

Japan is not a part of ASEAN!!! NEITHER IS CHINA!! WHATS UP WHOSE GOING TO BE IN COMMITTEE

Freedom of Religion or Belief in South East Asia

<https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/freedom-of-religion-or-belief-in-south-east-asia>

- *Indonesia's peaceful democratic transition over the last 15 years has been remarkable, and it has strong pluralist and inclusive traditions.* Whilst the country's constitution enshrines plurality of religious belief, hostility towards, and occasional attacks on, the Ahmaddiya, Christian and Shi'a communities has intensified in recent years, without a clear government response. The major outbursts of inter-religious violence seen in the early 2000s have not been repeated, but risks remain. In a positive development, ministers in the new government, elected in 2014, have undertaken to draft legislation that will strengthen protection for Indonesians to choose and practise their own religion or belief, whatever that may be. **We continue to support small-scale civil society projects in Indonesia to strengthen respect for freedom of religion or belief.**
- **In Brunei, the government introduced the first phase of a sharia penal code in May 2014.**
 - **Important - doubt that ppl know this**
- **There are different factors contributing to restrictions on freedom of religion or belief in South East Asia. However, we would like to see consistent messages from individual governments and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to send a strong signal that religious discrimination and violence will not be tolerated.**
- **Japan calls it Myanmar or Burma?**

Religious freedom another casualty of Southeast Asia's regressive turn

<https://asiancorrespondent.com/2017/10/religious-freedom-another-casualty-southeast-asias-regressive-turn/#logEUh42mt5tfJ4Q.99>

- MUCH concern has been raised about a trend of rising authoritarianism across Southeast Asia, from President Rodrigo Duterte's murderous drug war in the Philippines to Cambodia's rapid descent into dictatorship under Hun Sen.
- there are four-fold challenges: from rising religious-based intolerance, discrimination against minorities and indigenous peoples, the "securitisation" of Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) in the context of fighting terrorism, and the "dire need" to uphold international human rights standards in this overall context.
- In Thailand Rohingyas also faced discrimination, along with the country's numerous stateless minority ethnic communities. Moreover, according to the report, "Muslims in South Thailand were a concern in spite of the Government's claims that the conflict is not a religious one."
- Indonesia's constitution and state ideology of Pancasila guarantee freedom of religion, however in practice the majority population often imposes its will due to pressure from conservative elements.

- The country's blasphemy law – which this year saw Jakarta's former Christian mayor Basuki "Ahok" Tjahaja Purnama jailed for allegedly insulting Islam – remains out of step with international rights norms
- Malaysia
 - **forced "Islamisation policy" towards the indigenous Orang Asli population**
 - and "discrimination against women on religious grounds."
- In Indonesia's **Roman Catholic-majority neighbour Timor Leste** meanwhile, there was "little concern for the state of freedom of religion or belief." Amid "diminution of basic civil rights and abuse of human rights defenders", religious freedom was not a major concern in Cambodia either, except for a lack of guarantee around freedom of expression and assembly
- The Communist States of Laos and Vietnam – while both guaranteeing FoRB in their respective Constitutions – impose "systemic discrimination and persecution" against various religious groups, especially those of minority groups such as Christians.
- **Singapore** tightly restricts freedom of expression under the premise of preserving racial and religious harmony, and there is particular concern over the **safeguarding of religious freedom for migrant workers.**

NEW REPORTS: Freedom of Religion or Belief under threat in Southeast Asia

<http://ippforb.com/freedom-of-religion-or-belief-under-threat-in-southeast-asia/>

- Links to individual reports not provided, just get them off of the main page
- Brunei, gov't submissions:
 - The Constitution of 1959 guarantees FoRB. It stipulates that:
 - (1) The official religion of Brunei Darussalam shall be the Islamic Religion and provides that all other religions may be practised in peace and harmony by the persons professing them;
 - (2) The Head of the official religion of Brunei Darussalam shall be His Majesty the Sultan and Yang DiPertuan;
 - (3) The Religious Council shall be the authority responsible for advising His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan on all matters relating to the Islamic Religion; and
 - (4) His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan may, after consultation with the Religious Council, make laws in respect of matters relating to the Islamic Religion. His Majesty does not necessarily have to follow the advice of the Council.
 - The government called attention to various domestic laws introduced, enforced and/or amended to ensure the continued promotion and protection of human rights in the country. These included:
 - a) The Syariah Penal Code Order, 2013, gazetted on 22 October 2013 which was an Order that related to laws in respect of Syariah crimes and any matters connected therewith. The Order generally applied to both

Muslims and non-Muslims, and © Asia Centre, Bangkok - asiacentre.co.th
3 its applicability to: i) Muslims only; ii) non-Muslims only, and iii) both Muslims and non-Muslims, depends on the types of offences as stated in the Order.

- b) The Compulsory Religious Education Act (Cap 215), enforced on 1 January 2013, which provided for 7 years of compulsory religious education for all Muslim children. The Act required every parent whose child has attained a compulsory religious school age to ensure his child is enrolled as a pupil in a religious school in that year and remains as such for the duration of the compulsory religious education.
- The practice of their religions by Non-Muslims, is also enshrined in the Constitution. For example, there are no restrictions on wearing religious attire or personal items depicting religious symbols. In addition, major religious celebrations are also observed as public holidays such as Eid Fitri (Hari Raya Aidilfitri), Chinese New Year and Christmas.
- Brunei: stakeholder submissions:
 - **Key points:**
 - **The official recognition of Islam at the expense of other religions,**
 - **Discriminatory practices that disadvantaged the full enjoyment of Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) by minority groups,**
 - **The impact of the Syariah Penal Code of 2013 on FoRB, and**
 - **Reservations under international treaties that may affect FoRB, notably reservations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).**
 - **Key recommendations:**
 - **Ensure that the Syariah Penal Code of 2013 did not violate the right to FoRB,**
 - **Lifting of bans on importation of religious materials of other religions,**
 - **Elimination of restrictions on the construction of new religious facilities for non-Shafi'i Muslims, and**
 - **Withdrawal of reservations to the CRC that negatively impacted children's rights.**
 - The status of FoRB in Brunei was poor according to the Institute on Religion and Public Policy (IRPP) since the Government favoured Islam at the expense of other religions. It stated that despite Constitutional guarantees religious minorities faced discrimination. For example, some ministerial posts and other government positions were reserved exclusively for Shafi'i Muslims
 - Identity cards which included a person's ethnic identity were often used to determine the religion of a person and hence whether or not that person is subject to Syariah law. IRPP called on the Government to stop issuing such cards

