

2012 REPORT ON DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ATHEISTS, HUMANISTS, AND THE NON-RELIGIOUS

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

“1. The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (which includes the freedom to hold beliefs) in article 18.1 is far-reaching and profound; it encompasses freedom of thought on all matters, personal conviction and the commitment to religion or belief, whether manifested individually or in community with others....

“2. Article 18 protects theistic, non-theistic and atheistic beliefs, as well as the right not to profess any religion or belief. The terms ‘belief’ and ‘religion’ are to be broadly construed. Article 18 is not limited in its application to traditional religions or to religions and beliefs with institutional characteristics or practices analogous to those of traditional religions.”

–United Nations Human Rights Committee, General Comment 22, on Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The universal human right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, as laid out in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent treaties, protects the freedom of conscience of every human being. Just as freedom of religion or belief protects the right of the individual to follow a religion, it also protects the right to reject any religion or belief, to identify as humanist or non-religious, and to manifest non-religious convictions through expression, teaching and practice.

This report will show that atheists, humanists and other freethinkers are discriminated against by governments across the world. Some governments outlaw the very existence of atheists, while others prosecute people who express their religious doubts or dissent regardless of whether those dissenters identify as atheist. More commonly, secular people experience discrimination when they manifest their conscience by acting against the dictates of the religion of their family, community or country.

This report is submitted on behalf of five secular organizations: American Humanist Association, Center for Inquiry, International Humanist and Ethical Union, Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science, and Secular Coalition for America.

Systematic Discrimination Against Non-Religious People

Only a handful of countries criminalize atheism *per se*. But there are several forms of legal measures found across many countries that either effectively criminalize atheism or criminalize the expression and manifestation of atheist beliefs or result in systematic discrimination against atheists and those who reject religion. These include laws regulating:

- apostasy and religious conversion;

- blasphemy and religious criticism;
- compulsory religious registration, usually with a government proscribed list of permitted religions;
- religious requirements or restrictions on government ID cards and passports;
- religious tests for citizenship or participation in civic life;
- religious control of family law;
- and religious control of public education.

In many cases it will be seen that these laws intersect, compounding the problems experienced by atheists. For example, someone may be required to state a government-permitted religious identity (not “no religion”) on a government ID card and then are required to submit to that religion in cases of family law.

We also note that all these laws seek to control and regulate religious belief and behavior in ways that can adversely affect all belief groups and believers, whether religious or not. Atheists and humanists—and others who doubt, dissent, or protest religion without identifying with any label or tradition—may be at one end of the spectrum of belief, but they often suffer the same forms of discrimination as other belief groups. We hope that in looking at structural discrimination against religious minorities—for example, discrimination that flows from apostasy and blasphemy laws, or from religious tests for citizenship, or for religious control of family—the U.S. State Department will look at how this discrimination would impact nonbelievers as well as those who identify with an organized religion.

Challenges to Non-Religious Freedom

This report documents major developments with respect to non-religious freedom in 47 countries from many different regions. The countries are grouped by region and are listed alphabetically within their region. Discrimination within these countries is grouped into two separate categories:

- 1) Discrimination against non-religious communities through a nation’s constitution and/or legal system;
- 2) Reported cases of discrimination against or oppression of a specific non-religious person or persons.

EUROPE & EURASIA

Austria

Discriminatory Laws:

Sec. 188 of the Austrian Criminal Code, called Vilification Of Religious Teachings, criminalizes “Anyone who publicly disparages a person or thing that is the object of worship of a domestic church or religious society, or a doctrine, [or other] behavior is likely to attract legitimate offense...” Sec. 189, Disturbance Of Religious Practice criminalizes “(1) Whoever prevents by force or threat of violence, the law permitted such service or individual acts of worship in a church or religious community existing domestic or interfere, shall be punished with imprisonment up (2) Whoever [commits in a Church or religious place] mischief that is likely to attract legitimate offense...”

Cases of Discrimination:

On Dec. 11, 2009, Catholic clerics in Vienna sued the cartoonist Manfred Deix for two drawings on the website NEWS.at which depict God and the EU prohibition against crucifixes in schools, respectively.

On Jan. 22, 2009, the Austrian politician Susanne Winter was sentenced at a court in Graz to pay a \$24,000 fine for “humiliating a religion” by saying, among other things, that Mohammed was a pedophile.

On Dec. 11, 2010, 63-year-old Austrian garden owner Helmut G. was convicted for offending his Muslim neighbor by yodeling while lawn mowing. The neighbor claimed Helmut was trying to mock and imitate the Muezzin, the chosen person at a mosque who leads the call to prayer at Friday services and the five daily times for prayer from one of the mosque’s minarets.

On Jan. 15, 2011, Elizabeth Sabaditsch-Wolf was convicted of offending religion because she exclaimed, about Mohammed’s nine-year-old wife, “If that is not pedophilia, what is it?”

France

Discriminatory Laws:

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedoms; however, strict anti-defamation laws such as Law No. 72546 prohibit religiously motivated “attacks”.

Cases of Discrimination:

On Mar. 16, 2005, a French court prohibited a billboard campaign by the clothes company Francois Girbaut because of a photo imitating Leonardo’s *Last Supper*.

On Jul. 17, 2008, the French blogger Fernand Cortes de Conquilla was arrested and has his computer confiscated because his website, “Pilori,” is critical of Islam and allegedly promotes “racial hatred.” He received a suspended three-month sentence and a fine of 2,000 Euros.

On Oct. 5, 2010, a Strasbourg court charges a French blogger with “inciting religious hatred” for posting a video on the Internet in which he wears a devil’s mask while tearing pages out of the Qu’ran, makes paper airplanes from them, throws them against a Twin Towers model, then burns the remains of the Qu’ran and urinates on them.

Germany

Discriminatory Laws:

While the constitution and other laws protect religious freedom, the criminal code addresses the insulting of faiths, religious societies, and ideological groups. Article 166 of the German Criminal Code states, “Whoever publicly or through dissemination of writings insults the content of others’ religious faith or faith related to a philosophy of life in a manner that is capable of disturbing the public peace, shall be punished with imprisonment for not more than three years or a fine.”

In 1974, the German state of Bavaria concluded a treaty with the Holy See (technically an addition to the concordat between Bavaria and Pope Pius XI of 1924) which gave catholic bishops the right to veto the nomination of a professor of theology, philosophy, pedagogy and sociology/political science at state universities if the candidate does not entertain the standpoint of the Catholic Church. This stipulation concerned professors in the faculties of seven Bavarian universities. The Catholic Church had urged this privilege as a compensation for its loss of influence over catholic children after the people of Bavaria had voted in a referendum in 1968 to abolish the separation of primary schools into separate catholic and protestant schools.

Cases of Discrimination:

On Feb. 23, 2006, a 61-year-old German businessman who printed the word “Koran” repeatedly along toilet paper reportedly in order to raise funds for an artistic campaign against Islamic terrorism was given a one-year suspended prison sentence and ordered to complete 300 hours of community service. The jail term was suspended for five years, meaning the man could be jailed for one year if he committed another offense in the next five. His sentence was made harsher than usual because it followed the worldwide controversy over the cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed published in Danish newspapers.

On April 24, 2009, German professor of Islamic studies Sven Kalisch doubts the historical existence of Muhammad and receives death threats. He must live under police protection and teach in secret. Kalisch received a prohibition from the Minister of Science Andreas Pinkwart against participating in the education of teachers of Qu’ran, but he is permitted to continue his research.

On April 9, 2010, the German magazine *Titanic* was prosecuted by a Frankfurt court for a front page where the crucified Jesus appears to be receiving fellatio from a Catholic cleric, as a commentary to the actual pedophilia scandals in the Catholic Church.

In 2007, the chair of moral philosophy at the Institute for Philosophy at Erlangen University in Bavaria went into retirement and the chair was advertised with the usual disclaimer that that it was subject to the Bavarian-Catholic Concordant of 1974. Seven citizens then filed a claim with the courts regarding this advertisement, claiming that it was illegal and discriminatory. However, since of these seven people only Professor Ulla Wessels had actually applied for the position, Wessels was the only petitioner able to carry on with the litigation. The university, representing the State of Bavaria, argued that questions of religion had not played any role in the deliberation of the nomination committee. However, Wessels was able to present a letter to the court written by the dean of the faculty, who was also the head of the hiring committee, sent to one of the candidates asking which faith he belonged to. The court then ordered a stop to the proceedings of the nomination committee in December 2010. However, shortly after this ruling the last candidate on the nomination list declined the offer of the university and the proceedings of the committee and also of the litigation came to an end. Wessels, in order to get a ruling on the question of the constitutionality of this church privilege, asked the court to rule as to whether the proceedings of the faculty had been contrary to German law. However, the district court and the court of appeals rejected her claim, arguing that Professor Wessels had no justified interest in the ruling she was asking for since a case of recurrence could be ruled out: the university would be bound to pay no attention to the religion of the candidates in the future. Professor Wessels has now filed a constitutional appeal with the federal constitutional court. The aforementioned chair of moral philosophy has now been advertised anew with the relevant disclaimer regarding the Concordant, directly disobeying the ruling of the district court.

Greece

Discriminatory Laws:

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom; however, anti-blasphemy laws and state sponsorship of religion exist. Article 198 of the Greek Penal Code states that “One who publicly and maliciously and by any means blasphemes God shall be punished by imprisonment for not more than two years.” Article 199 states that “one who publicly and maliciously and by any means blasphemes the Greek Orthodox Church or any other religion tolerable in Greece shall be punished by imprisonment for not more than two years.” Similarly, the country outlaws any speech or acts that “insults public sentiment” or “offends people’s religious sentiments.” The government financially supports the Orthodox Church; for example, the government pays for the salaries and religious training of clergy, finances the maintenance of Orthodox Church buildings, and exempts from tax Orthodox Church’s revenues from properties it owns. Orthodox religious instruction in primary and secondary schools, at government expense, is mandatory for all students, although non-Orthodox students may exempt themselves. However, public schools offer no alternative activity or non-Orthodox religious instruction for these children.

Cases of Discrimination:

On Feb. 8, 2005, the Austrian draughtsman Gerhard Haderere is sentenced to six months in prison in Greece for blasphemy in his *Das Leben des Jesu*, a satire in which Jesus is portrayed as an incense-addicted hippy. Haderer, living in Germany, faced extradition and a suspended six-month

jail sentence; the ban and sentence were reversed on appeal.

On June 9th, 2012, three actors that took part in the “Corpus Christi” play were arrested with the charge of blasphemy.

