

Argentina  
 Colombia  
 Ivory Coast  
 Nicaragua  
 Brunei  
 New Zealand  
 Slovakia  
 Bosnia-Herzegovina  
 El Salvador ▼  
 Federated States of Micronesia  
 Guinea-Bissau  
 Kiribati  
 Senegal  
 Tuvalu  
 United States  
 Angola  
 Hong Kong  
 Marshall Islands

South Sudan  
 Croatia  
 Cuba  
 Fiji  
 Madagascar  
 Portugal  
 Slovenia  
 Venezuela  
 Bahrain  
 Barbados  
 Belize  
 Ecuador  
 Gabon  
 Jamaica  
 Liechtenstein  
 Luxembourg  
 Malta  
 Solomon Islands  
 Togo  
 Trinidad and Tobago  
 Zimbabwe  
 Gambia  
 Qatar  
 Greece ▼  
 Sierra Leone  
 Comoros  
 Belarus  
 Djibouti  
 Estonia  
 Lithuania  
 Oman  
 Timor-Leste  
 United Arab Emirates  
 Western Sahara  
 Benin  
 Bolivia ▼  
 Latvia  
 Mongolia  
 Taiwan  
 Uruguay

Vanuatu  
 China  
 Costa Rica  
 Dominican Republic  
 Eritrea  
 Eswatini  
 Japan  
 Peru  
 Samoa  
 St. Lucia  
 St. Vincent and the Grenadines  
 Andorra  
 Antigua and Barbuda  
 Bahamas  
 Botswana  
 Cape Verde  
 Dominica  
 Equatorial Guinea  
 Grenada  
 Guyana  
 Lesotho  
 Macao  
 Monaco  
 Namibia  
 Nauru  
 Palau  
 Panama  
 Republic of the Congo  
 Rwanda  
 San Marino  
 São Tomé and Príncipe  
 Seychelles  
 St. Kitts and Nevis  
 Suriname  
 Tonga



**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. Read 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).

<b>Americas</b> 35 countries	baseline year, ending JUN 2007		previous year, ending DEC 2020		latest year, ending DEC 2021	
	GRI	SHI	GRI	SHI	GRI	SHI
Antigua and Barbuda	1.1	0.3	0.8	0.0	0.8	0.0
Argentina	1.7	0.6	2.2	1.8	2.7	1.4
Bahamas	1.4	0.5	3.4	0.8	3.4	0.0
Barbados	0.8	0.3	2.0	0.8	0.7	0.8
Belize	1.3	0.0	1.5	0.8	1.4	0.8
Bolivia	1.0	0.0	0.9	2.9	0.9	0.3
Brazil	0.4	0.8	2.5	4.6	2.5	3.8
Canada	1.0	1.2	2.0	1.5	2.1	2.4
Chile	1.2	0.4	1.7	1.4	1.5	1.8
Colombia	1.8	3.3	1.4	2.2	2.1	1.4
Costa Rica	1.0	0.0	2.7	0.1	2.7	0.1
Cuba	4.5	0.0	5.6	0.2	5.3	1.0
Dominica	0.8	0.3	2.2	0.4	2.4	0.0
Dominican Republic	0.6	0.0	1.4	0.0	1.6	0.1
Ecuador	1.1	0.6	2.0	0.1	1.6	0.8
El Salvador	0.6	0.4	2.3	2.2	2.7	1.2
Grenada	0.5	0.0	2.0	0.0	1.7	0.0
Guatemala	1.2	1.0	1.9	2.2	2.7	2.2
Guyana	0.7	0.0	2.5	0.0	3.1	0.0
Haiti	1.8	0.6	2.4	3.1	2.8	4.7
Honduras	1.3	0.3	2.0	2.4	1.7	3.1
Jamaica	1.0	0.0	2.0	0.1	2.4	0.8
Mexico	4.7	5.5	3.3	5.0	3.5	5.1
Nicaragua	2.1	0.5	2.7	1.4	3.8	1.4
Panama	0.7	0.0	1.5	0.1	1.3	0.0
Paraguay	0.6	0.7	1.6	1.9	2.1	1.9
Peru	1.8	0.0	1.6	0.1	1.6	0.1
St. Kitts and Nevis	0.6	0.3	1.0	0.1	1.0	0.0
St. Lucia	0.6	0.3	2.4	0.4	2.3	0.1
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	0.6	0.3	0.9	0.1	1.0	0.1
Suriname	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	1.1	0.0
Trinidad and Tobago	0.3	0.6	1.0	0.8	1.2	0.8

## Religious restrictions index scores by region (cont.)

<b>Americas</b> 35 countries (cont.)	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>COUNTRY</b>		<b>GRI</b>	<b>SHI</b>	<b>GRI</b>	<b>SHI</b>
	United States	1.6	1.9	2.7	1.9	2.4
Uruguay	0.3	0.6	1.1	0.6	0.9	0.3
Venezuela	3.6	0.8	2.9	1.5	2.8	1.0