- **Might want to see if you want specific ways of dealing with these things:** Non-Muslims faced a wide array of prohibitions and restrictions that negatively affected the status of religious freedom. IRPP noted the following:
 - a. All non-Shafi'i religious groups were required to register and provide the names of members, and an application can be refused for any reason,
 - b. Prohibition by the Government of proselytization by all non-Shafi'i Muslim groups,
 - c. Restrictions and censorship of the availability of religious material for non-Shafi'i Muslims. The importation of spiritual and teaching material, including the Bible, is banned,
 - d. Restrictions on the construction of new religious facilities for non-Shafi'i groups limited their ability to conduct their religious services. Permissions to construct new shrines, temples and churches had been denied, zoning laws had prohibited the use of private residences for religious ceremonies,
 - e. Prohibitions by the Ministry of Education on the teaching of other religious traditions as well as "comparative religious studies" and requiring teaching on Islam in accordance with a state designated curriculum,
 - f. Non-Muslims were required to wear a head covering as part of their uniform in government schools and institutions of higher learning and pressuring of NonMuslim teachers into wearing Muslim headscarves,
 - g. The banning of several religious groups considered deviant,
 - h. Harassment of Christians by state agencies and officials
 - i. Subjecting of church members to periodic surveillance,
 - j. Measures by the Government to prevent the distribution and sale of any item featuring images of undesirable or religious symbols as well as censorship of magazine articles depicting such symbols, and
 - k. While Muslims may legally convert to another religion, they must obtain permission from the Ministry of Religious Affairs to do so.
- Cambodia: main points:
 - *Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB), which is guaranteed under the Constitution, did not arise significantly across two cycles amidst concerns for other rights violations, diminution of basic civil rights and abuse of human rights defenders.*
- Cambodia: recommendations:
 - Cambodia should cooperate with the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council and to **allow the Special Rapporteur on FoRB to visit Cambodia.**
 - Respect the right of religious communities to exercise their right to assembly and to freedom of expression.
- Cambodia: gov't submissions:
 - The Kingdom of Cambodia is a constitutional monarchy.
 - Article 43 stipulates that Khmer citizens "shall have the full right of belief. Freedom of belief and religious practice shall be guaranteed by the State,

provided that such freedom and religious practice do not impinge on other beliefs or religions, on public order and security.” It provides that Buddhism is the State’s religion.

- Article 31 provides for recognition and respect for human rights as enshrined in the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human rights and all the treaties and conventions related to human rights, women’s rights and children’s rights. It also stipulates that Khmer citizens are equal before the law, enjoying the same rights, liberties and duties regardless of, inter alia, religion.
- Gov’t noted that other religions, namely Christianity, Islam, Caodaism, Animism and others were being practiced by people freely and according to their beliefs and traditions. This included individuals from ethnic minorities.
- Cambodia; stakeholder submissions
 - The European Centre for Law and Justice noted reports that a government directive on controlling external religions was aimed at reducing Christian evangelical influence in the largely Buddhist country amid allegations of believers using gifts to convert children
- Indonesia key points:
 - Serious challenges to freedom of religion and belief (FoRB) in Indonesia amidst efforts by the Government to bring Indonesian law and practices in line with international standards,
 - Indonesia has seen an upswing in religious intolerance and violence in the past few years, and
 - Indonesia continues to experience discrimination against minority religions, in particular against Ahmadis and Christians, despite constitutional guarantees and the Pancasila ideology that together stipulate the right to FoRB as one of the fundamental human rights.
- Indonesia recommendations:
 - **Review existing laws that restrict FoRB and make them compatible with freedom of religion and belief. Specific recommendations related to a review of blasphemy laws and elimination of blasphemy from the criminal code,**
 - **Take further measures through legislation and bills,**
 - **Accept a visit from the special rapporteur as a way of improving the human rights situation for religious groups,**
 - **Continue in efforts to protect religious rights, and**
 - **Investigate allegations of discrimination and prosecute violators.**
 - **Ensure that investigations of violations are launched by the authorities and national human rights institutions on allegations of violations of FoRB, especially in relation to minority groups such as Ahmadi and Christians**
 - Legal Provisions on FoRB
 - The Indonesian Constitution guarantees freedom of religion and belief in Articles 28E, 28I and 29. The Constitution stipulates that the state shall be based upon

the belief in "the one and only God". This condition also forms the first principle of the Pancasila, the Indonesian state philosophy introduced by President Soekarno in 1945. Article 28J imposes a limitation: each person has the obligation to respect the fundamental human rights of others while partaking in the life of the community, the nation, and the state.

- Related articles concern the right to freedom of thought and conscience under Article 4, to free speech under Article 25 and to hold, impart and disseminate one's beliefs orally or in writing "taking into consideration religious values, morals, law and order, the public interest and national unity" under article 23. Since 1993, national action plans on human rights have been adopted for successive 5-year periods. Indonesia noted that it takes its obligations under ICCPR seriously, notably Article 18 on freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
- Indonesia, stakeholder submissions:
 - National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIS), civil society and United Nations agencies have noted a range of challenges, including the rise in fundamentalism and extremism, the preferential treatment given to official religions, contradictions between various laws, the worsening situation of religious minorities, the situation of Ahmadiyah and Christian communities and discrimination against women.
 - ***NUMBERS: Civil society stakeholders noted increased fundamentalism, extremism and violence over the two cycles. For example, Human Rights Watch reported that attacks increased from 135 incidents in 2007, to 216 in 2010 and 184 for the first nine months of 2011. Other groups pointed to the number of incidents of violations of religious freedom, which rose to 91 in 2010 of which at least 75 were committed against Christians. This compared to just 12 incidents affecting Christians in 2009. Gender based violence against Ahmadiyah women included threats of rape and sexual violence resulting in prolonged depression and reproductive disorders. In this vein, it was noted that an Islamic Criminal Legal Code in Aceh legalized marital rape, according to the Special Rapporteur on FoRB in 2008***
 - Contradictions in laws related to FoRB were noted. Article 29 of the Constitution, which guarantees the freedom of every citizen to observe each of their own religions and practice in accordance to those religions and beliefs, is impacted by a 1965 law (1/PNPS/1965) concerning the prevention of religious abuse and/or defamation. This law prohibits "interpretation and activities that are in deviation of the basic teachings" of "a religion adhered to in Indonesia", which includes some faiths with followers in the country but not others. This article was adopted in the Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP) Article 156 A on Blasphemies that gives the State the authority to criminalize any religions or beliefs that are declared to be deviant.
 - The harsh nature of laws seeking to prevent "abuse or defamation of religions" were highlighted. In 2010, during a judicial review of the 1965 law a joint amicus curiae brief pointing out the harshness of the law submitted to the Indonesian Constitutional Court by ARTICLE 19, Amnesty International, the Cairo Institute

for Human Rights Studies and the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights to the Indonesian Constitutional Court on 11 March 2010, argued that it was contrary to international standards. Others expressed concern about the application of the 1965 Blasphemy Law, which restricted the right of certain groups to hold a religion or belief and was being used to fuel religiously-motivated violence. They noted the February 2011 incident when a large mob gathered outside the courthouse in Temnanggung, Central Java calling for the death of the Roman Catholic Antonius Richmond Bawenggan, after he was sentenced to five years in prison for blasphemy. Despite this being the maximum sentence under the law, radical Islamists decried this “leniency” and a mob of 1,000 people burned vehicles, two churches and a church-run school.

- discrimination against religious minorities was deeply entrenched in the state bureaucracy, fueled by discriminatory laws and regulations, including a blasphemy law that recognizes only six religions, and house of worship decrees that give local majority populations significant leverage over religious minority communities.
- serious discrimination against the Ahmadiyah due to their beliefs since their founding and the alleged “deviant” nature of their beliefs.
- Restrictions against the ability to have a place of worship were noted. Laws require that any religious community desirous of having a place of worship need to have at least 60 % approval from the people who are living in the local area in question.
- **Better compliance with international obligations was called for (New Zealand), training and awareness campaigns for provincial and municipal officials on rule of law and FoRB (USA), guarantees for minorities (France, Italy Japan), better treatment of the Ahmadiyah families following a fatwa banning them (UK), review of the Blasphemy Act and other discriminatory laws (Canada, Denmark), eliminating blasphemy from the criminal code (Spain) and acceptance of a visit by the Special Rapporteur on FoRB (UK, Netherlands, Norway).**
- **Laos key points**
 - **While Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) is guaranteed under the Constitution, serious limitations are imposed by the State,**
 - **Minority religions, notably Christians, face systematic discrimination and persecution; their right to FoRB is negatively impacted through bureaucratic restrictions, and**
 - **Laws intended to foster FoRB are in need of revision to clarify their meaning and to bring them in line with international standards.**
- **Laos recommendations**
 - Ensuring the right to practice religion freely without discrimination and in accordance with international human rights standards.