Ireland

Discriminatory Laws:

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom; however, anti-blasphemy laws and state sponsorship of religion exist. Sec. 36 of Ireland’s

Defamation Act of 2009 criminalizes the publishing or utterance of “blasphemous matter” and imposes a maximum fine of €25,000. That is “matter that is grossly abusive or insulting in relation to matters held sacred by any religion, thereby causing outrage among a substantial number of the adherents of that religion...” Protection exists if “a reasonable person would find genuine literary, artistic, political, scientific, or academic value in the matter to which the offence relates.” There is still a requirement for holders of public office—including judges and the state president—to take a religious oath.

Cases of Discrimination:

A new religious education course that was introduced in 2000 was supposed to be suitable for all religions and those without religious. However, parents who do not wish to have their children attend religious classes in school are routinely being asked to supervise them personally during school hours because schools will not do so, according to Atheist Ireland. The organization also said it had received complaints that some schools were forcing the children of non-religious parents to take a religious education course introduced a decade ago. It said the current situation meant the right of individuals to be exempted from participation in religious classes was a “theoretical illusion” because there were no appropriate provisions within the education system for convictions of non-religious parents to be respected.

In 2003 the Equality Authority declared that church-linked schools are permitted legally to refuse to admit a student who is not of that religious group if the school can prove that the refusal is essential to the maintenance of the “ethos” of the school.

Italy

Discriminatory Laws:

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom; however, under article 724 of the penal code, blasphemy is considered as an “administrative offense” and punished with a fine. Additionally, the government recognizes the Holy See as a sovereign authority. Under the 1984 revision of the concordat with the Catholic Church, the state is secular but maintains the practice of state support for religion, which can also be extended to non-Catholic confessions if requested. In such cases, state support is governed by legislation implementing the provisions of an intesa (accord) between the government and the religious group. An intesa grants clergy

automatic access to state hospitals, prisons, and military barracks; allows for civil registry of religious marriages; facilitates special religious practices regarding funerals; and exempts students from school attendance on religious holidays. If a religious community so requests, an intesa may provide for state routing of funds, through a voluntary check-off on taxpayer returns, to that community. The state paid Catholic religion teachers, but this financial support was not available to other religious communities. If a student requested the assistance of a religion teacher of a non-Catholic religious group, that group could select a representative but had to cover the cost. The government provided funds for the construction of places of worship, granted public land for their construction, and helped preserve and maintain historic places of worship that shelter much of the country's artistic and cultural heritage.

Cases of Discrimination:

On June 12, 2006, the blasphemy case against the author Oriana Fallaci began in Bergamo, Italy. Prosecutors alleged that her latest book, *La Forza della Ragione* (The Force of Reason), contained eighteen statements “unequivocally offensive to Islam and Muslims.” Oriana Fallaci died of lung cancer before the trial could conclude.

On October 20, 2010, the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Franco Frattini, called for Muslims, Jews and Christians to unite to fight the “threat” that he claims atheism poses to society.

Liechtenstein

Discriminatory Laws:

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom; however, the criminal code prohibits any form of discrimination against or debasement of any religion or its adherents. The constitution makes the Catholic Church the “National Church” of the country, and as such it enjoys the full protection of the state. The government gives money not only to the Catholic Church, but also to other denominations. Catholic and Protestant churches receive regular annual contributions from the government in proportion to membership as determined in the 2000 census; smaller religious groups are eligible to apply for grants for associations of foreigners or specific projects. Religious education is part of the curriculum at public schools. Catholic or Protestant religious education is compulsory in all primary schools. The curriculum for Catholic confessional education is determined by the Roman Catholic Church with only a minor complementary supervisory role by the municipalities. At the secondary school level, parents and pupils choose between traditional confessional education organized by their religious community and the nonconfessional subject “Religion and Culture.” Since its introduction in 2003, 90 percent of Catholic pupils have chosen the nonconfessional subject.

Malta

Discriminatory Laws:

The constitution and other laws protect religious freedom; however, Article 2 of the Maltese

Constitution states: (1) The religion of Malta is the Roman Catholic Apostolic Religion. (2) The authorities of the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church have the duty and the right to teach which principles are right and which are wrong. (3) Religious teaching of the Roman Catholic Apostolic Faith shall be provided in all state schools as part of compulsory education.

As a result of this state endorsement of a particular religion, one third of all primary and secondary students attend Catholic schools, which the state fully funds as per a 1993 concordat between Malta and the Vatican. Owing to certain historical factors, church schools have over the past thirty years obtained a reputation of being educationally better than state schools. This has led to a reinforcing cycle as more educationally-motivated parents send their children to church schools, leading to these schools obtaining better results (and therefore more funding) than state schools. The number of students attending church schools is increasing as the church embarks on a school building program aided by government funds.

Religion in secondary schools is taught by teachers dedicated to that subject. These teachers have to be given a “Certificate of Suitability” by the local church and there have been instances where these certificates have been revoked due to a teacher not living an “exemplary” life based upon catholic values. In primary schools, teachers have to teach religion along with other subjects and the church can still object to a teacher regarding suitability though no certificate needs to be given prior to a teacher being engaged in teaching primary school.

Although teachers in church schools are paid by the State, they are selected and employed by the church school management. There have been reported instances of teachers not being hired, or else even being fired by church schools, owing to disapproval over their lifestyle. Unfortunately, it is difficult to gain concrete evidence of such instances.

Netherlands

Discriminatory Laws:

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom; however, it is a crime to engage in public speech that incites religious, racial, or ethnic hatred. Article 137c of the Dutch Penal Code penalizes defamation of groups “because of their race, religion or convictions, their heterosexual or homosexual orientation or physical, psychological or mental disability...” Article 137d criminalizes inciting “hatred or discrimination against persons or violence against person or property on the grounds of their race, religion or beliefs, their gender, their heterosexual or homosexual orientation or their physical, psychological or mental disability...” Article 429b criminalizes display of “scornful blasphemy for insulting religious feelings” along public roads. Fines are to be levied, with prison for repeat offenders.

Cases of Discrimination:

On Mar. 19, 2008, the Dutch cartoonist Gregorius Nekschot (pseudonym) is arrested for insulting Muslims and African-Americans in his drawings. He is later released, but still might be charged.

On Jan. 21, 2009, the Amsterdam appeal court authorizes the prosecution of Geert Wilders for his film *Fitna* and its “comparisons between Islam and Nazism.” Wilders was subsequently acquitted of these charges in June 2011.

Poland

Discriminatory Laws:

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom; however, Poland’s penal code states “Whoever offends religious feelings of other people by publicly insulting an object of religious cult or a place for public holding of religious ceremonies, is subject to a fine, restriction of liberty or loss of liberty for up to 2 years.”

Cases of Discrimination:

On Jul. 23, 2003, the Polish artist Danuta Nieznalska receives a fine and a six months travel prohibition for exhibiting artwork with a photo of a penis on a cross.

Russia

Discriminatory Laws:

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom; however, Article 282 of the Criminal Code bans “Inciting religious hatred”, for which maximum penalty is 3 years in prison. Most often fines are levied, at a maximum of 200,000 Rubles (US\$6,500).

Cases of Discrimination:

On Jan. 18, 2008, Aleksander Sdvizhkov, the editor of the White-Russian magazine *Zgoda*, is sentenced to three years in a labor camp for reprinting the Danish Muhammad cartoons.

On Jun. 13, 2010, two Russian gallerists, Jury Samadurov and Andrei Jerefeyev, are given large fines for organizing an exhibition called “Prohibited Art” at the Sakharov center, which included portrayals of Jesus as Mickey Mouse and as Lenin.

Sweden

Discriminatory Laws:

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom; however, Ch. 16 Section 8 of the penal code criminalizes “A person who, in a disseminated statement or communication, threatens or expresses contempt for a national, ethnic or other such group of persons with allusion to race, colour, national or ethnic origin or religious belief...”

Cases of Discrimination:

On Sep. 16, 2010, a court case begins against the Swedish politician Carl Herslow for making a

poster depicting Muhammad with his nine-year-old wife, Aisha. He's later found not guilty by jury of "agitation against an ethnic group."

Switzerland

Cases of Discrimination:

In October 2010, Valentin Abgottspon was dismissed from his job as teacher at a public school in the Swiss canton of Valais after he raised concerns about the state's promotion of Catholicism in public schools. Article 3 of the canton's education law states that schools should prepare students for their duties "as human beings and Christians". Abgottspon was told he was fired for removing the crucifix from the classrooms in the middle school at which he taught. However, Abgottspon removed the Christian crosses from his classrooms more than a year before his dismissal. According to Swiss newspapers, his colleagues and at least one person on the school board knew about the removal of the crucifixes. Yet there was no negative reaction from the school or the education board until Abgottspon appeared before the Valais education board, on August 11, as president of the Valais branch of the Freethinkers Association of Switzerland, and presented a list of concerns about religious activities in state schools.

At the education board meeting, Abgottspon encouraged the board to inform schools about a 1990 Swiss federal Supreme Court decision that requires school administrations to remove crucifixes from classrooms if requested by parents. Furthermore, he argued that Catholic religious festivities like communion or confirmation should no longer be prepared during school courses. Abgottspon urged the public school system to exercise more neutrality towards religion. In response, the school administration referred to Article 3 of the canton's education law, which states that education should prepare pupils for their duties "as human beings and Christians". At the end of September, the mayor of Stalden and multiple members of the regional school administration sent Abgottspon a letter urging him to put the crucifix back in his classrooms. Abgottspon refused, stating again his view that the requirement to teach under the crucifix violates his religious freedom. Overnight the cross was hung back up in Abgottspon's classroom. When Abgottspon again removed the cross from his classroom he received his immediate dismissal on the grounds that he could no longer be trusted by the school administration.

Turkey

Discriminatory Laws:

The Constitution guarantees equal protection before the law, irrespective of 'philosophical belief, religion and sect'. It also enumerates secularism among the fundamental characteristics of the republic. However, there are a few constitutional provisions which infringe on religious freedom and go against the principle of secularism. Religion classes at primary and secondary schools are compulsory. Article 42 requires this education to be conducted under the 'supervision and control of the state'. The compulsory teaching of religion in primary and secondary education is detrimental to all individuals who do not wish to receive this instruction. While these classes cover basic information about other religions, they are predominantly about the theory and practice of

Sunni Hanefi Islam. The state allocates substantial funds to provide religious services for Sunni Muslims: to pay the salaries of imams, construct mosques and oversee pilgrimage.

Cases of Discrimination:

On May 26, 2009, the Turkish court case begins against Nedim Gursel for his description of Muhammad and his family in the book *Allah's Daughters*, which allegedly insults religion and incites hatred. He was acquitted in June 2009.

On June 1, 2012, Turkish authorities charged Fazil Say, an atheist and classical and jazz pianist with an international career, with insulting Islamic values in Twitter messages, the latest in a series of legal actions against Turkish artists, writers and intellectuals for statements they have made about religion and Turkish national identity. A trial is scheduled to begin on Oct. 18, with Mr. Say facing up to 18 months in prison if convicted.