<b>Asia-Pacific</b> 50 countries	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>COUNTRY</b>		<b>GRI</b>	<b>SHI</b>	<b>GRI</b>	<b>SHI</b>
	Afghanistan	5.3	8.5	6.8	8.0	8.2
Armenia	3.4	2.7	3.7	2.1	3.7	2.0
Australia	1.3	1.8	1.9	2.3	1.6	2.7
Azerbaijan	5.0	2.9	7.0	1.7	6.7	1.6
Bangladesh	4.0	8.3	4.8	7.0	5.1	6.9
Bhutan	4.4	1.9	4.8	1.5	4.4	1.5
Brunei	7.2	4.2	7.2	1.3	6.5	1.3
Cambodia	2.9	0.8	3.5	0.9	3.4	1.5
China	7.8	0.9	9.3	0.1	9.1	0.1
Cyprus	1.2	0.9	2.9	2.6	4.1	3.2
Federated States of Micronesia	0.2	0.0	0.4	1.1	0.4	1.2
Fiji	0.9	2.6	2.8	1.0	2.3	1.0
Hong Kong	1.0	0.8	1.9	0.2	3.8	1.1
India	4.8	8.8	5.8	9.4	5.6	8.7
Indonesia	6.2	8.3	7.9	5.5	7.4	5.8
Iran	7.9	6.0	8.2	1.9	8.2	2.8
Japan	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.1	0.8	0.1
Kazakhstan	5.6	3.1	7.0	2.6	7.0	1.6
Kiribati	0.3	0.8	1.1	1.2	1.4	1.2
Kyrgyzstan	3.9	5.5	5.7	1.6	5.7	3.1

**Religious restrictions index scores by region (cont.)**

<b>Asia-Pacific</b> 50 countries (cont.)	<i>baseline</i> <i>year, ending</i> <b>JUN 2007</b>		<i>previous</i> <i>year, ending</i> <b>DEC 2020</b>		<i>latest</i> <i>year, ending</i> <b>DEC 2021</b>	
	<b>GRI</b>	<b>SHI</b>	<b>GRI</b>	<b>SHI</b>	<b>GRI</b>	<b>SHI</b>
Laos	6.3	1.0	6.0	4.0	6.5	4.1
Macao	1.3	0.3	0.8	0.0	0.4	0.0
Malaysia	6.4	1.0	8.5	3.5	7.7	3.3
Maldives	6.5	2.6	6.7	2.8	6.6	3.2
Marshall Islands	0.2	0.0	0.4	0.7	0.4	1.1
Mongolia	1.9	0.6	3.0	1.1	3.1	0.3
Myanmar	7.9	4.9	7.8	3.1	7.7	2.7
Nauru	2.0	0.3	1.6	0.0	1.6	0.0
Nepal	3.4	4.2	4.7	3.6	5.4	2.7
New Zealand	0.3	0.4	0.2	1.0	0.3	1.3
Pakistan	5.8	8.9	6.4	7.5	6.8	7.6
Palau	0.6	0.3	0.5	0.0	0.5	0.0
Papua New Guinea	0.8	0.0	1.5	2.0	0.9	2.6
Philippines	1.6	3.7	2.3	4.8	2.2	5.0
Samoa	0.8	0.4	1.1	0.1	1.0	0.1
Singapore	4.6	0.2	6.9	1.9	6.9	1.8
Solomon Islands	0.6	0.4	1.1	1.1	1.1	0.8
South Korea	1.6	0.0	2.4	3.6	2.2	2.5
Sri Lanka	4.0	7.8	5.4	6.5	6.4	5.8
Taiwan	0.5	0.0	1.5	0.3	1.0	0.3
Tajikistan	4.5	2.2	7.5	3.1	7.8	2.6
Thailand	2.6	2.6	5.1	3.3	5.1	4.9
Timor-Leste	0.9	4.2	1.1	0.4	0.9	0.4
Tonga	2.0	0.0	1.6	0.3	2.0	0.0
Turkey	6.6	4.7	6.2	4.6	6.2	2.4
Turkmenistan	5.6	1.5	6.1	1.2	7.1	2.0
Tuvalu	1.8	2.1	2.0	1.2	2.2	1.2
Uzbekistan	7.7	3.3	7.2	2.8	8.0	2.8
Vanuatu	1.0	1.0	1.3	0.1	1.5	0.3
Vietnam	6.6	1.2	6.2	2.8	6.3	2.5