- **Amend the Decree on Religious Practice (Decree 92) to ease the registration of places of worship and allow new religious groups to obtain official recognition.**
- **Ensure the protection of religious and other minorities and effectively investigate all alleged abuses and violations. In this regard, train local officials on FoRB.**
- **Implement all recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur (SR) on Freedom of Religion.**
- **Ensure that relevant authorities at the local and district levels are aware of their duty to protect individuals' right to FoRB.**
- Laos; gov' submissions:
 - The Constitution provides in Article 43 "that Lao citizens have the right and freedom to believe or not to believe in religions." Article 9 stipulates that the State respects and protects all lawful activities of Buddhists and of followers of other religions, [and] mobilises and encourages Buddhist monks and novices as well as the priests of other religions to participate in activities that are beneficial to the country and people. All acts creating division between religions and classes of people are prohibited.
 - The 2002 Prime Minister's Decree No.92 on the Management and Protection of Religious Activities in the Lao PDR was adopted with the aim,
 - under Article 1, of "making religious activities conform to laws and regulations, and ensuring the exercise of the right of Lao people to believe or not believe."
 - Article 3 stipulates that "The State respects and protects legitimate activities of believers. All Lao citizens are equal before the law in believing or not believing religions as provided by the Constitution and laws of the Lao PDR.
 - Article 4 stipulates that "Lao citizens, aliens, stateless persons and foreigners in the Lao PDR have the right to carry out undertakings or organize religious ceremonies where their monasteries or churches are located."
 - Article 5 stipulates that "Believers of all religions in the Lao PDR shall observe and implement the Constitution and laws of the Lao PDR, and preserve and expand historic traditions, cultural heritage and Lao National Unity."
 - Laos ratified the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 2009. Article 18 guarantees FoRB.
- Laos stakeholder submissions:
 - *A major hurdle in gaining approval was the need to prove that a religious practice served the Lao PDR's national interests, such as education or development. Bureaucratic controls over liberty of movement in the context of religious activities also posed a problem for FoRB.*
 - **Hedgehog: problems of not respecting FoRB in detention facilities**

- **(Need for training personnel on their duty to promote and respect international human rights standards, including freedom of religion or belief)**
 - You gotta scare them
 - **FIND A MUNNER AND TALK TO THEM ABOUT AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FOR MINORITIES**
 - **Helpful: early childhood involvement/intervention for minorities, think kindergarten**
 - **Helpful: loans and incentives for minority business owners**
 - The impetus for harassing or persecuting a Christian community, as per CSW, typically originated from any one of a variety of authorities, either within a village, or at a higher level. This enhances the vulnerability of Christians to arbitrary mistreatment.
- **Malaysia key points**
 - Despite Constitutional guarantees of Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB), major concerns were raised over limitations on the scope of FoRB due to Islam being recognized as the official religion and its negative impact on religious freedom of non-Muslims,
 - Battles over conversions from Islam regulated by Sharia courts that tended to prohibit such conversion,
 - Discrimination against women on religious grounds,
 - The negative impact on FoRB of Indigenous peoples due to land appropriations and assimilation policies, and
 - A knock-on negative impact on freedom of expression.
- **Malaysia recommendations**
 - **A revision of the Constitution to better ensure FoRB and the removal of any faithbased governmental discrimination,**
 - **Ensure that all persons, including Muslims, can freely exercise their right to FoRB without interference by the State, including the right to change religion,**
 - **Ensure more open discussion on freedom of religion and the rights rights of Non-Muslims, and**
 - **Promote inter-religious dialogues and to reconcile different schools of Islamic thought.**
- **Malaysia gov't submissions**
 - In domestic law, fundamental liberties are enshrined in Part II of the Federal Constitution.¹ Freedom of Religion is guaranteed along with other freedoms in Articles 5 to 13 the Federal Constitution. Part I, Article 3 (1) stipulates that “Islam is the religion of the Federation; but other religions may be practised in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation.” The Head of the religion of Islam in each state is the Ruler of the state (Article 3(2)). The Yang di Pertuan Agong is the head of religion in the Federal territories, Sabah and Sarawak. Under article 11(1) “Every person has the right to profess and practice his religion and, subject

to Clause (4), to propagate it.” Under 11(3), “Every religious group has the right: (a) to manage its own religious affairs; (b) to establish and maintain institutions for religious or charitable purposes; and (c) to acquire and own property and hold and administer it in accordance with law. Under 11(4) State law and in respect of the Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur and Labuan, federal law may control or restrict the propagation of any religious doctrine or belief among persons professing the religion of Islam. Article 11(5), stipulates that “this Article does not authorize any act contrary to any general law relating to public order, public health or morality.”

- So the general trend is one official religion with freedom to practice others alongside of it, and provisions to subdue those other religions if necessary on grounds like “public health and safety”
- In terms of its international commitments, Malaysia is not party to the International Conventions on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).
- Gov’t emphasized that civil courts have jurisdiction over all persons in the Federation, whilst Syariah Courts have jurisdiction only over persons professing the religion of Islam.
- Malaysia, stakeholder submissions:
 - FoRB for Muslims of other schools was restricted as only the Sunni sect was permitted. Constitutional guarantees of FoRB, as per ERT, was excessively limited in scope and poorly enforced with the result that religious freedom of non-Muslims was not fully granted. The Bar council noted, for example, that Non-Muslims face difficulties from the authorities in the construction of places of worship, that the right of religious organisations to publish and comment on matters in the public sphere was also being threatened by the Government’s actions
 - The mandatory jurisdiction of Sharia courts over conversion applications from Islam to another religion allowed Sharia courts to effectively prohibit conversion from Islam. Conflicts have arisen in court cases due to the exclusion from the Civil Court of any matter before the Sharia court.
 - Malay-language Bibles, as per a 2005 proclamation, were required to have “Not for Muslims” printed on the cover and Malay language Bibles were only allowed in churches and Christian bookstores and were not allowed in ethnic Malay homes. The concern that the Bible published in Malay would be distributed in an effort to spread Christianity among Muslim-Malays was expressed by the Government.
 - There were also knock-on effects on freedom of expression, through curbs on cultural and artistic expression deemed to be ‘against the teachings of Islam’. For example, the State Government of Kelantan imposed a ban on Mak Yong performances despite UNESCO having certified these as a world cultural heritage. No action was taken by the Federal Government. Muslim entertainers

and singers have faced the heavy hand of the authorities and arrest due to 'immoral activities' in pubs, bars and other entertainment outlets