United Kingdom

Discriminatory Laws:

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom; however, laws against inciting religion groups through “hate speech” exist. Additionally, the government helps fund the repair and maintenance of all listed places of worship for religious groups nationwide and contributes to the budget of the Church Conservation Trust, which preserves disused Church of England buildings of architectural or historic significance. The Church of England’s status as an established church grants that Church many privileges and is viewed as a source of disadvantage to the non-religious as well as to other religious communities. In addition, the laws against inciting religious hatred and “insulting” religious feelings have been used to prosecute people for religious and atheist statements.

The Church of England is granted privileged access to the British Parliament. Church of England Bishops are automatically granted membership in the House of Lords where they have the right to debate and vote on all legislation. They acquired this right solely by virtue of their religion, their gender and their position in the hierarchy of one particular denomination of one particular Church. They are unaccountable to the public. More than 30% of state-funded schools are run by church authorities, and the number is increasing. These schools are allowed to discriminate against students—in their admission policies—and teachers—in hiring, discipline and firing, even in subjects that do not relate to the religious mission of the school -- based on their religion (either because they are not religious or belong to a different religion or denomination than the school authorities) or their personal life (for example, teachers may be fired, or simply not hired, because of their sexual orientation or even because they have children out of wedlock.

If you choose a school on religious basis, free bussing will be provided, but not if choosing a school for secular reasons. In England and Wales, every state-funded school is legally required to hold a daily act of collective worship. In the 66% of schools which are not designated with a religious character, this worship must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. Schools can apply to have this changed to another faith for some or all of their students, but cannot have

this changed to be secular. Students can be opted out of worship, however the opt-out is rarely used because it singles out students from their peers and is likely to mean they miss out on school notices.

Under Section 5 of the Public Order Act, police and courts may charge people for expressions that are perceived as religiously “insulting”. Section 5 does not require proof of actual harm, only “likelihood” that someone, somewhere, might be “distressed”. Christian and secularist groups have united to campaign for the removal of “insulting words or behavior” as a possible crime under Section 5. In addition to Section 5, The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 inserted Part 4A into the Public Order Act 1986. That part prohibits anyone from causing alarm or distress. Part 4A states:

(1) A person is guilty of an offence if, with intent to cause a person harassment, alarm or distress, he— (a) uses threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour, or disorderly behaviour, or (b) displays any writing, sign or other visible representation which is threatening, abusive or insulting, thereby causing that or another person harassment, alarm or distress. A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or to a fine not exceeding £5,000 or to both.

Cases of Discrimination:

Recent cases brought under Section 5 include John Roberts, a retiree in the county of Lincolnshire, who was warned by police that he could be arrested if he did not take a sign down from his window saying “religions are fairy stories for adults”.

On 4 March 2010, a jury returned a verdict of guilty against Harry Taylor, who was charged under Part 4A of the Public Order Act 1986. Taylor was charged because he left anti-religious cartoons in the prayer-room of Liverpool’s John Lennon Airport on three occasions in 2008. The airport chaplain, who was insulted, offended, and alarmed by the cartoons, called the police. On 23 April 2010, Judge Charles James of Liverpool Crown Court sentenced Taylor to a six-month term of imprisonment suspended for two years, made him subject to a five-year Anti-Social Behaviour Order (which bans him from carrying religiously offensive material in a public place), ordered him to perform 100 hours of unpaid work, and ordered him to pay £250 costs. Taylor was convicted of similar offences in 2006.

On Sep. 23, 2010, British police arrest six people for filming the burning of a Koran and putting it on YouTube. The six men from Gateshead, England, were arrested “on suspicion of inciting racial hatred” because they burned copies of the Koran to mark the anniversary of September 11 and then posted the video on YouTube.

In 2012, places of worship were singled out for preferential treatment following the removal of the zero Value Added Tax (VAT) rating concession for alterations to listed buildings announced in the budget. The government set aside £30 million per annum to compensate places of worship for the extra VAT resulting from the withdrawal of the concession.

NEAR EAST & NORTH AFRICA

Algeria

Discriminatory Laws:

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom; however, Algeria's constitution also makes Islam the official religion. Its penal code disallows persons from insulting religious sentiments or inciting hatred against religion. The country also has a Ministry of Religious Affairs that works to ban any publishing and broadcasting content deemed blasphemous.

Egypt

Discriminatory Laws:

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom; however, Article 98(f) of the country's penal code, as amended by law 147/2006, states that "whoever makes use of religion in propagating, either by words, in writing, or in any other means, extreme ideas for the purpose of inciting strife, ridiculing or insulting a heavenly religion or a sect following it, or damaging national unity" should be punished with between six months and five years imprisonment, and/or a fine between five hundred and one thousand pounds.

Cases of Discrimination:

Alber Saber was originally arrested on September 13th over claims that he published the anti-Islam film "Innocence of Muslims" on Facebook, but when it emerged that there was no evidence to support the claim, he was later charged on the basis of an atheist video that he had made.

Two days after protests and clashes between security forces and protesters broke out over the film near the U.S. Embassy on September 11th neighbors of Saber claimed that he shared the anti-Islam video on his Facebook account, which led an angry mob to storm Saber's house in Marg district, kicking out Saber and his mother. Kariman Meseha, Saber's mother, told journalists attending a press conference at the Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression that she called the police to protect her son, but once police arrived, it was Saber who was arrested, not those who attacked his home. Meseha said, that the next day she discovered that he was arrested on blasphemy charges.

Egyptian lawyer Ahmed Ezzat said police incited the prisoners against Saber, claiming that he was an atheist and insulted the Prophet Mohamed; one of the prisoners injured him in the neck with a razor blade. Ezzat stated that residents of Saber's area filed a complaint accusing him of sharing the blasphemous content, yet the records do not state clearly who had filed the complaints, which is a violation of laws that oblige someone filing a complaint to reveal their identity. Ezzat said that the prosecution accused Saber of religious blasphemy after finding a movie of Saber criticizing both Islamic and Coptic religious leaders and institutions. Prosecutors did not

find the movie when they asked Saber to log into his Facebook account, but declined to mention this in the investigations records. The prosecution asked Saber during a 12-hour investigation about his religious beliefs. One of Saber's lawyers was kicked out after objecting to questions about Saber's personal religious beliefs. Saber was detained for four days pending investigation by the prosecution, and his detention is now extended to another 15 days, meaning it would end October 1st.

On Feb. 22, 2007 An Egyptian court sentenced a blogger, Abdel Kareem Soliman, to four years' prison for insulting Islam and the president. Soliman's trial was the first time that a blogger had been prosecuted in Egypt. He had used his web log to criticise the country's top Islamic institution, al-Azhar university and President Hosni Mubarak, whom he called a dictator.

On Oct. 27, 2007, blogger Kareem Amer was sentenced for Facebook posts deemed offensive to Islam, along with being seditious toward Hosni Mubarak. He was released on Nov. 17, 2010, upon which he was re-detained by security forces and allegedly tortured.

In Feb. 2012, a Christian school secretary named Makram Diab was sentenced to six years in prison for "insulting the Prophet Mohammed." A mob of 2,500 Muslims rallied outside the courthouse and demanded Diab be sentenced to death. Diab was apparently convicted on the testimony of Muslim colleagues, who stated he had made offensive remarks.

On Oct. 12, 2012, a court gave Ayman Yusef Mansur, 24, a three-year prison sentence with hard labor because he allegedly intentionally insulted the dignity of the Islamic religion with criticism on Facebook. The court did not make available what exactly Mansur posted on Facebook to draw the sentence.

Alaa Hamed, a former civil servant in the Ministry of Tax Authorities, was arrested and convicted in 1990 for writing a book, *A Distance in a Man's Mind*, that was deemed blasphemous. He was sentenced under Egypt's blasphemy laws to 8 years imprisonment with a fine.

Iran

Discriminatory Laws:

Iranian law bars any criticism Islam or deviation from the ruling Islamic standards. Government leaders use these laws to persecute religious minorities and dissidents. Article 110 of the Constitution lists all the powers granted to the Spiritual Leader (a Muslim religious and political leader), appointed by his peers for an unlimited duration. Among others, the Spiritual Leader exercises his control over the judiciary, the army, the police, the radio, the television, but also over the President and the Parliament, institutions elected by the people. Article 91 of the Constitution establishes a body known as the "Guardian Council" whose function is to examine the compatibility of all legislation enacted by the Islamic Consultative Assembly with "the criteria of Islam and the Constitution"³ and who can therefore veto any and all legislation. Half of the members of the Guardian Council are appointed by the Spiritual Leader and the other half are elected by the Islamic Consultative Assembly from among the Muslim jurists nominated by the

Head of the Judicial Power (who is, himself, appointed by the Spiritual Leader). The Guardian council exercise a double control of any draft legislation, with two different procedures:

- conformity with the Constitution: all 12 elected members vote, a simple majority recognizes the constitutionality
- conformity with Islam: only the six religious leaders elected personally by the Spiritual leader vote, and a simple majority is required to declare the compatibility of a draft legislation with Islam.

Consequently, four religious leaders may block all draft legislation enacted by the Parliament. The Guardian Council and the Supreme Leader therefore and in practice centralize all powers in Iran.

Articles 12 and 13 of the Constitution divides citizens of the Islamic Republic of Iran into four categories: Muslims, Zoroastrians, Jews and Christians. Nonbelievers are effectively left out and aren't afforded any rights or protections. They must declare their faith in one of the four officially recognized religions in order to be able to claim a number of legal rights, such as the possibility to apply for the general examination to enter any university in Iran. Only Muslims are able to take part in the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and to conduct public affairs at a high level. According to the Constitution, non-Muslims cannot hold the following key decision-making positions:

- President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who must be a Shi'a Muslim (Article 1156)
- Commanders in the Islamic Army (Article 1447)
- Judges, at any level (Article 163 and law of 1983 on the selection of judges 8)

Moreover, non-Muslims are not eligible to become members of the Parliament (the Islamic Consultative Assembly) through the general elections. Finally, non-Muslims cannot become members of the very influential Guardian Council.

A study of the Penal Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran reveals that, for a number of offences, the punishment differs in function of the religion of the victim and/or the religion of the offender. The fate of Muslim victims and offenders is systematically more favorable than that of non-Muslims, showing that the life and physical integrity of Muslims is given a much higher value than that of non-Muslims. This institutionalized discrimination is particularly blatant for the following crimes:

1. *Adultery*- The sanctions for adultery vary widely according to the religion of both members of the couple. A Muslim man who commits adultery with a Muslim woman is punished by 100 lashes (Article 8811). However, a non-Muslim man who commits adultery with a Muslim woman is subject to the death penalty (Article 82-c12). If a Muslim man commits adultery with a non-Muslim woman, the Penal Code does not specify any penalty.