## Religious restrictions index scores by region (cont.)

<b>Europe</b> 45 countries	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	GRI	SHI	GRI	SHI	GRI	SHI
Albania	0.8	0.2	1.9	0.0	1.9	1.7
Andorra	0.9	0.0	2.4	0.0	2.5	0.0
Austria	2.6	1.1	4.5	2.2	4.6	1.9
Belarus	5.9	1.4	5.8	1.1	6.2	0.4
Belgium	4.0	0.9	3.3	4.5	3.6	4.6
Bosnia-Herzegovina	1.5	2.4	2.8	2.0	3.3	1.2
Bulgaria	4.0	2.2	4.5	2.2	4.7	2.4
Croatia	0.7	2.0	2.9	1.0	3.4	1.0
Czech Republic	1.0	1.2	2.3	1.8	2.3	1.6
Denmark	2.5	1.2	4.4	4.4	4.4	3.5
Estonia	1.1	0.8	1.4	0.4	1.3	0.4
Finland	0.6	0.8	3.3	3.7	3.5	4.7
France	3.3	3.4	5.4	4.7	5.4	5.5
Georgia	2.2	4.7	3.9	2.9	3.8	3.8
Germany	3.1	2.1	3.3	4.0	2.8	4.1
Greece	5.2	4.4	3.9	2.2	4.2	0.6
Hungary	0.3	1.0	3.1	2.0	2.3	2.0
Iceland	2.6	0.4	3.6	1.7	3.6	1.6
Ireland	0.6	0.4	1.0	2.4	1.0	2.1
Italy	2.0	1.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.1
Kosovo	1.9	2.4	2.8	2.6	2.8	2.7
Latvia	2.3	1.4	2.4	0.3	2.4	0.3
Liechtenstein	1.3	0.1	2.5	0.8	2.0	0.8
Lithuania	1.7	0.8	2.3	0.4	2.8	0.4
Luxembourg	0.8	0.0	2.9	1.0	3.1	0.8
Malta	1.2	0.4	2.2	0.8	2.0	0.8
Moldova	4.2	3.8	4.6	4.1	4.7	3.3
Monaco	2.5	0.0	2.5	0.0	2.1	0.0
Montenegro	0.9	2.4	3.6	1.3	2.8	3.5

**Religious restrictions index scores by region (cont.)**

<b>Europe</b> 45 countries (cont.)	<i>baseline year, ending</i> <b>JUN 2007</b>		<i>previous year, ending</i> <b>DEC 2020</b>		<i>latest year, ending</i> <b>DEC 2021</b>	
	<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>GRI</b>	<b>SHI</b>	<b>GRI</b>	<b>SHI</b>	<b>GRI</b>
Netherlands	0.4	1.0	2.8	2.1	3.8	3.1
North Macedonia	2.2	1.5	2.2	2.2	3.7	1.5
Norway	1.5	1.0	3.1	2.7	3.0	2.4
Poland	1.0	0.9	3.3	1.8	3.3	2.6
Portugal	0.3	0.0	0.6	0.8	0.6	1.0
Romania	4.8	5.5	5.3	1.3	4.8	1.7
Russia	5.8	3.7	8.2	3.2	8.3	3.9
San Marino	0.1	0.0	0.6	0.0	0.6	0.0
Serbia	3.1	1.5	3.1	1.8	3.3	2.6
Slovakia	2.8	1.9	2.8	1.8	3.0	1.3
Slovenia	0.6	1.0	1.8	1.0	2.5	1.0
Spain	2.0	1.6	3.8	3.0	3.9	2.9
Sweden	1.2	0.7	3.1	2.9	2.3	2.2
Switzerland	1.2	1.7	2.4	3.4	2.6	1.7
Ukraine	2.6	1.9	4.2	4.9	4.1	4.7
United Kingdom	1.6	1.6	2.8	4.4	3.4	4.0

<b>Middle East-North Africa</b> 20 countries	<i>baseline year, ending</i> <b>JUN 2007</b>		<i>previous year, ending</i> <b>DEC 2020</b>		<i>latest year, ending</i> <b>DEC 2021</b>	
	<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>GRI</b>	<b>SHI</b>	<b>GRI</b>	<b>SHI</b>	<b>GRI</b>
Algeria	5.6	3.6	8.4	5.6	8.1	4.6
Bahrain	4.3	3.0	6.3	1.6	6.5	0.9
Egypt	7.2	6.1	7.3	7.4	7.6	7.9
Iraq	5.1	10.0	6.0	7.3	6.5	6.2
Israel	3.9	7.8	6.5	8.0	5.7	8.2
Jordan	4.6	3.5	4.8	3.6	5.5	3.6
Kuwait	4.8	1.9	5.9	1.9	5.6	1.9
Lebanon	1.4	5.1	4.1	4.7	3.8	3.9
Libya	5.1	1.4	5.8	7.4	6.0	6.8