- In relation to Malaysia's commitment to women's rights under CEDAW, the Bar Council noted, inter alia, that:
 - a) "The wording of Article 8(2) seems to suggest that discrimination based on gender coupled with other grounds is permissible and that the provision provides "there shall be no discrimination against citizens on the ground only of religion, race, descent, place of birth or gender...",
 - b) Article 8(5) of the Federal Constitution also provides that the equality clauses of the Constitution do not invalidate or prohibit "any provision regulating personal law", effectively leaving Muslim personal law unaffected...
 - c) Article 12(4) also needs to be amended to recognise the rights of both parents to decide the religion of a minor.
- Myanmar, key points:
 - Discrimination by the state and serious violations of Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) of ethnic and religious minorities, notably the Rohingya community and also against Christians and Buddhist groups,
 - Discriminatory laws might discriminate against the right to convert to another religion,
 - Persecution of the Muslim community in Rakhine State, which is denied citizenship and fundamental rights, and
 - Inconsistencies between domestic legal instruments on FoRB as well as nonconformity with international standards
- Myanmar, recommendations:
 - **Bring all domestic legislation with international standards and remove restrictions on fundamental freedoms, including religious freedom**
 - **Protect the right of ethnic and religious minorities to enjoy fundamental rights, including FoRB and end discrimination against minorities,**
 - **Recognize the Rohingyas and grant them citizenship,**
 - **Investigate and prosecute violators of FoRB and other fundamental rights, and**
 - **Respect the right to convert to a religion of one's choice.**
- Myanmar, gov't submissions
 - The Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar of 2008 guarantees FoRB. Article 34 stipulates that "Every citizen is equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess and practise religion subject to public order, morality or health and to the other provisions of this Constitution." Article 348 stipulates that the Union shall not discriminate against any citizen of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, based on religion.
 - Buddhism enjoys a privileged position under Article 361, which stipulates that the Union recognizes special position of Buddhism as the faith professed by the great majority of the citizens of the Union. Under Article 362, the Union also

recognizes Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Animism as the religions existing in the Union on the day of the coming into operation of the Constitution. Article 363 stipulates that the Union may assist and protect the religions it recognizes to its utmost.

- Under Article 354, every citizen enjoys liberty in the exercise the religion they profess, and their customs. This is limited to the extent that such enjoyment must not be contrary to the laws, enacted for the Union’s security, prevalence of law and order, community peace and tranquility or public order and morality. The abuse of religion for political purposes is forbidden under Article 364. Moreover, any act which is intended or is likely to promote feelings of hatred, enmity or discord between racial or religious communities or sects is contrary to this Constitution. A law may be promulgated to punish such activity. In addition, Article 360 (a) stipulates that freedom of religion “shall not include any economic, financial, political or other secular activities that may be associated with religious practice.” Section (b) states that “The freedom of religious practice so guaranteed shall not debar the Union from enacting law for the purpose of public welfare and reform.”
- ‘It is noteworthy that Article 121 (h) of the Constitution prohibits from election a person, individually or as a member of an organization, who abets the act of inciting, giving speech, conversing or issuing declaration to vote or not to vote based on religion for political purpose, and under Article 121 a member of a religious order from being elected as the Pyithu Hluttaw representatives. Under Article 392, members of religious order “shall have no right to vote.”
- To enhance peace and harmony and dialogues among different faiths, Interfaith Friendship Group was formed with ten executive members representing various religions and the group was expanded down to village level. The group organized collective activities on religious ceremonies and prayers on various occasions including victims of Japan Tsunami, Indonesia earthquake and disasters and talks on anti-violence and religious harmony.
- Myanmar, stakeholder submissions
 - called attention to the ‘National Race and Religion Protection’ legislative package which was thought to legitimize and encourage religious discrimination. A package of four bills sought to restrict interfaith marriage and religious conversion and allow the government to regulate family planning and birth spacing in some areas. In addition, the package of laws would severely restrict the basic rights of non-Buddhists and women in Myanmar. Civil society activists opposing the proposed bills faced threats.
 - **Discrimination against children belonging to religious minorities was raised by the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC). It urged Myanmar to ensure that all children are registered at birth without discriminatory conditions, and recommended abolishing the statement on the national identity card of the religion and ethnic origin of citizens, including children**

- **Leading activists of the 88 Generation Students group and the All Burma Monks Alliance became the main targets**
 - **Interesting idea to look into these groups bc now we have BUDDHISTS being targeted in a country of extreme buddhists???????**
- Problems with domestic legislation were noted, in particular the incompatibility of the four laws on race and religion with international human rights treaties to which Myanmar is a party. (Denmark)
 - bring the 1982 citizenship act in accordance with international human rights obligations,
 - **So, what's interesting to me is that myanmar is breaking human rights treaties it is a part of (although not admitting it) - there should be more international legal ramifications to that → maybe look into if the treaties are binding and if so, perhaps a recommendation to the International Criminal Court is in order?**
- **DIALOGUE BETWEEN RELIGIOUS LEADERS**
- Philippines, key points:
 - Far less concern for freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) challenges than other major challenges including extrajudicial killings, President Duterte's war on drugs, allegations of torture and other rights violations under anti-terrorism legislation, disingenuously named "Human Security Act".
 - The Government guarantees FoRB in its constitution and this issue has featured very sparingly in its reports to the UPR.
 - Concerns for the FoRB of Indigenous peoples to practice their traditions and religious-based discrimination towards Muslim women and girls.
- Philippines, key recommendations:
 - The Government must take measures to ensure that economic activity does not affect indigenous peoples' rights, which includes their spiritual beliefs, and expressed concern
 - Secure revision of laws regulating mining activities in order to ensure respect for the FoRB of indigenous peoples
- Philippines, gov't submissions
 - So their legal provisions section is too long so I'm not going to copy-paste that and instead am going to read the thing I print out
 - The Philippines is a party to all the core international conventions on human rights, though it is not party to several optional protocols, notably to the Conventions Against Torture (OPCAT), Persons With Disabilities (OP/CPD) and for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance (OP/CED).
 - **They have women issues:**
 - Another issue concerned religious based discrimination against girls and women. The Human Rights Committee recommended in 2017, and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) previously in 2008, that the Code of Muslim Laws be revised to

repeal the provisions discriminating on the basis of religion regarding the minimum age of marriage for girls. The code allowed for marriage of girls below the age of 18. Asian Indigenous Tribal Peoples Network (AITPN) also raised the issue in 2008

- Furthermore, CEDAW had noted in 2006, concern for the situation of Muslim women in Mindanao.
- The Women's Legal Bureau noted continued government tendency to over privilege natural family planning, strengthening religious prejudices against those who opt to choose artificial contraceptive methods.
- **Is this the country without divorce??**

Singapore, key points:

- Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) is enshrined in the Constitution and supported in practice through institutions and civic initiatives,
- The Government pays particular attention to preserving racial and religious harmony,
- There are some concerns on restrictions on free speech under the guise of preventing racial and religious strife, and
- Migrant workers are in need of better protections to safeguard their freedom of religion or belief.
 - So the issue is migrant workers

Singapore, key recommendations:

- Restrictions on public discourse related to religion should be narrowed
 - **They're called sedition laws**
- Consider alternatives and less punitive measures for those violating religious sensitivities online or in publications,
- Enactment of legislation ensuring nondiscrimination in employment related to religion, and
- Singapore should share its best practices in maintaining FoRB and religious harmony.