2. *Homosexuality*- Likewise, homosexuality “without consummation” between two Muslim men is punished by 100 lashes (Article 12113) but if the “active party” is non-Muslim and the other Muslim, the non-Muslim is subject to the death penalty.

3. *Crimes Against the Deceased*- Article 49418 stipulates penalties for crimes against a deceased Muslim but the Penal Code does not edict any penalties for the violation of the corpse of a non-Muslim.

Cases of Discrimination:

On Jan. 17, 2012, the country’s Supreme Court confirmed the previously handed down death sentence for 35-year-old web designer and Canadian resident Saeed Malekpour. Malekpour had returned to Iran in 2008 to visit his dying father and was arrested for “insulting and desecrating Islam” for creating a computer program used by others to download pornography.

Israel

Discriminatory Laws:

Article 173 of the country’s penal code allows for one year imprisonment if “One publishes a publication that is liable to crudely offend the religious faith or sentiment of others,” or if “One voices in a public place and in the hearing of another person any word or sound that is liable to crudely offend the religious faith or sentiment of others.”

Jordan

Discriminatory Laws:

The Constitution, in Article 14, provides for the freedom to practice the rites of one’s religion and faith in accordance with the customs that are observed in the Kingdom, unless they violate public order or morality. According to the Constitution, the state religion is Islam and the King must be Muslim. The Constitution, in Articles 103-106, also provides that matters concerning the personal status of Muslims are under the exclusive jurisdiction of Shari’a courts which apply Shari’a in their proceedings. Personal status includes religion, marriage, divorce, child custody, and inheritance. Personal status law follows the guidelines of the Hanafi school of Islamic jurisprudence, which is applied in cases that are not explicitly addressed by civil status legislation. Matters of personal status of non-Muslims whose religion is recognized by the Government are under the jurisdiction of Tribunals of Religious Communities, according to Article 108.

The Government prohibits conversion from Islam and efforts to proselytize Muslims. The Jordanian Penal Code makes insulting Islam, the Prophet Mohammed, or any Muslim’s feelings, a crime punishable by up to three years in prison. Atheists must associate themselves with a recognized religion for purposes of official identification. Employment applications for government positions occasionally contain questions about an applicant’s religion.

Kuwait

Discriminatory Laws:

The Constitution of Kuwait makes Islam the state religion, and Sharia a primary source of legislation, making blasphemy illegal. The 1961 Press and Publications Law prohibits the publication of any material that attacks religions or incites persons to commit crimes, create hatred, or spread dissension.

Palestinian National Authority

Cases of Discrimination:

On Oct. 31, 2010, a 20-year-old blogger was arrested in the West Bank for posting allegedly blasphemous comments on Facebook and his blog. Waleed Hasayin, who used the name Waleed al-Husseini online, described himself as “an atheist from Jerusalem-Palestine” and wrote that God is “a primitive Bedouin and anthropomorphic” and that “people are free to think and believe in whatever suits them.” Hasayin continues to be detained and faces a potential life sentence under a law against defaming religion.

Saudi Arabia

Discriminatory Laws:

The country’s laws rely on an interpretation of Sharia law, which treats blasphemy – or, in other words, any deviation from Sunni Islam – as apostasy, an offense usually met with a death sentence. There is no separation between state and religion, and the deep connection between the royal family and the religious establishment results in significant pressure on all citizens to adhere to the official government interpretation of Islam. The Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (the religious police) are especially intolerant of minority religions and disbelief. Freedom of religion is neither recognized nor protected under Saudi law and is severely restricted in practice.

Cases of Discrimination:

In Feb. 2012, journalist Hamza Kashgari, 23, was accused of blasphemy for posting messages on Twitter in which he imagined himself being in conversation with the Prophet Mohammed. Despite fleeing to Malaysia, Kashgari was arrested and returned home, where he faces charges as severe as the death penalty.

SOUTH & CENTRAL ASIA

Afghanistan

Discriminatory Laws:

The constitution states that Islam is the “religion of the state” and that “no law can be contrary to the beliefs and provisions of the sacred religion of Islam.” The constitution and other laws and policies restrict religious freedom and, in practice, the government enforced these restrictions. The issue of blasphemy is a matter of Afghanistan’s Constitutional reliance on Islamic and Sharia law, which permit the government to punish alleged blasphemers and apostates with sentences as serious as death by hanging. Non-Muslim minority groups, which together constitute approximately 1 percent of the population, are frequent targets of discrimination and persecution. The constitution requires that the president and vice president be Muslim.

Cases of Discrimination:

In Jan. 2008, the Afghan Senate supports the death penalty for the 23-year old journalist Sayed Pervez Kambaksh for blasphemy. He downloaded and distributed an article (written by Arash “The Atheist” Bikhoda) that critically discussed certain Qu’ran verses about women. In October 2008, Kambaksh’s sentence was commuted to 20 years imprisonment. In August 2009, Kambaksh left Afghanistan after a grant of amnesty by President Hamid Karzai.

Bangladesh

Discriminatory Laws:

Section 295A of the penal code states that any person who has “deliberate” or malicious” intent to “hurt religious sentiments” can be imprisoned. Similarly, The Code of Criminal Procedure includes several clauses (99a-f) that states “the government may confiscate all copies of a newspaper if it publishes anything subversive of the state or provoking an uprising or anything that creates enmity and hatred among the citizens or denigrates religious beliefs.”

Cases of Discrimination:

On Jan. 4, 2012, the principal of a technical college, Yunus Ali, was arrested for keeping a copy of Taslima Nasrin’s book *Shame* in the school library. The book tells the story of a Hindu family persecuted in Bangladesh, and was deemed blasphemous and banned by the Bangladeshi government in 1993.

On Mar. 21, 2012, the Dhaka High Court ordered five Facebook pages and a website to be shut down after Dhaka University professors claimed the pages contained remarks and cartoons about the Prophet Mohammed, the Holy Qu’ran, Jesus, Buddha, and the Hindu Gods that insulted religious sentiments.

India

Discriminatory Laws:

Section 295 of Indian Penal Code allows up to three years imprisonment and fines for “whoever, with deliberate and malicious intention of outraging the religious feelings of any class of citizens of India, by words, either spoken or written, or by signs or by visible representations or otherwise, insults or attempts to insult the religion or the religious beliefs of a class.” Also, in May 2011, the Indian Ministry of Communications and Information Technology issued new rules requiring operators of social media networks to screen and remove blasphemous content within 36 hours of receiving a complaint.

Cases of Discrimination:

In Apr. 2012, the Catholic Church filed a complaint under Section 295 of the country’s penal code against Sanul Edamaruku. Edamaruku had previously exposed a supposed “miracle” by revealing that a weeping cross was actually the result of a leaky drain. The local police requested Edamaruku turn himself in and face the charges. He is currently in hiding to avoid arrest.

Maldives

Discriminatory Laws:

The constitution and other laws restrict religious freedom. The constitution designates Islam as the official state religion, and the government and many citizens at all levels interpreted this provision to impose a requirement that all citizens be Muslims and that non-Muslims could not vote. The constitution also stipulates that the president must be Sunni. The language of the constitution relating to the fundamental rights and duties of citizens does not provide for the right to freedom of religion or belief. Furthermore, the constitution precludes non-Muslims from voting and holding public positions. The constitution does not prohibit discrimination based on religious preference. It excludes religion from a list of attributes for which people should not be discriminated against. Several articles in the constitution make the practice of Islam mandatory. Article 36 states that it is imperative for parents and the state to provide children with primary and secondary education. Section (c) of that article states education shall strive to inculcate obedience to Islam and instill love for Islam. According to Forum 18, a foreign nonprofit group that promotes religious freedom, in practice this wording is understood to mean that parents must educate their children as Muslims, whether they are Muslim or not.

Cases of Discrimination:

In 2008 the Ministry of Islamic Affairs replaced the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs. The ministry mandated Islamic instructions in schools, funded salaries of religious instructors, and certified imams, who were responsible for presenting government-approved sermons. By law no one may publicly discuss Islam unless invited to do so by the government.

In Jun. 2010, Mohammed Nazim asked a Muslim preacher, at a large public event, how Islam viewed non-believers such as himself. The preacher replied that Islam requires the death penalty

for those who leave Islam. Several members of the enraged crowd attempted to attack Mohammed and he was hustled away by the police. The Islamic Ministry arranged Mohammed Nazim to receive “religious counseling” before determining if he should be executed for apostasy. During this prison counseling, Mohammed saved his life by embracing Islam.

One month later, Ismail Mohamed Didi faced the same choice as Mohammed Nazim: believe or die. He chose death. On July 13, 2010, the 25-year-old air traffic controller, was found hanged from the control tower of the international airport in the Maldives, after killing himself to escape persecution for his rejection of religion. Shortly before his death, Ismail Mohamed Didi wrote that he had “foolishly admitted my stance on religion” to work colleagues, and the news had “spread like wildfire.” He added, “A lot of my close friends and girlfriend have been prohibited from seeing me by their parents. I have even received a couple of anonymous phone calls threatening violence if I do not repent and start practicing Islam... Maldivians are proud of their religious homogeneity and I am learning the hard way that there is no place for non-Muslim Maldivians in this society.”

Pakistan

Discriminatory Laws:

Chapter XV of Pakistan’s Penal Code contains several sections regarding blasphemy-type laws. Article 295-A outlaws “deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs.” Article 295-B outlaws the defiling of the Holy Qu’ran. Article 295-C bans the use of derogatory remarks in respect of the Holy Prophet. Article 298 bars uttering words with the deliberate intent to wound religious feelings. And article 298-B punishes any misuse of epithets, descriptions, or titles reserved for certain holy personages or places. When applying for a passport, applicants must state their religion. “No Religion” is not accepted as an answer. If an applicant states their religious identity as “Muslim” then they are required to sign an additional declaration that they accept the Prophet Mohammad as the “final Prophet”.

Cases of Discrimination:

On Nov. 8, 2010, Aasia Bibi, a Christian farm worker and mother of five was convicted of blasphemy and sentenced to death for allegedly making blasphemous remarks following a disagreement with a Muslim co-worker who refused to drink from a container of water she carried, believing it was tainted. Several prominent Pakistani politicians have been assassinated for supporting her freedom (more below).

In November 2010 Aasia Bibi became the first woman to be sentenced to death in Pakistan for blasphemy, after she reportedly refused to convert to Islam. She remained in custody while her case was on appeal.