## Religious restrictions index scores by region (cont.)

<b>Middle East-North Africa</b> <i>20 countries (cont.)</i>	<i>baseline</i> <i>year, ending</i> <b>JUN 2007</b>		<i>previous</i> <i>year, ending</i> <b>DEC 2020</b>		<i>latest</i> <i>year, ending</i> <b>DEC 2021</b>	
	<b>GRI</b>	<b>SHI</b>	<b>GRI</b>	<b>SHI</b>	<b>GRI</b>	<b>SHI</b>
Morocco	4.9	3.7	6.2	2.3	6.2	2.5
Oman	3.9	0.3	5.3	0.4	5.4	0.4
Palestinian territories	3.3	6.4	4.7	6.2	3.8	7.1
Qatar	3.3	0.3	6.0	1.2	6.1	0.7
Saudi Arabia	8.0	7.2	6.6	2.4	6.6	2.8
Sudan	5.7	6.5	5.8	2.4	3.2	1.7
Syria	4.5	5.3	7.5	7.4	8.0	8.3
Tunisia	4.8	3.8	6.2	3.5	5.8	3.6
United Arab Emirates	3.9	0.1	5.7	0.8	6.0	0.4
Western Sahara	4.8	3.3	5.8	0.4	5.8	0.4
Yemen	4.3	6.2	5.8	3.5	5.5	4.2

<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b> <i>48 countries</i>	<i>baseline</i> <i>year, ending</i> <b>JUN 2007</b>		<i>previous</i> <i>year, ending</i> <b>DEC 2020</b>		<i>latest</i> <i>year, ending</i> <b>DEC 2021</b>	
	<b>GRI</b>	<b>SHI</b>	<b>GRI</b>	<b>SHI</b>	<b>GRI</b>	<b>SHI</b>
Angola	3.3	3.7	2.8	1.1	3.1	1.1
Benin	0.3	0.0	1.3	0.0	1.3	0.3
Botswana	0.9	0.1	2.0	0.0	1.6	0.0
Burkina Faso	0.3	1.5	2.7	6.9	3.0	6.2
Burundi	0.4	0.9	2.8	1.7	3.3	2.5
Cameroon	1.1	1.4	2.7	5.5	2.6	6.0
Cape Verde	0.3	0.1	0.9	0.0	0.8	0.0
Central African Republic	3.7	3.3	2.7	4.1	3.5	4.1
Chad	4.2	3.3	3.9	2.0	4.6	1.8
Comoros	5.4	6.2	4.6	0.5	4.5	0.5
Democratic Republic of the Congo	1.3	2.6	2.3	3.8	1.2	5.4
Djibouti	2.4	1.8	4.2	0.4	3.7	0.4
Equatorial Guinea	2.6	0.0	4.1	0.0	3.6	0.0
Eritrea	7.0	0.4	6.7	0.0	6.5	0.1
Eswatini	1.5	0.0	2.6	0.1	2.6	0.1
Ethiopia	2.6	5.3	4.1	4.5	3.9	4.7

**Religious restrictions index scores by region (cont.)**

<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b> 48 countries (cont.)	<i>baseline</i> <i>year, ending</i> <b>JUN 2007</b>		<i>previous</i> <i>year, ending</i> <b>DEC 2020</b>		<i>latest</i> <i>year, ending</i> <b>DEC 2021</b>	
	<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>GRI</b>	<b>SHI</b>	<b>GRI</b>	<b>SHI</b>	<b>GRI</b>
Gabon	1.7	0.1	1.2	0.8	0.8	0.8
Gambia	0.5	0.8	1.5	0.3	0.9	0.7
Ghana	1.2	4.9	1.6	2.6	1.1	2.2
Guinea	1.5	1.7	3.3	3.5	3.1	3.5
Guinea-Bissau	1.6	0.0	0.4	1.1	0.8	1.2
Ivory Coast	1.9	3.1	1.3	1.4	1.2	1.4
Kenya	2.9	2.4	3.2	6.0	3.5	4.4
Lesotho	0.4	0.0	1.3	0.0	1.1	0.0
Liberia	1.7	3.8	1.5	2.0	1.4	3.6
Madagascar	1.8	0.0	2.8	1.0	3.3	1.0
Malawi	0.4	0.3	2.2	2.0	2.2	1.8
Mali	0.9	0.3	2.5	7.9	2.4	7.0
Mauritania	6.5	0.9	6.2	1.8	6.1	1.9
Mauritius	1.4	0.3	1.5	0.3	1.7	1.6
Mozambique	1.0	0.3	2.6	2.8	2.9	3.2
Namibia	0.3	0.0	1.3	0.0	1.1	0.0
Niger	1.7	1.5	4.0	2.6	3.8	4.5
Nigeria	3.7	4.4	4.3	8.5	4.3	8.9
Republic of the Congo	0.7	0.4	1.5	0.3	1.5	0.0
Rwanda	2.0	0.0	3.7	0.3	3.2	0.0
São Tomé and Príncipe	0.2	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.9	0.0
Senegal	0.5	0.0	0.9	1.2	0.7	1.2
Seychelles	1.3	0.0	2.6	0.0	2.7	0.0
Sierra Leone	0.0	0.0	2.3	0.8	2.1	0.6
Somalia	4.4	7.4	4.7	7.6	4.7	6.6
South Africa	0.6	2.2	2.1	4.3	1.3	2.4
South Sudan*	*	*	3.2	1.9	3.9	1.1
Tanzania	2.1	3.5	5.1	1.3	5.2	2.6
Togo	2.8	0.0	2.5	0.8	2.7	0.8
Uganda	2.4	0.4	2.5	2.1	2.5	6.1
Zambia	2.0	0.0	3.2	1.1	3.5	1.9
Zimbabwe	2.9	1.2	2.5	1.1	2.1	0.8