Singapore, gov't submissions

- In addition, the Government is required to recognise the special position of Malays, the indigenous people of Singapore. It noted its responsibility to protect, support and promote the political, educational, religious, economic, social and cultural interests of Malays.
- It promoted its strong legal framework consisting of the Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act, the Penal Code, the Sedition Act, and the Public Order Act, which acted as deterrents to racial and religious conflict. A Presidential Council for Minority Rights considered and reported on matters affecting persons of any racial or religious community in Singapore as referred to it by Parliament or the Government. With limited exceptions, the Council scrutinised draft legislation to ensure they do not disadvantage any racial or religious community. The Council also scrutinised subsidiary legislation for the same purpose.
- It noted that administrative measures complemented legislation to create an environment conducive to encourage social harmony. For instance, to prevent the formation of racial

enclaves, the Ethnic Integration Policy ensured a balanced mix of the major ethnic communities in public housing estates

Singapore, stakeholder submissions:

- Concerns were raised in relation to the age of marriage of Muslim women, prosecution of cases of alleged offensive statements on religion where there were no incitement to violence, greater respect for all religious groups and the FoRB of migrant workers
- While welcoming the proposed legislation to raise the minimum age of marriage for Muslim women to 18 years, the Committee on the Convention Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) was concerned about the existence of the dual legal system of civil law and Sharia law with regard to personal status, which resulted in continued discrimination against Muslim women in the fields of marriage, divorce and inheritance.
- Concerned about laws on sedition - it is an offence to do, attempt to do or conspire with someone to do a seditious act; to utter seditious words; and to produce, distribute or import a seditious publication. It argued that this has been used to prosecute cases of offensive statements on religion, including where there was no incitement to violence, when there are more appropriate provisions in the Penal Code that specifically address such cases while carrying lesser sentences
- **It also recommended, in relation to migrant workers, that Singapore educate employers and support voluntary welfare organizations (VWOs) in their work to encourage employers to respect the rights of migrant workers to believe and practice their religions.**
- **26. Domestic workers who are not provided a day off are unable to attend religious worship. Solidarity for Migrant Workers and Think Centre noted several FoRB challenges for migrant workers: being forbidden by their employers from praying or fasting, employment agencies insisting that Muslim workers cook with pork products, that they stop praying and the confiscation of their religious items to make them more “employable”, some Muslim construction and shipyard workers not being allowed to pray in these premises dormitories and restrictions on the capacity of NGOs to support migrant workers, publicly advocate for their rights and promote their wellbeing**
- **Restrictions on public discourse on issues of religion and politically sensitive issues was noted by Slovenia. It called for the repealing or at least narrowing of restrictions on public discourse on the issue of ethnicity, language, race, religion and politically sensitive issues in order to ensure the full enjoyment of freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly and association (Slovenia)**
- **Enactment of comprehensive legislation prohibiting discrimination in employment on the basis of religion was called for. (Canada)**

Thailand, key points:

- Highlanders, inclusive of minority ethnic communities, continued to be denied citizenship and consequently FoRB.
- Muslims in South Thailand were a concern in spite of the Government’s claims that the conflict is not a religious one.

- Rohingya, Muslim refugees from Myanmar, faced discrimination as their rights under international law were being violated

Thailand, recommendations:

- Ensure that current constitutional arrangements provide for clear and unambiguous protections on FoRB that are in conformity with Thailand's international human rights obligations.
- Ensure that minority groups and indigenous peoples in the Highlands are granted citizenship in order to enjoy fully their cultural and spiritual practices.
- Ensure that Muslims in South Thailand are not subject to discrimination amidst the ongoing conflict

Thailand, gov't submissions:

- Thailand's new and 20th Constitution in less than a century received royal assent in April 2017. While ostensibly seeking to create a more stable electoral system it has also provided the basis for military intervention into national politics and for continued authoritarianism, provisions:
 - Section 7: **The King is a Buddhist and Upholder of religions**
 - Section 31: A person shall enjoy full liberty to profess a religion, and shall enjoy the liberty to observe or perform rites according to own religion, provided that it shall not be prejudicial to the duties of Thai people, be harmful to the security of the State, and be contrary to the **public order or good morals of people**.
 - Section 50: A person shall have the following duties: (1) to uphold the Nation, religions, the King, and the democratic regime of government with the King as Head of the State
- Thailand is **party to several international human rights treaties including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)**. Article 18 stipulates the fundamental right of freedom of religion or belief.

Thailand, stakeholder submissions:

- The prior concern of the Human Rights Committee in 2005 was raised in the UPR, in particular the plight of highlanders and the protection of their way of life. **A call was made for the granting to indigenous peoples of citizenship and for the respect for their land rights, which are linked to their spiritual practices.**
- The conflict in South Thailand elicited concern from the **National Human Rights Commission** which reported that the **violence in the Deep South was rooted in several factors including religion**. It called attention to the distinct ethnic and religious identity of the local population and to ongoing violence. During 2004–2010, there were 11,523 incidents of violence, 4,370 deaths and 7,136 injuries. **Human Rights Watch (HRW) also noted violence against civilians possibly for religious reasons** as it called for insurgent groups to cease all attacks against civilians whatever their religion or ethnicity, and civilian objects, including schools, places of worship, and public health centers
- The marginalization of women in southern Thailand was also raised. The Justice and Peace Foundation noted that they faced persecution and were discredited when they come out to defend their rights which are compromised by the conservative

interpretation of religious code. Malay Muslim women are seriously underrepresented in Thailand's democratic system.

- **If the question of rights of refugees comes up, you might want to use the Turkey example, where the country is doing everything it can but it is just incredibly overwhelmed by the number of incoming refugees, in which case the country accepting refugees needs international help in case of sheer vilinization**
- **Intensify efforts to promote policies in the area of prevention, sanction and eradication of all forms of violence against women, including measures aimed at promoting their rights regardless of its religion, race, sexual identity or social condition (Mexico)**

Timor-Leste, key points:

- Some concern was expressed regarding violence against minorities

Timor-Leste, key recommendations:

- **To issue standing invitations to all Special Procedures of the United Nations, and**
- **To ratify all remaining human rights conventions and to perfect its adherence to all international standards.**

Gov't submissions

- With regard to FoRB, Section 45 of Timor-Leste's Constitution, which was adopted in 2002, provides that:
 - 1) every person is guaranteed the freedom of conscience, religion and worship and the religious denominations are separated from the State,
 - 2) no one shall be persecuted or discriminated against on the basis of his or her religious convictions,
 - **3) the right to conscientious objection shall be guaranteed in accordance with the law, and**
 - **This is new. Define "conscientious objection", please?**
 - 4) freedom to teach any religion in the framework of the respective religious denomination is guaranteed
- The Preamble solemnly reaffirmed the new State's determination "to fight all forms of tyranny, oppression, social, cultural or religious domination and segregation, to defend national independence, to respect and guarantee human rights and the fundamental rights of the citizen." Two foundation principles, the rule of law and the respect for the dignity of the human person - are considered foundational principles of the State. A fundamental objective of the State is noted to be "To guarantee and promote fundamental rights and freedoms of the citizens and the respect for the principles of the democratic State based on the rule of law".
- In 2003, Timor-Leste ratified seven conventions on human rights, incorporating these instruments into the national legal order including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the optional protocols of the ICCPR and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). It has since taken steps to ratify and comply with additional treaties.
 - the ICCPR, the International Covenant on Economic,
 - Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR),

- the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),
- the CRC, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT),
- the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)
- and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (ICRMW).
 - The country had also ratified several optional protocols, including the optional protocols of the
 - ICCPR,
 - the CEDAW and
 - the CRC.
- **The value and dignity of the human being were guiding principles of the Constitution.**
- In relation to minority religious groups, the State reported no “vertical or horizontal conflict against minority groups in Timor-Leste.”