On Jan. 4, 2011, Salmeen Taseer, the Governor of Punjab, was assassinated by his bodyguard, Mumtaz Hussein Qadri. Qadri was unhappy with Taseer’s commitment to reforming the country’s blasphemy laws. Taseer had been fighting for a presidential pardon for Aasia Bibi,

whose case in mentioned above.

On Mar. 2, 2011, Shabaz Bhatti, Minister for Minority Affairs, was assassinated at his home in retaliation for his opposition to blasphemy laws. His assassins left leaflets threatening opponents of blasphemy laws with a similar fate. Despite the fact that members of the Tehrik-e-Taliban have taken responsibility for the murder, no one has yet been charged in Bhatti's death. Bhatti had been fighting for a presidential pardon for Aasia Bibi, whose case in mentioned above.

On Jun. 22, 2011, 29-year-old Abdul Sattar was sentenced to death and fined 50,000 rupees (US\$1,000) for sending text messages and having phone conversations in which the Holy Qu'ran, the Prophet Mohammed, and other Islamic figures were blasphemed.

On Oct. 13, 2012, a retired schoolteacher named Ameer Ali Wahocho was sentenced to three years in prison for allegedly making insulting remarks about the Prophet Mohammed and his family. Wahocho was originally sentenced to one month, which he appealed. While out on bail, his accuser also petitioned – for a stricter sentence. The accuser's petition was granted.

EAST ASIA & PACIFIC

Brunei

Discriminatory Laws:

Though the constitution guarantees religious freedom, other laws and policies restrict this right. The constitution states, “The religion of Brunei Darussalam shall be the Muslim religion according to the Shafi’i sect of that religion.” The government continued its longstanding policies to promote the Shafi’i school of Sunni Islam and discourage other religions. Anyone who teaches or promotes any “deviant” beliefs or practices in public may be charged under the Islamic Religious Council Act and punished with three months incarceration and a fine of BND 2,000 (\$1,550). Visitors to the country were asked to identify their religion on their visa applications. The Ministry of Education requires courses on Islam in all schools that adhere to the state curriculum. Marriage between Muslims and non-Muslims was not permitted, and non-Muslims must convert to Islam if they wish to marry a Muslim.

Burma

Discriminatory Laws:

Religious activities and organizations are subject to restrictions on freedom of expression, association, and assembly as per Articles 34, 361, and 362 of the 2008 constitution. Article 361 recognizes the “special position of Buddhism as the faith professed by the great majority of the citizens of the Union”, and Article 362 recognizes Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Animism as the only religions minorities allowed to exist. The government actively promotes Theravada Buddhism, particularly among ethnic minorities. Adherence or conversion to Buddhism was an unwritten prerequisite for promotion to senior government and military ranks. Nearly all senior-level officers of the ruling State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) and the armed forces are Buddhists.

Indonesia

Discriminatory Laws:

Indonesia recognizes only six official religions—Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Hinduism—and requires its citizens to adhere to one of these. The country’s blasphemy law makes it illegal to promote other faiths, or atheism. Article 156(a) of the country’s criminal code also punishes “disseminating information aimed at inciting religious hatred or hostility” with up to five years in prison. Persons who do not identify with one of the six official religions, including people with no religion, continue to experience official discrimination. This discrimination occurs often in the context of civil registration of marriages and births and other situation involving “family law”.

Official ID cards must list one of the six official religions; therefore “atheism” or “humanism” or

“no religion” are not permitted options. Applicants for government jobs must also identify as belonging to one of the six official religions. To register an organization in Indonesia, the organizers must declare their allegiance to the Basic Ideology of the State (called Pancasila); the first principle of Pancasila is ‘Belief in the one and only God’. That means no atheist group can legally register itself.

Cases of Discrimination:

In Jan. 2012, Alexander Aan, an Indonesian civil servant in the province of West Sumatra, was arrested after being attacked by a mob of Muslim militants reacting to statements Aan made on Facebook which criticized Islam and said he had left Islam and become an atheist. The police charged Aan on three separate counts: insulting religion (which has a maximum sentence of five years in jail), the electronic transmission of defamatory comments (six years jail), and false reporting on an official form (six years in jail). The charges of blasphemy and defamation related to his criticism of Islam on Facebook. The final charge claimed that his application for his civil service job falsely stated he was Muslim when he was in fact an atheist.

On Jun. 14, 2012, a district court sentenced atheist Alexander Aan to two years and six months in prison for allegedly “spreading information inciting religious hatred and animosity.” Aan was also reportedly fined 100 million rupiah (US \$10,600).

On Jul. 12, 2012, a district court sentenced Shiite Muslim cleric Tajul Muluk to two years in jail for “blasphemy causing public anxiety.” Muluk was reportedly arrested for teaching that the Holy Qu’ran is not an authentic text and that the hajj pilgrimage is not obligatory. Muluk’s Shiite community, located in Sampang’s Nangkernang village, has been under attack since 2006, when 40 Sunni clerics and four police officers signed a public statement, declaring that the Shiite sect is heretical.

Laos

Discriminatory Laws:

The constitution provides for freedom of religion; however, other laws and policies restricted this right. The prime minister’s Decree on Religious Practice (Decree 92) is the principal legal instrument defining rules for religious practice; it institutionalizes the government’s role as the final arbiter of permissible religious activities. Although the government does not recognize an official state religion, the government’s exemption of Buddhism from many of the Decree 92 restrictions, sponsorship of Buddhist facilities, incorporation of Buddhist ritual and ceremony in state functions, and promotion of Buddhism as an element of the country’s cultural and spiritual identity gave Theravada Buddhism an elevated status.

Malaysia

Discriminatory Laws:

The constitution protects freedom of religion; however, portions of the constitution as well as

other laws and policies placed some restrictions on religious freedom. Every Malaysian citizen over the age of 12 must carry an identification card, a 'MyKad', which must state the bearer's religion. This requirement alone appears to breach the ICCPR under which States have no right to demand to know the religion of any of their citizens; a point reinforced by Section 3 of General Comment 22 of the Human Rights Committee: 'In accordance with articles 18.2 and 17, no one can be compelled to reveal his thoughts or adherence to a religion or belief.' But, in addition, the government has a history of limiting how citizens can identify their religion. The constitution also defines ethnic Malays as Muslim. Civil courts generally ceded authority to Sharia (Islamic law) courts on cases concerning conversion from Islam, and Sharia courts remained reluctant to allow for such conversions. Additionally, Articles 295-298A of the penal code allow up to three years in prison and a US \$1,000 fine penalties for those who "commit offenses against religion".

AFRICA

Botswana

Discriminatory Laws:

While the constitution and other laws mandate a secular state and protect religious freedom, government meetings often begin with a Christian prayer. Even though the constitution prohibits forced religious instruction, forced participation in religious ceremonies, or taking oaths that run counter to an individual's religious beliefs, religious education is part of the curriculum in public schools. This public education emphasizes Christianity but also addresses other religious groups in the country, while excluding secularists and nontheists. Additionally, the constitution provides that every religious community may establish places for religious instruction at the community's expense.

Cameroon

Discriminatory Laws:

The constitution mandates a secular state, and the constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom. However, state-sponsored television station and radio stations broadcast Christian and Islamic religious services on a regular basis, as well as religious ceremonies on national holidays and during national events. The government gives an annual subsidy to all private primary and secondary education institutions, including those operated by religious denominations.

Chad

Discriminatory Laws:

The constitution provides that the country shall be a secular state; however, some policies favor Islam in practice. A committee composed of members of the High Council for Islamic Affairs (HCIA) and the Directorate of Religious and Traditional Affairs in the Ministry of the Interior (MOI) organized trips to Mecca for the Hajj (pilgrimage during the 12th month of the Islamic calendar) and Umrah (pilgrimage).

The director of religious and traditional affairs oversees religious matters. The HCIA oversees Islamic religious activities, including the supervision of some Arabic language schools and higher institutions of learning, and the representation of the country in international Islamic meetings. The HCIA, in coordination with the president, appoints the grand imam, a spiritual leader for Muslims, who oversees each region's high imam and serves as head of the council. In principle, although not consistently in practice, the grand imam has the authority to restrict proselytizing by Islamic groups, regulate the content of mosque sermons, and exert control over activities of Islamic charities.

Religious leaders are involved in managing the country's wealth. A representative of the religious community sits on the Revenue Management College, the body that oversees use of oil revenues. The seat rotates between Muslim and Christian leaders every four years. At the end of the reporting period, a Muslim religious leader held the seat.

While the government is legally obligated to treat all religious groups or denominations equally, some non-Muslims alleged that Muslims received preferential status, particularly concerning use of public lands for building places of worship. On October 14, a local private newspaper editorialized that the government made development decisions based on where it would be favorable to Muslims.

Comoros

Discriminatory Laws:

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom; however, the constitution also states that citizens will draw governing principles and rules from Islamic tenets. A constitutional referendum passed in May 2009 states "Islam is the state religion". Proselytizing for any religion except Islam is illegal, and foreigners caught proselytizing for religions other than Islam were subject to deportation. Additionally, converts from Islam may be prosecuted under the law.

Djibouti

Discriminatory Laws:

Although the constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom, Islam is the state religion and the president and other government employees, including magistrates, are required to take religious oaths. The government allows civil marriage only for non-Muslim foreign residents. Muslims are required to marry in a religious ceremony. A non-Muslim man may marry a Muslim woman only after converting to Islam. According to the family code, "impediment to a marriage occurs when a Muslim woman marries a non-Muslim."

Equatorial Guinea

Discriminatory Laws:

While the constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom, a 1992 presidential decree regulates the exercise of religious freedom. This decree provides official preference for the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformed Church of Equatorial Guinea. While the decree does not hinder the practice of other religions, its preferential effects can be observed in some circumstances; for example, Catholic masses are a normal part of any major ceremonial function, such as the October 12 National Day and June 5 President's Birthday. In addition, Catholic and Reform church officials are exempt from airport entry and exit taxes.

Eritrea

Discriminatory Laws:

The 1997 constitution protects religious freedom; however, the government has yet to implement the constitution in law and in practice. The government has officially registered four religious groups: the Eritrean Orthodox Church, the Evangelical (Lutheran) Church of Eritrea, Islam, and the Roman Catholic Church. The application for an exit visa requires a designation of religious affiliation, and members of unregistered faiths or no faith require additional permission from the Office of Religious Affairs, which has been reported to grant permission, deny permission, or arrest applicants on the spot for practicing an unrecognized faith or being nonreligious.

Ethiopia

Discriminatory Laws:

The constitution requires the separation of state and religion; however, under a 2008 law it is a crime to defame religious groups.