\* South Sudan was coded for the first time in 2011.

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



**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. Read the Methodology for more details.

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

## 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). Center staff then combed through 19 published sources of information, including reports by the U.S. State Department, the United Nations, and various nongovernmental organizations, to answer the questions on a country-by-country basis. (For more details, refer to 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, 2021, 121 countries and territories (61%) had no reported limits on preaching; 35 countries (18%) had limits on preaching for some religious groups; and 42 countries (21%) had limits on preaching for all religious groups.

Additionally, the summary shows whether particular religious restrictions occurred during the previous year, ending Dec. 31, 2020, or in the study’s baseline year, ending in mid-2007. A total of 197 countries and territories are shown for the baseline year; South Sudan was coded for the first time in 2011, bringing the total to 198 countries and territories starting that year. To see how each country scored on each question, refer to [Appendix F: Results by country](#) online.

When comparing these results with Pew Research Center’s previous reports, readers should keep in mind that reports published 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 for a single year may be smaller 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, refer to 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?<sup>1</sup>*

	baseline year, ending JUN 2007		previous year, ending DEC 2020		latest year, ending DEC 2021	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
Yes	143	73%	145	73%	147	74%
The constitution or basic law does not specifically provide for freedom of religion but does protect some religious practices	47	24	48	24	46	23
No	7	4	5	3	5	3
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

**GRI.Q.2**

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

	baseline year, ending JUN 2007		previous year, ending DEC 2020		latest year, ending DEC 2021	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	42	21%	24	12%	21	11%
Yes, there is a qualification	38	19	41	21	46	23
Yes, there is a substantial contradiction and only some religious practices are protected	110	56	127	64	126	64
Religious freedom is not provided in the first place	7	4	6	3	5	3
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

**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.

<sup>1</sup> 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.”

GLOBALLY, GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS ON RELIGION REACHED PEAK LEVELS IN 2021, WHILE SOCIAL HOSTILITIES WENT DOWN

### 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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
National laws and policies provide for religious freedom, and the national government respects religious freedom in practice	63	32%	70	35%	72	36%
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	88	44	83	42
There are limited national legal protections for religious freedom, but the national government does not generally respect religious freedom in practice	38	19	33	17	37	19
National laws and policies do not provide for religious freedom and the national government does not respect religious freedom in practice	2	1	7	4	6	3
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

**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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	85	43%	34	17%	35	18%
Yes, in a few cases	44	22	46	23	46	23
Yes, in many cases	32	16	67	34	57	29
Government prohibits worship or religious practices of one or more religious groups as a general policy	36	18	51	26	60	30
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

**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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	141	72%	116	59%	121	61%
Yes, for some religious groups	32	16	40	20	35	18
Yes, for all religious groups	24	12	42	21	42	21
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

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

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	132	67%	123	62%	123	62%
Yes, for some religious groups	39	20	36	18	37	19
Yes, for all religious groups	26	13	39	20	38	19
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

GLOBALLY, GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS ON RELIGION REACHED PEAK LEVELS IN 2021, WHILE SOCIAL HOSTILITIES WENT DOWN

### 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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	166	84%	156	79%	157	79%
Yes	31	16	42	21	41	21
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

### 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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
No	130	66%	116	59%	115	58%
Yes	67	34	82	41	83	42
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

### GRI.Q.9

*Are foreign missionaries allowed to operate?*

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES
Yes	117	59%	116	59%	117	59%
Yes, but with restrictions	72	37	74	37	74	37
No	8	4	8	4	7	4
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

**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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	176	89%	137	69%	137	69%
Yes	21	11	61	31	61	31
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

**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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	79	40%	20	10%	15	8%
Yes, there was limited intimidation	82	42	63	32	58	29
Yes, there was widespread intimidation	36	18	115	58	125	63
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

**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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	152	77%	134	68%	141	71%
Yes	45	23	64	32	57	29
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

GLOBALLY, GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS ON RELIGION REACHED PEAK LEVELS IN 2021, WHILE SOCIAL HOSTILITIES WENT DOWN

### 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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	157	80%	153	77%	140	71%
Yes	40	20	45	23	58	29
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