Timor-Leste, stakeholder submissions:

- In 2011, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) for Timor-Leste stated that, since 2008, there were several incidents of violence, reported by members of the majority Catholic community, against members of some Evangelical church groups and their places of worship
- The country team noted in the second cycle, reports of forcible return of a group of 95 potential asylum seekers from the Rohingya minority in Myanmar and from Bangladesh to Indonesia
 - **Contradicts Turkey defense, however - is this religion-based, or resource-based?**
- **With regard to women’s rights, a Joint Submission by Timor Leste Civil Society Coalition on the UPR pointed out the need for a comprehensive definition of discrimination against women.** The presence of such definition from the domestic legal framework and the Civil Code was required to address some discriminatory provisions, for instance, no recognition of religious marriages other than Catholic and de facto relationships.
- **Some recommended that the Government issue standing invitations to all Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council (Uganda, Montenegro, South Korea)**

Vietnam!!! Finally!! Key points:

- While Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) is guaranteed in the Constitution, domestic laws and practices do not conform with international standards,
- Systematic discrimination and persecution was reported against all religious groups, especially ethnic and religious minorities, and
- Bureaucratic and administrative obstacles hinder the full enjoyment of FoRB, especially by non-recognized religious groups

Vietnam, key recommendations:

- Review laws to ensure full compliance with requirements of Article 18 of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR),
- Take better care of religious minorities and to ensure effective protection of their FoRB,
- Eliminate bureaucratic and administrative obstacles, which hinder the activities carried out by religious communities and groups, including non-registered groups , and
- Re-engage with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on FoRB

Vietnam, gov't submissions:

- The revised Constitution of Vietnam, adopted in 2014, includes Chapter 2 on “Human Rights, Fundamental Rights and Obligations of Citizens”. It stipulates in Article 24 (1) that “Everyone has the right to freedom of belief and religion, and has the right to follow any religion or to follow no religion. All religions are equal before law.” Article 24(2) goes on to note that the State shall respect and protect the freedom of belief and religion and no one may violate the freedom of belief and religion, nor may anyone take advantage of a belief or religion in order to violate the law. The National Assembly is entrusted, under Article 70, with deciding on state policies on ethnicities and religion.
- The previous Constitution of 1992, in force at the time of the first cycle of Vietnam’s review under the UPR process, had also fully recognized all human rights under Articles 2 and 50. Equality and non-discrimination (Article 52 of the 1992 Constitution) were guiding principles for all legal documents and an important premise for the guarantee and promotion of people’s rights in specific areas.

Vietnam, stakeholder submissions:

- Stakeholders noted State imposed barriers to FoRB, constitutional clauses that undermined FoRB, problems with the registration and recognition of some denominations and congregations, discriminatory laws on ethnic and religious grounds, persecution of religious groups and interference in the affairs of religious organizations.
- Joint Submission (JS) 5 in cycle two noted numerous State-imposed barriers remained on the free practice of religion, including restriction on registration, intervention in religious organizations’ internal affairs, State approval of appointments for church leadership, and restrictions on proselytizing.
- the Institute on Religion and Public Policy (IRPP) called attention to clauses that serve to undermine freedom of religion. It cited Article 30 of the Constitution states: “the State undertakes the overall administration of cultural activities. The propagation of all reactionary and depraved thought and culture is forbidden; superstitions and harmful customs are to be eliminated.” IRPP argued that this provided an administrative loophole allowing the authorities to brand certain forms of religious expression as “depraved culture,” “superstitions,” or “harmful customs.”, thus enabling discrimination against religious beliefs or groups without any specific, objective criteria. International PEN expressed similar concerns.
- Complex and ill-defined process for the registration and recognition of denominations and congregations. Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) noted two policy documents: “Ordinance Regarding Religious Beliefs and Religious Organizations” that came into effect on 15 November 2004 and “Decree on Religion” promulgated on 1 March 2005 as a set of guidelines for the implementation of the Ordinance, included the complex and

ill-defined process for the registration and recognition of denominations and congregations

- A lot of groups are pointing at legal provisions for religious discrimination in Vietnam law, for more specificity, look at the article
- **Vietnam's Interfaith Confederation recommended that Vietnam respect the right of religious organizations to decide on internal matters, including the right to select trainee and train priests and monks, appoint office holders, the right to private property, the right to preach, to provide education, to carry out charity work, the right to liaise with fellow religious institutions overseas. United Caodai Tayninh Holy See Overseas recommended that Vietnam ensure that Codaist followers are free to produce religious books.**
- JS4 stated that since the last UPR, the authorities had intensified repression against United Buddhist Church of Viet Nam (UBCV) members, subjecting UBCV leaders to beatings, house arrest and surveillance, harassing Buddhists who frequent "reactionary" UBCV Pagodas and smashing Buddha statues.
- According to Bloc 8406, religious activities deemed to threaten the authority of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) are banned or carefully monitored and controlled.
- The European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ) noted that the majority religion continues to benefit from a preferential treatment while signs of hostilities remain concerning minority religions and non-authorized religions, notably Christians. The Christians are closely monitored and be subjected to discrimination, even to violence when they belong to a particular ethnic group.
- Violations against Montagnards, an ethnic minority in the Central Highlands was highlighted. These included restrictions on movement and forcing Christians belonging to unauthorized "house churches" to renounce their religion. An unknown number of Montagnards from among the more than 250 who were sentenced to lengthy prison terms in connection with the large-scale protests in 2001 and 2004 around land ownership and religious freedom, are believed to remain in prison
- Montagnard Christians were often forced to renounce their faith, and they were beaten. Many suffered solitary confinement and torture. Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO) recommended that Vietnam allow full, impartial and transparent investigations into reports of violence against indigenous and minority communities, and ensure that perpetrators of such violence are brought to justice
- Intolerance of the propagation of Christian faith and new Christians continued according to CSW. They faced restrictions such as forced evictions, restrictions on freedom of movement and restrictions on access to theological training are occasionally reported.
- **UBVC was banned in 1981 following the creation of the State-sponsored Vietnam Buddhist Church and its leaders and members were subjected to detention, intimidation and constant harassment. Despite repeated appeals from the international community, Vietnam has not re-established its legal status.**
 - **Who is UBVC?**
- Arrest and arbitrary detention of citizens – religious dissidents - who are sent to mental hospitals or rehabilitation camps without due process of law. FIDH and VCHR noted

Ordinance 44 on “Regulating Administrative Violations”, was particularly used against political and religious dissidents, and legalizes the arbitrary practice of detention without trial. CIVICUS noted that dozens of human rights defenders, including civil society activists, land rights activists and religious advocates remained in prison and subjected to extrajudicial forms of detention for their political or religious views.

- **Indefinite detention of political and religious prisoners *after their release*.**
- **Its really bad, unsurprisingly, for political and religious prisoners here - they can be taken without trial, tortured, sentenced, and either disappear, or if they end their sentence, be punished a second time, anyway**
- Non-cooperation with special procedures. Vietnam has not allowed visits since 1998, when the Special Rapporteur on FoRB raised concerns on abuses of the same. It announced then that it would **never again “accept any individuals or organizations coming to investigate religious freedom or human rights”**.

ASIA/PAKISTAN - Discrimination against religious minorities is "institutionalized"

http://www.fides.org/en/news/63021-ASIA_PAKISTAN_Discrimination_against_religious_minorities_is_institutionalized

- All this article really gives me is that in Pakistan worse jobs are specifically reserved for non-Muslims, so they end up as the laborers, something which I’m sure happens in our south asian countries

South Asia: Protecting and promoting freedom of religion or belief

<http://minorityrights.org/what-we-do/south-asia-protecting-and-promoting-freedom-of-religion-or-belief/>

- This was a nice organization, thought I could **work with this organization - or steal their programs and ideas**
- What they do:
 - **Capacity-building for religious freedom activists (including an intensive training course on international standards, national human rights law, advocacy, and security; mentoring scheme; and follow up survey).**
 - **Establishment of three national networks and one regional network/dialogue space to build multi- or cross-religious support for human rights defenders working to secure religious freedom.**
 - **Establishment and deployment of documentation system to ensure credible reporting of violations (including published country briefings and regional report).**
 - **Media and awareness-raising work to promote religious tolerance (including three briefing sessions for journalists and three supported visits by journalists to cover religious freedoms stories, by target country).**
 - **Local, national and international advocacy (including small grants, national roundtables for activists, officials and other decision-makers; programme of individual meetings per country with decision-makers; international advocacy missions to UN in Geneva/NY, and SAARC member capitals).**