The Gambia

Discriminatory Laws:

Article 25 of the Constitution protects the rights of citizens to practice any religion that they choose. The government also did not establish a state religion, although the constitution establishes Qadi (Muslim judge trained in the Islamic legal tradition) courts in such places as the chief justice determines. Their jurisdiction applies only to marriage, divorce, and inheritance questions for Muslims where they apply traditional Islamic law. The Supreme Islamic Council (SIC) is an independent body that advises the government on religious issues. Although the government does not have representation on the council, it provided the council with substantial funding. The minister of religious affairs maintains a formal relationship with the council. Government meetings and events typically commenced with two prayers, one Islamic and one Christian.

The government funds religious instruction in schools. Public and private schools throughout the country provide Biblical and Qur'anic studies with government support.

Mauritania

Discriminatory Laws:

The constitution and other laws and policies restricted religious freedom and the 1991 constitution defines the country as an Islamic republic and recognizes Islam as the sole religion of its citizens and the state. Sharia (Islamic law) provides legal principles upon which the law and legal procedures are based. The government and citizenry consider Islam to be the essential cohesive element unifying the country's various ethnic groups. There is a cabinet-level Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Traditional Education. The High Council of Islam, consisting of six imams, advised the government on conformance of legislation to Islamic precepts. The judiciary consists of a

single system of courts that uses principles of Sharia in matters concerning the family and modern legal principles in all other matters.

The government requires members of the Constitutional Council and the High Council of Magistrates to take an oath of office that includes a promise to God to uphold the law of the land in conformity with Islamic precepts. Both public schools and private Islamic schools include classes on Islam, and attendance at these religious classes is required.

Zambia

Discriminatory Laws:

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom , however, the government requires Christian instruction in public schools. The classes are conducted in both the Catholic and Protestant traditions and are mandatory for all students through grade seven.

WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Bahamas

Discriminatory Laws:

The constitution requires the government to respect Christian values. The government met regularly with religious leaders, both publicly and privately, to discuss societal, political, and economic issues. Religion is recognized as an academic subject at government schools and is included in mandatory standardized achievement and certificate tests. The country's Christian heritage has a strong influence on religion classes in government-supported schools, which focus on the study of Christian philosophy, Biblical texts, and, to a lesser extent, comparative and non-Christian religions presented in a Christian context. The constitution allows students, or their guardians in the case of minors, to decline to participate in religious education and observance in schools.

Belize

Discriminatory Laws:

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom. There is no state religion; however, the preamble to the constitution states, "The nation of Belize shall be founded upon principles which acknowledge the supremacy of God." An amendment to the constitution expanded the appointed Senate to 12 persons, one of whom is appointed by the governor general acting in accordance with the advice of the Belize Council of Churches and the Evangelical Association of Churches. The membership of these organizations includes several Christian denominations, among them Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, Salvation Army, Chinese Christian Mission, Chinese Christian Church, and Seventh-day Adventist.

The constitution stipulates that religious communities may establish "places of education" and states that "no such community shall be prevented from providing religious instruction for persons of that community." Although there is no state religion, the educational system maintains by statute a strong religious curriculum. The curriculum ties "spirituality" with social studies courses.

Chile

Discriminatory Laws:

Church and state are officially separate; however, anti-incitement laws exist for religious groups. A 2002 law on freedom of expression and information and the press prohibits the use of any means of social communication to publish or transmit information designed to promote hatred of or hostility towards persons or groups based on religion and establishes fines for infractions. Publicly subsidized schools are required to offer religious education two teaching hours per week through high school; although parents may decide to have their children omit religious education. Religious instruction in public schools is almost exclusively Catholic, although the Ministry of Education approved curricula for 14 other religious groups. Schools must teach the religion requested by the parents.

El Salvador

Discriminatory Laws:

The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom; however, Article 296 of the penal code imposes criminal sentences of six months to two years on those who publicly offend or insult the religious beliefs of others, or damage or destroy religious objects. If such acts are carried out with and for the purpose of publicity, sentences increase to one to three years in prison. Repeat offenders face prison sentences of three to eight years.

DATA REPORT OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST NON-RELIGIOUS PEOPLE

Country / Region	Discriminatory Law / Case	Date of Case	Description	Source
Europe & Eurasia				
Austria	Law	N/A	Sec. 188 of Austrian Criminal Code criminalizes anyone that disparages a religious object, society, or doctrine.	http://www.caslon.com.au/blasphemy/profile9.htm
Austria	Law	N/A	Sec. 189 of Austrian Criminal Code criminalizes anyone that interferes with a religious ceremony.	http://www.caslon.com.au/blasphemy/profile9.htm
Austria	Case	12/11/09	Catholics clerics sued cartoonist Manfred Deix over drawings depicting God and the EU prohibition against crucifixes.	http://scienceblogs.com/pharyngula/2009/12/12/european-cartoonist-on-a-rampa/
Austria	Case	1/22/09	Politician Susanne Winter was fined \$24,000 for "humiliating a religion" by saying Mohammed was a pedophile.	http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/2009/01/susanne-winter-found-guilty.html
Austria	Case	12/11/10	Helmut G. was convicted for offending his Muslim neighbor by yodeling while mowing his lawn.	http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/141152
Austria	Case	1/15/11	Elizabeth Sadaditch-Wolf was convicted of offending religion after asking "If that is not pedophilia, what is it?" in regard to Mohammed's nine-year-old wife.	http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/1596/sabaditsch-wolff-lawfare-austria
France	Law	N/A	Law No. 72546, a strict anti-defamation law, prohibits religiously motivated "attacks."	http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1369183X.1973.9975217?journalCode=cjms20
France	Case	3/16/05	Courts prohibited a billboard campaign by a clothes company because of a photo imitating Leonardo's Last Supper.	http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2005/feb/04/media.arts
France	Case	7/17/08	Blogger Fernand Cortes de Conquilla was sentenced to three months in jail and a €2,000 fine for his blog critical of Islam.	http://www.internationalfreepressociety.org/2009/03/french-citizen-prosecuted-for-expressing-his-opinion-on-website/
France	Case	10/5/10	A French blogger was charged with "inciting religious hatred" after posting a video of himself tearing, burning, and urinating on a Qu'ran.	http://blogs.reuters.com/faithworld/2010/10/05/france-charges-man-for-burning-urinating-on-koran/
Germany	Law	N/A	Article 166 of the German Criminal Code criminalizes insulting another's religion or faith with up to three years of imprisonment.	http://www.iuscomp.org/gla/statutes/StGB.htm#166
Germany	Case	2/23/06	A German businessman who printed "Koran" repeatedly on toilet paper was initially sentenced to one year of prison and 300 hours of community service.	http://www.expatica.com/de/news/local_news/suspended-prison-for-german-who-insulted-koran-27912.html
Germany	Case	4/24/09	Professor of Islamic studies, Sven Kalisch, publicly doubts the historical evidence of Mohammed and receives death threats before having his teaching license revoked.	http://dachnews.wordpress.com/2008/09/21/professor-for-islamic-theology-muhammed-sven-kalisch-faces-death-threats-after-denying-muhammads-existence/
Germany	Case	4/9/10	German magazine Titanic was prosecuted after their front page showed a crucified Jesus appearing to be receiving fellatio from a Catholic cleric.	http://www.spiegel.de/international/z eitgeist/pope-benedict-xvi-sues-german-satire-magazine-titanic-a-843690.html
Germany	Law	N/A	In 1974, the German state of Bavaria concluded a treaty with the Holy See which gave catholic bishops the right to veto the nomination of a professor of theology, philosophy, pedagogy and sociology/political science at state universities if the candidate does not entertain the standpoint of the Catholic Church	http://www.concordatwatch.eu/showtopic.php?org_id=870&kb_header_id=17061
Germany	Case	2007	Applicants for a position at a Bavarian state university were discriminated against by Catholic officials that have the right to veto the nomination of a professor of theology, philosophy, pedagogy and sociology/political science if the candidate does not entertain the standpoint of the Catholic Church.	www.konkordatslehrstuhklage.de

Greece	Law	N/A	Article 198 criminalizes blasphemy against God with up to two years imprisonment.	http://www.venice.coe.int/docs/2008/CDL(2008)090add2-e.asp
Greece	Law	N/A	Article 199 criminalizes blasphemy against the Greek Orthodox Church, which the country financially supports.	http://www.venice.coe.int/docs/2008/CDL(2008)090add2-e.asp
Greece	Case	2/8/05	Gerhard Haderere was sentenced to six months prison after portraying Jesus as an incense-addicted hippy in his book Das Leben des Jesu.	http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2005/mar/23/austria.arts
Greece	Case	6/9/12	Three actors that took part in the "Corpus Christi" play were arrested on charges of blasphemy.	http://onthewaytoithaca.wordpress.com/2012/06/10/arrests-over-corpus-christi-en/
Ireland	Law	N/A	Judges, public office holders, and the president must all take a religious oath before taking their position.	http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/upload/statistic/256.htm
Ireland	Law	N/A	Sec. 36 of Ireland's Defamation Act of 2009 criminalizes publishing or utterance of "blasphemous matter" with penalties up to a €25,000 fine.	www.irishstatutebook.ie/pdf/2009/en.act.2009.0031.pdf
Ireland	Case	2000	Religious education classes in public schools are mandatory.	http://www.teachdontpreach.ie/2011/01/un-to-monitor-racial-and-religious-discrimination-in-irish-schools/
Ireland	Case	2003	Church-linked publically funded schools are legally permitted to refuse a student not of that religious group.	http://www.teachdontpreach.ie/2011/01/un-to-monitor-racial-and-religious-discrimination-in-irish-schools/
Italy	Law	N/A	Article 724 of the penal code considers blasphemy an "administrative offense" punishable by a fine.	http://www.altalex.com/index.php?idnot=36776
Italy	Law	N/A	The 1984 revision of the Concordat with the Catholic Church allows the state to support religion through finances, land, and other commodities.	http://www.concordatwatch.eu/showtopic.php?org_id=878&kb_header_id=39221
Italy	Case	6/12/06	Oriana Fallaci faced blasphemy charges after her latest book, La Forza della Ragione contained 18 statements "unequivocally offensive to Islam and Muslims."	http://neveryetmelted.com/2006/06/12/oriana-fallaci-trial-begins-in-italy/
Italy	Case	10/20/10	Franco Frattini, Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, called for Muslims, Jews, and Christians to unite to fight against the "threat" that atheism poses.	http://coreysviews.wordpress.com/2010/11/01/foreign-minister-franco-frattini-christians-muslims-and-jews-lets-kill-the-atheists/
Liechtenstein	Law	N/A	Criminal code prohibits debasements of any religion or its adherents.	2010 IRF report
Liechtenstein	Law	N/A	The Constitution makes the Catholic Church the "National Church" of the country, entitling it to full protection of the state.	2010 IRF report
Malta	Law	N/A	Article 2 of the Maltese Constitution states: (1) The religion of Malta is the Roman Catholic Apostolic Religion. (2) The authorities of the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church have the duty and the right to teach which principles are right and which are wrong. (3) Religious teaching of the Roman Catholic Apostolic Faith shall be provided in all state schools as part of compulsory education.	http://www.constitution.org/cons/malta/chapt0.pdf
Netherlands	Law	N/A	Article 137c of the Dutch Penal Code penalizes defamation of groups because of their religion.	http://www.internationalfreepressociety.org/2009/02/the-dutch-law-used-against-geert-wilders/
Netherlands	Law	N/A	Article 137d of the Dutch Penal Code penalizes inciting "hatred or discrimination against persons" on grounds of their religion or beliefs.	http://www.internationalfreepressociety.org/2009/02/the-dutch-law-used-against-geert-wilders/
Netherlands	Law	N/A	Article 429b of the Dutch Penal Code penalizes display of "scornful blasphemy for insulting religious feelings."	http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0001854/DerdeBoek/TitelIII/Artikel429bis/geldigheidsdatum_07-08-2012
Netherlands	Case	3/19/08	Dutch cartoonist Gregorius Nekschot is arrested for insulting Muslims and African Americans in his drawings.	http://www.forbes.com/sites/abigailman/2011/12/27/radical-islam-claims-another-gregorius-nekschot-rip/