### 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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	106	54%	75	38%	77	39%
No, but the government consults a nongovernmental advisory board	12	6	11	6	12	6
Yes, but the organization is non-coercive toward religious groups	54	27	58	29	50	25
Yes, and the organization is coercive toward religious groups	25	13	54	27	59	30
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

### 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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	180	91%	173	87%	172	87%
Yes	17	9	25	13	26	13
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>



**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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	162	82%	157	79%	156	79%
Yes	35	18	41	21	42	21
Security reasons stated as rationale	11	6	9	5	9	5
Non-security reasons stated as rationale	18	9	17	9	18	9
Both security and non-security reasons stated as rationale	6	3	15	8	15	8
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

**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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	181	92%	182	92%	183	92%
Yes	16	8	16	8	15	8
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

GLOBALLY, GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS ON RELIGION REACHED PEAK LEVELS IN 2021, WHILE SOCIAL HOSTILITIES WENT DOWN

### 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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	38	19%	9	5%	8	4%
Yes, but in a nondiscriminatory way	71	36	67	34	67	34
Yes, and the process adversely affects the ability of some religious groups to operate	34	17	24	12	23	12
Yes, and the process clearly discriminates against some religious groups	54	27	98	49	100	51
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

### 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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	136	69%	98	49%	98	49%
Yes	61	31	100	51	100	51
1-9 case(s) of government force	18	9	42	21	46	23
10-200 cases of government force	35	18	43	22	41	21
201-1,000 cases of government force	4	2	6	3	4	2
1,001-9,999 cases of government force	2	1	7	4	7	4
10,000+ cases of government force	2	1	2	1	2	1
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

**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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	136	69%	98	49%	98	49%
Yes*	61	31	100	51	100	51
Property damage	7	4	56	28	65	33
Detentions/abductions	47	24	76	38	73	37
Displacement from homes	20	10	30	15	29	15
Physical assaults	25	13	37	19	42	21
Deaths	15	8	16	8	22	11
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

\* This line represents the number or percentage of countries in which at least one of the following types of government force occurred  
Note: Nested categories add to more than total because countries can have multiple types of cases of government force.

**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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
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	46	23	48	24
Yes, the government gives preferential support or favors to some religious group(s) and clearly discriminates against others	143	73	151	76	149	75
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: 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.

GLOBALLY, GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS ON RELIGION REACHED PEAK LEVELS IN 2021, WHILE SOCIAL HOSTILITIES WENT DOWN

### 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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	141	72%	108	55%	109	55%
Yes	56	28	90	45	89	45
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: 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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
All religious groups are generally treated the same	39	20%	25	13%	21	11%
Some religious groups have minimal privileges unavailable to other religious groups, limited to things such as inheriting buildings or properties	7	4	27	14	26	13
Some religious groups have general privileges or government access unavailable to other religious groups	62	31	50	25	53	27
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	50	25	50	25
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	48	24
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: 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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	45	23%	12	6%	11	6%
Yes, but with no obvious favoritism to a particular group or groups	23	12	47	24	48	24
Yes, and with obvious favoritism to a particular group or groups	129	65	139	70	139	70
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: 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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	71	36%	69	35%	71	36%
Yes, but with no obvious favoritism to a particular group or groups	24	12	40	20	43	22
Yes, and with obvious favoritism to a particular group or groups	102	52	89	45	84	42
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

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

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### 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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	128	65%	93	47%	91	46%
Yes, but with no obvious favoritism to a particular group or groups	10	5	25	13	27	14
Yes, and with obvious favoritism to a particular group or groups	59	30	80	40	80	40
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: 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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	106	54%	28	14%	25	13%
Yes, but with no obvious favoritism to a particular group or groups	7	4	64	32	66	33
Yes, and with obvious favoritism to a particular group or groups	84	43	106	54	107	54
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: 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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	134	68%	114	58%	117	59%
Yes, by at least some local governments	6	3	11	6	10	5
Yes, by the national government	57	29	73	37	71	36
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: 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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	150	76%	132	67%	133	67%
Yes	47	24	66	33	65	33
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

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

Note: Figures throughout 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). Center staff then combed through 19 published sources of information, including reports by the U.S. State Department, the United Nations, and various nongovernmental organizations, to answer the questions on a country-by-country basis. (For more details, refer to 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. 12 – “Were there incidents of hostility over proselytizing?” – the study found that for the latest year, ending on Dec. 31, 2021, 174 countries and territories (88% of all studied) had no reported incidents of hostility over proselytizing; 13 countries (7%) had incidents that fell short of physical violence; and 11 countries (6%) had incidents involving violence.

Additionally, the summary shows whether particular religious hostilities occurred during the previous year, ending Dec. 31, 2020, or in the study’s baseline year, ending in mid-2007. A total of 197 countries and territories are shown for the baseline year; South Sudan was coded for the first time in 2011, bringing the total to 198 countries and territories starting that year. To see how each country scored on each question, refer to [Appendix F: Results by country](#) online.

