



Focus on Religious Freedom

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U.S. Commission Documents Worldwide “Plague” of Religious Freedom Violations

“A terrifying crisis of religious violence” grips Nigeria, as pervasive religious freedom violations “continue to plague millions of people across the globe,” according to the just-released 2026 Annual Report of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF).

Since 2009—when USCIRF “first recommended Nigeria’s designation as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC)” —53,000 Nigerian civilians have been killed in “targeted violence” —21,000 in the last five years alone, according to the report. “The unfolding catastrophe,” the report explains, is the outcome of “religiously motivated extremist violence; economic and ethnic tensions, long left to fester; corrosive, state-level blasphemy laws; and years of both inadequate response and pervasive corruption from the Nigerian government. Together, these dynamics have fostered an environment of rampant fear and unchecked religious attacks, abductions of schoolchildren, and killings.”

Elsewhere, the report details religious persecution in virtually every region of the world.

Examples include:

Syria: Conditions “dramatically deteriorated” for the country’s “religiously diverse population” after “almost 14 years of civil war.” According to Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), USCIRF found that “transitional authorities” failed to respond effectively to “multiple mass killings, kidnappings, and other egregious acts of violence against Alawis, Druze, Christians, and other religious minorities.”

“**China** continued its longstanding campaign to destroy all independent religious expression” by “broadly targeting religious leaders with insidious tools of repression.”

“In **India**,” ACN quoted from the report, “12 out of 28 states maintain laws that forbid Hindus to convert to another faith.” Last November a U.S. citizen and two Indian nationals were arrested for allegedly converting Hindus to Christianity.

Africa: “Nonstate militant groups continued to wage war against peaceful religious communities,” with nearly 180 Christians murdered in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and continued religious violence in Sudan.

Latin America: The governments of Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela each wielded political repression hand-in-hand with pervasive harassment, arrests, surveillance, and other tactics against religious communities and clergy. “

Europe: Attacks on houses of worship continued to spread, according to ACN, with “arson attacks” on “churches in Italy, Germany, France, Spain, Grenada and the UK.”

Read the report details here: <https://tinyurl.com/3vcu49rf>