Netherlands	Case	1/21/09	Geert Wilders is put on trial because his film Fitnacompared Islam and Nazism.	http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/edwest/100093524/geert-wilders-has-been-acquitted-that-he-went-on-trial-at-all-is-a-disgrace/
Poland	Law	N/A	Article 196 of Poland's penal code states that anyone who "offends religious feelings of other people" are subject to imprisonment for up to 2 years.	http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4d5a70081a.html
Poland	Case	7/23/03	Polish artist Danuta Nieznska is fined and receives a 6-month travel probation for exhibiting his artwork which depicts a penis on a cross.	http://www.secularnewsdaily.com/2010/05/polish-pop-star-faces-two-years-prison-for-blasphemy/
Russia	Law	N/A	Article 282 of the Russian Criminal Code bans "inciting religious hatred," which can lead to 3 years in prison and fines up to \$6,500.	http://www.russian-criminal-code.com/PartII/SectionX/Chapter29.html
Russia	Case	1/18/08	Aleksander Sdvizhkov, editor of Zgoda is sentenced to 3 years in a labor camp for reprinting the Danish Mohammed cartoons.	http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,331188,00.html
Russia	Case	6/13/10	Jury Samadurov and Andrei Jerefeyey are fined after organizing an art show which included pieces depicting Jesus as Mickey Mouse and Lenin.	http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/13/arts/design/13curators.html
Sweden	Law	N/A	Chapter 16, section 8 of the penal code criminalizes any person who expresses contempt for persons with allusion to religious belief.	http://www.sakerhetspolisen.se/english/english/countersubversion/politicalextremism/politicallymotivatedoffences/penalcodechapter16section8.4.7671d7bb110e3dcb1fd800018808.html
Sweden	Case	9/16/10	Carl Herslow is tried for "agitation against an ethnic group" after making a poster of Mohammad and his nine-year-old wife.	http://www.thelocal.se/32368/20110303/
Switzerland	Case	10/5/10	Valentin Abgottspion was fired from his job as a teacher at a public school after removing crucifixes from the classroom over a year earlier. The school's explanation was that they could not trust him as a teacher.	http://richarddawkins.net/articles/642641-you-have-to-like-lots-of-things-to-fight-against-one-big-dislike
Turkey	Law	N/A	School children are forced into mandatory religious education which focuses heavily on the Sunni Haefi Islamic belief.	http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=alevis-to-open-mass-lawsuits-against-compulsory-religious-courses-2011-01-17
Turkey	Case	5/26/09	Nedim Gurel was prosecuted because his book Allah's Daughters allegedly insults religion and incites hatred.	http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2009/jun/26/turkish-novelist-gursel-religious-hatred
Turkey	Case	6/1/12	Fazil Say, an atheist and international jazz pianist is charged with insulting Islamic values in Twitter messages. He faces up to 18 months in prison.	http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/02/world/europe/turkey-charges-pianist-fazil-say-over-twitter-posts.html
United Kingdom	Law	N/A	The penal code contains laws against inciting religious groups through "hate speech" and the government has given money to churches.	2010 IRF report
United Kingdom	Law	N/A	More than 30% of state-funded schools are run by church authorities and are free to discriminate. Schools are also required to hold a daily act of collective worship.	http://accordcoalition.org.uk/campaigning-for-inclusive-admissions-in-local-voluntary-controlled-faith-schools/
United Kingdom	Law	N/A	The government set aside €30 million to compensate places of worship when laws became tougher on state-funding for architectural improvements for churches.	http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2146068/Osborne-30m-heritage-tax-U-turn-Compensation-fund-relieve-burden-churches.html
United Kingdom	Law	N/A	The Church of England is given special privilege to Parliament, allowing them to lobby with greater ease than other religions.	2010 IRF report
United Kingdom	Case	3/4/10	Harry Taylor was sentenced to six months imprisonment, a five year Anti-Social Behaviour Order, 100 hours of unpaid work, and a fine of €250 after he left anti-religious cartoons in the prayer-room of John Lennon Airport.	http://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/liverpool-news/local-news/2010/04/24/militant-atheist-harry-taylor-hit-with-asbo-for-offensive-images-in-john-lennon-airport-100252-26307049/

United Kingdom	Case	9/23/10	Six people were arrested for filming the burning of a Kroan and putting it on YouTube.	http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/sep/23/six-arrested-alleged-quran-burning
Near East & North Africa				
Algeria	Law	N/A	Islam is the country's official religion and disallows insulting religious sentiments. The country also works to ban any publishing or broadcasting that is blasphemous.	2010 IRF report
Egypt	Law	N/A	Article 98(f) of the penal code prohibits insulting religion by any means, threatening anywhere from 6 months to 5 years of imprisonment and a €500-1,000 fine.	http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4dbe90c4c.html
Egypt	Case	9/13/12	Atheist activist Alber Saber was originally arrested on September 13th over claims that he published the anti-Islam film "Innocence of Muslims" on Facebook, but when it emerged that there was no evidence to support the claim, he was later charged on the basis of an atheist video that he had made and is currently being detained.	http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/rights-groups-condemn-detention-atheist-blasphemy-charges
Egypt	Case	12/7/91	Alaa Hamed was convicted after writing a book, "A Distance in a Man's Mind," that was deemed blasphemous. He was sentenced to 8 years in prison and a fine.	http://articles.philly.com/1992-01-13/news/26035098_1_fundamentalist-s-salman-rushdie-jail/2
Egypt	Case	2/22/07	Abdel Kareem Soliman was sentenced to four years of imprisonment for insulting Islam and the president in his blog.	http://www.aina.org/news/2008079165111.htm
Egypt	Case	10/27/07	Kareem Amer was sentenced for Facebook posts insulting the president and Islam. After serving his term, he was re-detained and allegedly tortured.	http://www.readwriteweb.com/archives/historys_longest_imprisoned_blogger_kareem_amer_is.php
Egypt	Case	10/12/11	Ayman Usef Mansur was given a 3 year prison sentence with hard labor after insulting Islam on Facebook.	http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/22/ayman-mansour-insulting-islam_n_1026370.html
Egypt	Case	2/?/12	Makram Diab was sentenced to six years in prison for "insulting the Prophet Mohammed."	http://www.bikyamasr.com/59777/egypt-christian-man-jailed-for-insulting-prophet/
Iran	Law	N/A	Iran appoints a Spiritual leader, who must be of Muslim faith, to hold massive governmental power.	http://www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/ir00000_.html
Iran	Law	N/A	Only Muslims are allowed to be elected to office or hold jobs as judges or commanders in the army.	http://www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/ir00000_.html
Iran	Law	N/A	Citizens must register as Muslims, Zoroastrians, Jews, or Christians to obtain full legal rights.	http://www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/ir00000_.html
Iran	Law	N/A	Crimes such as adultery, homosexuality, and crimes against the deceased are always much stricter on non-Muslims. Muslims face 100 lashes for adultery, but non-Muslims face the death penalty.	http://www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/ir00000_.html
Iran	Case	1/17/12	Canadian Saeed Malekpour was given the death penalty upon his return to Iran to visit his dying father. He was arrested for "insulting and desecrating Islam" for making a computer program to download pornography.	http://www.springboardbath.org.uk/news/1460-amnesty-bath-urge-us-to-appeal-against-web-programmers-execution-in-iran.html
Israel	Law	N/A	Article 173 of the penal code allows for imprisonment for any publication or expression that is liable to crudely offend the religious faith or sentiment of others.	www.oecd.org/dataoecd/15/58/43289694.pdf
Jordan	Law	N/A	The official religion of the state is Islam and many laws are based upon it, which includes the necessity of Kings to be Muslims and the prohibition of conversion from Islam.	2010 IRF report
Kuwait	Law	N/A	Islam is the country's official religion.	2010 IRF report