When comparing these results with Pew Research 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 for a single year may be smaller 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, refer to 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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	67	34%	34	17%	34	17%
Yes*	130	66	164	83	164	83
Harassment/intimidation	127	64	164	83	164	83
Property damage	40	20	81	41	80	40
Detentions/abductions	12	6	19	10	20	10
Displacement from homes	19	10	16	8	14	7
Physical assaults	55	28	58	29	67	34
Deaths	25	13	35	18	34	17
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

\* 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 Appendix F: Results by country (online). Note: 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.

**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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	67	34%	34	17%	34	17%
Yes: One type	56	28	59	30	63	32
Yes: Two types	30	15	47	24	37	19
Yes: Three types	25	13	30	15	35	18
Yes: Four types	11	6	13	7	14	7
Yes: Five types	5	3	12	6	9	5
Yes: Six types	3	2	3	2	6	3
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: 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 Appendix F: Results by country (online).

GLOBALLY, GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS ON RELIGION REACHED PEAK LEVELS IN 2021, WHILE SOCIAL HOSTILITIES WENT DOWN

### SHI.Q.2

*Was there mob violence related to religion?*

	<i>baseline year, ending JUN 2007</i>		<i>previous year, ending DEC 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	174	88%	170	86%	170	86%
Yes, but there were no deaths reported	14	7	15	8	19	10
Yes, and there were deaths reported	9	5	13	7	9	5
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

### 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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	181	92%	185	93%	183	92%
Yes	16	8	13	7	15	8
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: 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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	137	70%	146	74%	150	76%
Yes	60	30	52	26	48	24
Yes, but their activity was limited to recruitment and fundraising	43	22	3	2	19	10
Yes, with violence that resulted in some casualties (1-9 injuries or deaths)	7	4	21	11	5	3
Yes, with violence that resulted in multiple casualties (10-50 injuries or deaths)	2	1	6	3	5	3
Yes, with violence that resulted in many casualties (more than 50 injuries or deaths)	8	4	22	11	19	10
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: Religion-related terrorism is defined as politically motivated violence against noncombatants by subnational groups or clandestine agents with a religious justification or intent. For SHI.Q.4, the differences between the coding periods may not be as significant as they appear due to minor changes in coding procedures. Refer to the Methodology for more information.

**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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	176	89%	183	92%	182	92%
Yes	21	11	15	8	16	8
Yes, with fewer than 10,000 casualties or people displaced	9	5	5	3	3	2
Yes, with tens of thousands of casualties or people displaced	6	3	5	3	4	2
Yes, with hundreds of thousands of casualties or people displaced	3	2	5	3	8	4
Yes, with millions of casualties or people displaced	3	2	0	0	1	1
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: 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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	50	25%	97	49%	104	53%
There were public tensions between religious groups, but they fell short of hostilities involving physical violence	56	28	52	26	45	23
Yes, with physical violence in a few cases	69	35	22	11	23	12
Yes, with physical violence in numerous cases	22	11	27	14	26	13
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: 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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	113	57%	108	55%	117	59%
Yes	84	43	90	45	81	41
At the local level	22	11	21	11	13	7
At the regional level	31	16	10	5	8	4
At the national level	31	16	59	30	60	30
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: 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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	130	66%	143	72%	138	70%
Yes	67	34	55	28	60	30
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: 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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	162	82%	127	64%	136	69%
Yes	35	18	71	36	62	31
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

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

GLOBALLY, GOVERNMENT RESTRICTIONS ON RELIGION REACHED PEAK LEVELS IN 2021, WHILE SOCIAL HOSTILITIES WENT DOWN

### 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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	149	76%	147	74%	129	65%
Yes	48	24	51	26	69	35
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: 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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	183	93%	138	70%	139	70%
Yes	14	7	60	30	59	30
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: 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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	148	75%	173	87%	174	88%
Yes, but they fell short of physical violence	30	15	14	7	13	7
Yes, and they included physical violence	19	10	11	6	11	6
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: 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 2020</i>		<i>latest year, ending DEC 2021</i>	
	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>NUMBER OF COUNTRIES</b>	<b>% OF COUNTRIES</b>
No	153	78%	142	72%	138	70%
Yes, but they fell short of physical violence	23	12	31	16	37	19
Yes, and they included physical violence	21	11	25	13	23	12
	<b>197</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100</b>

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

Note: Figures throughout may not add to 100% or to subtotals indicated due to rounding. Myanmar is also called Burma. Eswatini was formerly known as Swaziland.