The Roots of Religious Conflict in Myanmar

<https://thediplomat.com/2015/08/the-roots-of-religious-conflict-in-myanmar/>

- In May, three Nobel laureates called violence and persecution of Muslims in Myanmar “[nothing less than genocide](#).” A few days later, U Zaw Aye Maung, the Rakhine Affairs Minister for Yangon Region, was quoted by the Reuters news agency as saying, “[if genocide was taking place in Rakhine State, then it was against ethnic Rakhine Buddhists](#).”
- Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, meanwhile, told the BBC in October 2013, “[Fear is not just on the side of the Muslims, but on the side of the Buddhists as well. There’s a perception that Muslim power, global Muslim power, is very great](#).”
- Understanding these narratives is important because it helps to explain the ferocity of domestic backlash against international responses to recent violence: rejecting calls to recognize Rohingya citizenship is seen by many in Myanmar as integral to national security. Rakhine State is often referred to as the country’s “western gate,” the front line in a battle to protect Myanmar from an invasion described as both external, via immigration from Bangladesh that is dated to the British colonial period, and internal, via expansion in domestic Muslim populations believed to be driven by large families, inter-faith marriage, and forced conversions.
- **Anyone interested in reducing conflict or promoting peace and reconciliation in Myanmar would do well to start by listening carefully to the ways people discuss violence in everyday life. Firstly, this reinforces the importance of backing local civil society efforts to counter narratives of threat and self-defense. This would not only include those who identify (or are identified) as peacemakers, but also those whose stated focus is elsewhere but who have the credibility, connections, and bravery to work for peace at the most difficult moments. These local actors exist, but they are not always the ones first identified by outsiders who would intervene. Local groups and individuals often have a greater understanding and sensitivity to the ways in which narratives of threat are mobilized, and how they may be countered – as well as who is (or is not) countering them.**
- Myanmar is preparing for hotly contested national elections. We have identified the analogy between discourses in Myanmar and the US after 2001. In the US, similar sentiments and security rhetoric became an integral part of the 2004 elections, supporting political agendas while also demonizing Muslim communities in the US and worldwide; we should expect similar dynamics in Myanmar, while hoping for less violent outcomes.

Equal Opportunity Oppression: Religious Persecution Is a Global Problem

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2015-08-31/equal-opportunity-oppression>

- Of the 30 specific types of limitations tracked by the Religion and State Project, 28 are now more common than in 1990. Proselytizing, for example, is now restricted by 99 countries around the world, compared with 79 in 1990. Meanwhile, 82 countries, including Austria, Belarus, China, and Russia, require people from minority religions to register with the state, compared with 60 in 1990. Further, 73 countries limit places of worship from being erected, and 65 restrict public observance of religion. In 1990, those numbers were 53 and 36, respectively.
- Western democracies, despite professing freedom, are not immune to religious persecution, either. Denmark's 2004 "Imam Law," for example, limits the number of religious residence visas—the kind of visa that clergy and religious workers need—that it issues based on the size of the community that person will serve. It also requires the visa applicant to be associated with a recognized religion, to demonstrate a proven relevant background

PROSELYTIZING AND THE LIMITS OF RELIGIOUS PLURALISM IN CONTEMPORARY ASIA

https://books.google.com.vn/books?id=TJLFBAAQBAJ&pg=PA45&lpg=PA45&dq=ROOTS+OF+RELIGIOUS+DISCRIMINATION+ASIA&source=bl&ots=w-fIJKZTII&sig=AUBGLIL2JDCIS3BO7GEIG6WAXI&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=ROOTS%20OF%20RELIGIOUS%20DISCRIMINATION%20ASIA&f=false

- PRINT OUT PGS 42-46
- ARE WE TALKING ABOUT REQUIRING A SINGLE LEGAL CODE FOR ALL RELIGIONS, AS PART OF THIS RESOLUTION?

Religion and Politics in SE Asia

<https://thediplomat.com/2012/07/religion-and-politics-in-southeast-asia/>

- Published - July 28, 2012
- These separate incidents highlight the special role of organized religion in several Southeast Asian societies. They reflect the political power of churches and the popularity of church leaders among the masses.
- In the case of the Philippines, critics are blaming the obstinate opposition of the church for the repeated failure of Congress to pass legislative measures on reproductive health and divorce. The Catholic-dominated Philippines is the only country in the world without a divorce law.
- Meanwhile, the scandal involving Singapore's largest congregation sparked debate about the practice of tithing. It also led many people to question the moral fitness of church leaders who were reported to be living in luxury.

Racial and religious conflicts in Asia

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2013/05/23/racial-and-religious-conflicts-asia.html>

- In Indonesia, one of the most notorious religious conflicts occurred in Ambon at a time when the reform movement spread across the country, changing the authoritarian regime into a democratic society. In a similar mode, the Muslim-Buddhist conflict in Myanmar peaked when the country was changing its political landscape by allowing the opposition to participate in the national election.
- The religious violence is not new in Asia Pacific. In Bangladesh, for example, conflict between Hindu followers, who account for 16 percent of the population, and Muslims, who make up nearly 83 percent of the population, is commonplace. In neighboring India, Hindu extremists have accused minority Muslims of running for a majority. The hardliners suspect that Muslims who live in India support Pakistan.
- In Indonesia, radical Muslims also believe that Christians are stepping up a 'Christianization' movement toward turning Indonesia into a predominantly Christian country. In fact, followers of all religions other than Islam only account for 20 percent of the country's population.
- The May 1998 tragedy is evidence of racial violence against Chinese ethnics, which Indonesia is still prone to. Chinese Indonesians have been stigmatized as lacking nationalism and commitment to national interests.
- **Racial Conflict: the demographic control of specific ethnic groups, religions or social classes, with an objective to keep those groups' minority status intact.**
- Social and economic changes in racial and religious conflicts:
 - In Asia Pacific, social and economic changes may play a major role behind the racial and religious conflicts. For example, a radical Hindu group developed in India along with the financial reform that changed India into a liberal economy, led by then Finance Minister Manmohan Singh (currently the Indian prime minister) in 1991.
 - In Indonesia, one of the most notorious religious conflicts occurred in Ambon at a time when the reform movement spread across the country, changing the authoritarian regime into a democratic society. In a similar mode, the Muslim-Buddhist conflict in Myanmar peaked when the country was changing its political landscape by allowing the opposition to participate in the national election.
- Colonists helped these nations identify their people through categories based on social strata, religion, and race → then, they took it for granted as their identity
- In India, the British colonial rulers were excited with a census in 1871 to define India by religious categories, to define religions by their potential to support colonial capitalism or revolt against colonialism. In Indonesia, the Dutch in 1866 introduced Wijkenstelsel, which segregated housing for minority Chinese and Arabs, to separate them from pribumi or indigenous people solely to maintain social order.
- In 1799 a report by Francis Buchanan-Hamilton helped to establish Rohingya as non-Burmese based on language, later on by physical appearance that defines Arakan Muslims and Rohingya as Bengalis.
- In post-independence, many countries maintained colonial administrative terms to govern an independent state. In its early independence, Indonesia preserved almost 75

percent of colonial laws, while Myanmar is using a social-geographical map created by the British, including racial terms.

- Sometimes, the interests were very discriminative as in the case of the Wijkenstelsel policy, which unfortunately is maintained in segregated housing for the Shia minority in Sampang on Madura Island and in the case of Wirathu and Buddhist monks, who engineered an anti-Muslim movement to justify Buddhist control of Myanmar.