Palestinian National Authority	Case	10/31/10	Waleed Hasayin wrote that God is "a primitive Bedoiunand anthropomorphic" and that "people are free to think and believe in whatever suits them" on Facebook and his blog. He faced a potential life sentence for defaming religion. He has escaped to France, where he is seeking asylum.	http://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/showthread.php?t=1461536
Saudi Arabia	Law	N/A	There is no separation of church and state. Sharia is used as interpretation for the law and the country is very intolerant of minority religions and disbelief.	2010 IRF report
Saudi Arabia	Case	2/8/12	Hamza Kashgari was accused of blasphemy for posting messages on Twitter in which he imagined himself in conversation with Mohammed. He faces charges as severe as the death penalty.	http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/saudi-writer-detained-after-tweets-about-muhammad/2012/02/09/gIQApsgW2Q_story.html
South & Central Asia				
Afghanistan	Law	N/A	Islam is the state religion and no laws are allowed to be contrary to this belief system. Blasphemy is punishable by death and president and vice president are required to be Muslim.	2010 IRF report
Afghanistan	Case	1/2/08	Sayed Pervez Kambaksh was sentenced to death for blasphemy after downloading and distributing an article critical of Koran verses about women.	http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7204341.stm
Bangladesh	Law	N/A	Section 295a of the penal code says that anyone who has "deliberate" or "malicious" intent to "hurt religious sentiments" can be imprisoned.	http://www.asiamedia.ucla.edu/religion/article.asp?parentid=45887
Bangladesh	Law	N/A	Clauses 99a-f in the Code of Criminal Procedure states that the government may confiscate all copies of a newspaper should it enflame religious beliefs.	http://www.asiamedia.ucla.edu/religion/article.asp?parentid=45887
Bangladesh	Case	1/4/12	Yunus Ali, principal of a technical school, was arrested for keeping a copy of Shame, which discusses the persecution of a family in Bangladesh and was deemed blasphemous by the government.	http://www.jihadwatch.org/2012/01/bangladesh-teacher-facing-three-years-in-jail-for-blasphemous-book-in-school-library.html
Bangladesh	Case	3/21/12	The Dhaka High Court ordered 5 Facebook pages to be shut down along with 1 website after Dhaka professors claimed the pages insulted religious sentiments.	http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-17465550
India	Law	N/A	Section 295 of the Indian Penal Code allows up to 3 years imprisonment for "attempts to insult the religion or the religious beliefs of a class."	http://indiankanoon.org/doc/1803184/
India	Law	N/A	The Indian Ministry of Communications and Information Technology requires operators of social media to screen and remove blasphemous content within 36 hours of a complaint.	http://globalvoicesonline.org/2012/04/28/india-protests-against-the-new-information-technology-rules/
India	Case	4/21/12	Sanul Edamaruku is currently in hiding after the Catholic Church filed a complaint against him. Edamaruku had previously exposed a "miracle" by showing water from a statue of Jesus was the result of a leaky drain.	www.patheos.com/blogs/friendlyatheist/2012/06/10/indian-rationalist-faces-jail-for-exposing-miracle/
Maldives	Law	N/A	The constitution of Maldives designates Islam as the official state religion. Non-Muslims are not allowed to vote and the president must be Sunni.	2010 IRF report
Maldives	Law	N/A	Article 36 states that it is imperative for parents and the state to provide children with primary and secondary education and that this education must include obedience and love for Islam, regardless of the parents' beliefs.	www.maldivesinfo.gov.mv/home/upload/downloads/Compilation.pdf

Maldives	Law	N/A	The Ministry of Islamic Affairs mandates Islamic instruction in school, funds salaries of religious leaders, certifies imams, and disallows anyone not certified to discuss Islam in public.	2010 IRF report
Maldives	Case	6/5/10	Mohammed Nazim was forced to convert to Islam or face death after admitting to a preacher that he did not believe. He was later attacked by a crowd and forced into religious counseling.	http://maldivesdissent.blogspot.com/
Maldives	Case	7/13/10	Ismail Mohamed Didi committed suicide after being outcast when co-workers learned that he was a nonbeliever. He was shunned from his girlfriend and other friends and received threatening phone calls before his death.	http://freethinker.co.uk/2010/07/14/muslim-apostate-found-hanged-after-admitting-he-was-an-atheist/
Pakistan	Law	N/A	Chapter XV of Pakistan's Penal Code outlines an extensive blasphemy ban, including the insult of religious beliefs, the defiling of the Qu'ran, and remarks against the Holy Prophet.	http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/legislation/1860/actXLVof1860.html
Pakistan	Law	N/A	Passport applicants must state their religion. "No religion" is not accepted as an answer. Should an applicant choose Islam, they must also sign a declaration that they accept Mohammed as the "final Prophet," and that they consider Mirza Ghulam Qadiani to be an imposter and his followers non-Muslim.	2010 IRF report
Pakistan	Case	11/8/10	Aasia Bibi was convicted of blasphemy and sentenced to death for making remarks following a disagreement with a Muslim co-worker who refused to drink from the same container as she had, calling it tainted.	http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-11930849
Pakistan	Case	1/4/11	Salmeen Taseer, Governon of Punjab was assassinated by his bodyguard who was unhappy with his support for Aasia Bibi and his work to reform the country's blasphemy laws.	http://www.aolnews.com/2011/01/04/salman-taseer-apparently-killed-because-of-stance-on-pakistans/
Pakistan	Case	3/2/11	Shabaz Bhatti, Minister for Minority Affairs was assassinated at his home in retaliation for his opposition to blasphemy laws according to a note left by his assassins. Bhatti also supported Aasia Bibi.	http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/mar/02/pakistan-minister-shot-dead-islamabad
Pakistan	Case	6/22/11	Abdul Sattar was sentenced to death and fined \$1,000 for sending text messages and having private phone conversations which blasphemed the Qu'ran, Mohammed, and other Islamic figures.	http://dawn.com/2011/06/22/man-sentenced-to-death-for-blasphemy/
Pakistan	Case	10/13/12	Ameer Ali Wahocho was sentenced to 3 years imprisonment after making insulting remarks about Mohammed. He was originally sentenced to one year, but appealed. While on bail, his accuser petitioned for a stricter sentence, which was granted.	http://tribune.com.pk/story/276379/life-ironies-man-appeals-1-month-blasphemy-sentence-lands-in-jail-for-3-years/
East Asia & Pacific				
Brunei	Law	N/A	Islam is the official state religion. Any teaching or promoting a "deviant" belief can be charged with 3 months in prison and a \$1,550 fine. Schools are required to teach courses on Islam and marriage between a Muslim and non-Muslim are prohibited.	2010 IRF report
Burma	Law	N/A	Article 362 of the constitution only recognizes Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Animism, and Buddhism as religions allowed to be practiced. The government supports Buddhism and requires high positions in government to be held by Buddhists.	lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/.../MM/JC_JubileeCampaign_eng.pdf

Indonesia	Law	N/A	The country only acknowledges 6 official religions - Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. It also has laws against blasphemy which if broken, carry up to 5 years of prison. Minority religions experience discrimination in areas of marriage, birth, and identity cards.	2010 IRF report
Indonesia	Law	N/A	When organizing and sort of group, organizers must declare their allegiance to the Basic Ideology of the State. The first principle is belief in only one God.	2010 IRF report
Indonesia	Case	6/14/12	Alexander Aan was sentenced to 2 years and 6 months of prison and a \$10,600 fine for "spreading... religious hatred and animosity." He had previously been attacked by an angry mob for earlier Facebook posts.	http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/on-faith/atheists-rally-for-persecuted-unbeliever-in-indonesia/2012/07/19/gJQAfg2JwW_story.html
Indonesia	Case	7/12/12	Tajul Muluk was sentenced to 2 years in jail for teaching that the Qu'ran was not an authentic text and that the hajj pilgrimage is not obligatory. Muluk's Shiite community had been under attack since 2006, when 40 Sunni clerics and 4 police officers declared the sect heretical.	http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/shiite-cleric-jailed-for-blasphemy-in-indonesia/530165
Laos	Law	N/A	Decree 92 assigns the state the role of monitoring which religions can and cannot be practiced. Although not an official religion, Buddhism is promoted and sponsored by the state.	http://www.uscirf.gov/government-relations/other-advocacy-materials/3751-laos-chapter-summary-2012.html
Malaysia	Law	N/A	The Constitution defines ethnic Malays as Muslim. Sharia is given authority over civil courts.	2010 IRF report
Malaysia	Law	N/A	Articles 295-298A of the penal code allow up to 3 years in prison and a \$1,000 fine for those who "commit offenses against religion."	http://expression.freedomhouse.org/reports/blasphemy_report/malaysia
Malaysia	Law	N/A	The government makes everyone over 12 years old carry an identification card which states their religion, in violation with Section 3, General Comment 22 of the Human Rights Committee. The state is also known to limit how one may identify.	2010 IRF report
Malaysia	Case	5/30/07	Lina Joy, a convert to Christianity from Islam 10 years before, applied to have her religious identification changed. This was rejected, leaving her with many legal problems, for example, she is now unable to marry a non-Muslim.	http://www.reuters.com/article/2007/05/30/us-malaysia-religion-ruling-idUSSP20856820070530
Africa				
Botswana	Law	N/A	Government meetings often begin with a Christian prayer. Religion is taught in school, but with a preference to Christianity.	2010 IRF report
Cameroon	Law	N/A	State-sponsored television and radio broadcast Christian and Islamic religious services on a regular basis, despite the constitution calling for a secular state.	2010 IRF report
Chad	Law	N/A	Despite calling itself secular, the government shows a preference to Islam. Government officials organized trips to Mecca for the Hajj.	2010 IRF report
Chad	Law	N/A	Religious leaders are given rights to restrict proselytizing by followers and Christians and Muslim leaders are given oil reserves to maintain, with ownership switching. Muslims are also reported to be favored for building rights.	2010 IRF report
Comoros	Law	N/A	Islam is the state religion and proselytizing for any other religion is illegal. Converts from Islam may also be prosecuted under the law.	2010 IRF report

Djibouti	Law	N/A	Islam is the state religion and government officials must take a religious oath before taking office. Non-Muslim men must convert to Islam before marrying a Muslim woman and civil marriages for non-Muslims are only available to foreign residents.	2010 IRF report
Equatorial Guinea	Law	N/A	Roman Catholicism is the state religion and masses are part of most ceremonial events. Catholic and Reform church officials are also exempt from airport entry and exit taxes.	2010 IRF report
Eritrea	Law	N/A	The country only officially acknowledges 4 religions: Islam, and three sects of Christianity. A non-member of these religions seeking permission for an exit visa must go to the Office of Religious Affairs, which is known to grant or deny permission or even arrest applicants on the spot.	2010 IRF report
Ethiopia	Law	N/A	A 2008 law makes it a crime to defame religious groups.	2010 IRF report
The Gambia	Law	N/A	Article 25 of the Constitution establishes a Muslim judge trained in Islamic legal tradition as chief justice. The government also funds religious classes in schools and an independent body, The Supreme Islamic Council.	2010 IRF report
Mauritania	Law	N/A	The state is officially Islamic, takes influence from Sharia, requires religious oaths, contains a cabinet-level Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Traditional Education, and both private and public schools have mandatory classes on Islam.	2010 IRF report
Zambia	Law	N/A	The country requires Christian instruction in public schools. This instruction is conducted in both Protestant and Catholic tradition and mandatory for students through grade 7.	2010 IRF report
Western Hemisphere				
Bahamas	Law	N/A	The constitution requires the government to respect Christian values. The government met regularly with religious leaders to discuss societal, political, and economic issues. Religion is recognized as an academic subject at government schools and is included in mandatory standardized achievement and certificate tests	2010 IRF report
Belize	Law	N/A	One of the 12 members of the Senate is a religious appointee, religious instruction in schools is common.	2010 IRF report
Chile	Law	N/A	A 2002 law on freedom of expression and information and the press prohibits the use of any means of social communication to publish or transmit information designed to promote hatred of or hostility towards persons or groups based on religion and establishes fines for infractions	2010 IRF report
El Salvador	Law	N/A	Article 296 of the penal code imposes criminal sentences of six months to two years on those who publicly offend or insult the religious beliefs of others, or damage or destroy religious objects	2010 IRF report

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