## Appendix E: Government benefits to religious groups

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

AMERICAS	ASIA-PACIFIC	EUROPE	MIDDLE EAST-N. AFRICA	SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA
Argentina	Afghanistan	Albania	Algeria	Benin
Bahamas	Armenia	Andorra	Bahrain	Burkina Faso
Barbados	Australia	Austria	Egypt	Burundi
Belize	Azerbaijan	Belarus	Iraq	Cameroon
Brazil	Bangladesh	Belgium	Israel	Cape Verde
Canada	Brunei	Bulgaria	Kuwait	Comoros
Costa Rica	Cambodia	Croatia	Lebanon	Democratic Republic of the Congo
Dominica	China	Czech Republic	Morocco	Djibouti
Ecuador	Cyprus	Denmark	Palestinian territories	Equatorial Guinea
Grenada	Federated States of	Estonia	Saudi Arabia	Eswatini
Guatemala	Micronesia	Finland	Sudan	Ethiopia
Haiti	Fiji	France	Western Sahara	Gambia
Jamaica	Hong Kong	Georgia		Ghana
Nicaragua	India	Germany		Guinea
Panama	Macao	Greece		Kenya
Paraguay	Malaysia	Hungary		Lesotho
Peru	Maldives	Ireland		Liberia
St. Kitts and Nevis	Marshall Islands	Italy		Malawi
St. Lucia	Nepal	Kosovo		Mauritania
Suriname	Pakistan	Latvia		Niger
Trinidad and Tobago	Palau	Liechtenstein		Rwanda
United States	Papua New Guinea	Lithuania		Senegal
Venezuela	Philippines	Luxembourg		Togo
	Singapore	Moldova		Zambia
	Solomon Islands	Montenegro		Zimbabwe
	Sri Lanka	Netherlands		
	Thailand	North Macedonia		
	Timor-Leste	Poland		
	Turkey	Portugal		
	Turkmenistan	Romania		
	Uzbekistan	San Marino		
	Vanuatu	Serbia		
		Slovakia		
		Spain		
		Sweden		
		United Kingdom		



**Q:** Does any level of government provide funds or other resources for religious property (such as buildings, upkeep, repair or land)?

AMERICAS	ASIA-PACIFIC	EUROPE	MIDDLE EAST-N. AFRICA	SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA
Belize	Afghanistan	Albania	Algeria	Angola
Canada	Bangladesh	Andorra	Bahrain	Burundi
Chile	Bhutan	Austria	Egypt	Cameroon
Costa Rica	Brunei	Belarus	Iraq	Cape Verde
Dominican Republic	China	Belgium	Israel	Chad
El Salvador	Cyprus	Bulgaria	Jordan	Djibouti
Guatemala	Hong Kong	Croatia	Kuwait	Gabon
Haiti	India	Czech Republic	Morocco	Ghana
Mexico	Indonesia	Finland	Oman	Ivory Coast
Peru	Iran	France	Palestinian territories	Mauritania
Trinidad and Tobago	Japan	Georgia	Qatar	Namibia
Uruguay	Laos	Germany	Saudi Arabia	Republic of the Congo
	Macao	Greece	Sudan	Senegal
	Malaysia	Hungary	Syria	Zambia
	Maldives	Ireland	Tunisia	
	Mongolia	Italy	United Arab Emirates	
	Myanmar	Kosovo	Western Sahara	
	Nepal	Latvia		
	Pakistan	Liechtenstein		
	Philippines	Lithuania		
	Singapore	Moldova		
	Solomon Islands	Montenegro		
	South Korea	Netherlands		
	Sri Lanka	North Macedonia		
	Taiwan	Norway		
	Thailand	Poland		
	Timor-Leste	Romania		
	Turkey	Russia		
	Turkmenistan	Serbia		
	Uzbekistan	Slovakia		
		Slovenia		
		Spain		
		Ukraine		
		United Kingdom		

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**Q: Does the state give benefits or privileges to clergy of any religious group?**

AMERICAS	ASIA-PACIFIC	EUROPE	MIDDLE EAST-N. AFRICA	SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA
Argentina	Afghanistan	Albania	Algeria	Democratic Republic of
Canada	Armenia	Andorra	Bahrain	the Congo
Colombia	Bangladesh	Belarus	Egypt	Guinea
Dominican Republic	Bhutan	Belgium	Iraq	Mauritania
Haiti	Cambodia	Bulgaria	Israel	
Honduras	Iran	Croatia	Jordan	
Panama	South Korea	Estonia	Kuwait	
Peru	Thailand	France	Lebanon	
Suriname	Turkey	Georgia	Morocco	
United States		Greece	Oman	
Venezuela		Hungary	Palestinian territories	
		Iceland	Saudi Arabia	
		Lithuania	Syria	
		Luxembourg	Tunisia	
		Moldova	United Arab Emirates	
		Montenegro	Western Sahara	
		Norway		
		Poland		
		Portugal		
		North Macedonia		
		Romania		
		Russia		
		San Marino		
		Serbia		
		Slovakia		
		Slovenia		
		Spain		
		Switzerland		

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