Religious and ethnic identity: is there a link?

<https://crcc.usc.edu/report/the-latino-church-next/religious-and-ethnic-identity-is-there-a-link/>

- **How does migration influence religious identity?**
- Given that Los Angeles has experimented with several potential ways of bringing together peoples from many backgrounds, it is not surprising that Latinos reflect the gamut of possibilities. Some Latinas have structurally assimilated into an Anglo conformity model. Others celebrate the contribution they bring to the melting pot. And still others reflect on various versions of cultural pluralism and how Latinos are creating something that is American and Latino. Should they develop and maintain their own institutions or should they be part of existing structures? This question is closely linked to the religious question, particularly for Protestants. Should Latino Protestants join existing churches in the United States or form their own? How do one's views of what "should" happen in the United States parallel or differ from one's views about what churches should look like? From the time of the U.S. takeover of the southwest both Catholics and Protestants had Americanization as one of their goals for ministry among the new Spanish-speaking citizens.
- Bc of learning English and "passing" - The cost of success for most young Latinos was leaving behind a strong ethnic identity. Young Latinos often found that once they went to school and developed a profession they often no longer fit in their former churches. The class difference also meant that they often felt somewhat more comfortable in English-language congregations, though they were not always easily welcomed.

Religious-Freedom Violations in South Asia

<https://jia.sipa.columbia.edu/online-articles/religious-freedom-violations-south-asia>

- Research strongly suggests that the protection of religious freedom is correlated with less conflict and is central to the lessening of violent religious extremism, the maintenance of security, the consolidation of democracy, and the advancement of socioeconomic progress.
- **Since 2002, USCIRF has recommended that Pakistan be designated a "country of particular concern," or CPC, concluding that it ranks among the world's most serious religious-freedom violators.**
 - **Check this out, including perks of this, see if any of our friends are CPC and if any of them need it**
 - **In response to the dismal religious-freedom conditions prevailing in Pakistan, designating the nation as a CPC would enable the United States to press Islamabad more effectively to undertake needed reforms. A CPC designation would raise the profile of the issue and increase the United States' ability to encourage changes that are in both America's interest and that of Pakistan.**

- **One of our guys has blasphemy laws:** Pakistan’s blasphemy law provides a stark example of the problem. The mere allegation of blasphemy has resulted in the lengthy detention of, and violence against, Christians, Ahmadis, Hindus, other religious minorities, as well as Muslims.^[5] The law requires neither proof of intent nor evidence to be presented after allegations are made, and includes no penalties for false allegations. Charges are used to intimidate religious minorities or others with whom the accusers disagree or have financial or other disputes. Despite the law’s national application, two-thirds of all blasphemy cases reportedly are filed in Punjab province.
- **Based on the report’s findings, USCIRF recommends that the United States urge Pakistan to set national textbook and curricula standards to promote tolerance toward all individuals; take concrete steps to implement earlier 2006 curricular reforms; introduce the “Ethics for Non-Muslims” course into the curriculum to promote interfaith understanding; sign into law and implement the reform agreement made with the National Madrassa Oversight Board and, until that can be achieved, ensure that a temporary madrassa oversight board is empowered to develop, implement, and train teachers in human rights standards; provide oversight of madrassa curricula and teaching standards; implement guidelines for textbooks used in public schools; and replace current public-school textbooks with ones that exclude messages of intolerance, hatred, or violence against any group based on religious or other differences.**
- *In March of this year, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) issued its 2012 Annual Report to Congress and the executive branch, revealing the disturbing state of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief abroad.*
 - *Might be fun to use*
- **In response to religious-freedom conditions in India, the U.S. government should integrate concern for religious freedom into all bilateral contacts with India; urge the Indian government to strengthen the ability of state and central police to provide effective measures to prohibit and punish cases of religious violence to the fullest extent while protecting victims and witnesses; and urge India to encourage states that have adopted “Freedom of Religion Act(s)” which actually restrict religious freedom to repeal them and conform to international religious freedom standards.**
 - **We could do a thing where we ask countries to do this in their bilateral talks with Asian countries**

Popular Perceptions of the Relationship between Religious and Ethnic Identities: A Comparative Study of Ethnodoxy in Contemporary Russia and Beyond

<http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1079&context=dissertations>

Dissertation: pages 1 - 31, or in PDF, pages 20 - 50

- Analyses of relationship between ethnicity and religion indicate a belief that an individual must affiliate with their ethnic group’s dominant religion is widespread and deeply embedded among most ethnic Russians
- Belief in specific ethno-religious ideology is associated with social, religious, and political orientations that emphasize intolerance, xenophobia, and protectionism

- Moreover, ties between ethnicity and religion have been important factors in establishing group identities, affecting the way members of such groups perceive themselves and others. For example, post-colonial boundary-making in the Middle East and Africa were often based on these characteristics (e.g., Hindi India and Muslim Pakistan)
- In fact, failure to consider the effects of ethno-religious relationships when constructing borders has resulted in significant conflict (e.g., Kurds in Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey)

Religion and Identity

Steward Harrison Oppong Polish Academy of Sciences Graduate School for Social Research
 Ul. NowySwiat 72, 00-330 Warsaw, Poland

file:///C:/Users/berti/Documents/Model%20UN/SEA%20Religion/ethnicity%20and%20identity.pdf

- It is plausible that religion and identity may be positively correlated, especially when viewed and analysed within the prism of designated group of individuals such as adolescents, younger cohorts, older cohort's etc. The link between religion and identity can be contextualized through the exploration of the self. For instance, the search for identity has been recognized as key to the developmental task of adolescence.
- However, it seems that there is no generally accepted definition of religion taken into account the nature of the discipline, diversity of religions, diversity of religious experiences, and diversity of religious origins, among others
- Definitions of religion:
 - Scientific approaches to religion have often shifted between delineating religion with reference to its social or psychological functions and its belief contents (see, Berger, 1974).
 - Etymological speaking, religion is derived from the Latin word 'religare' which means to "to bind back" or "to rebind". This implies that etymologically speaking religion entails a process of reconnecting by worship a missing or broken intimacy between God and worshippers.
 - Alternative less known and used etymological origin of religion is the Latin word 'relegere' denoting "to re-read"
 - Paul Tillich's definition of religion as "that which we designate as our symbol of ultimate concern"
 - This suggests that religion relates to symbols with ultimate spiritual relevance and influence in worshippers way of life
 - Pecorino (2000) notes that a robust definition of religion needs to meet a number of requirements such as:
 - involvement of the totality of life;
 - is open to all kinds of people;
 - deals with issues naturally in widely different activities;
 - deals with issues in widely different notions and beliefs;
 - exists and is practiced in both private and social milieus;
 - is open to various opinions as to the veracity or otherwise its beliefs;

- and has repercussions perceived to be either harmful or beneficial to persons and groups
- In view of the above requirements, he defines religion as “the most intensive and comprehensive method of valuing that is experienced by humankind”
- Religion is the feeling of man’s absolute dependence. This absolute dependence was encouraged by man’s sense of inadequate protection, provision, sustenance and supremacy as such he has to depend on the divine for all those things he cannot provide for himself
 - [This] definition of religion invokes a sense of man’s dependence on a Supreme Being believed to be all powerful and all knowing. This arises from man’s recognition of his limitations such as inability to explain some of the mysteries of the world, such as, the origin of man, the origin of death, life after death, among others. Man therefore yearns for a Being that he believed has all the answers and solutions to his problems, afflictions and unanswered questions.
- He defines religion as a universal system of beliefs and practices related to sacred things. Durkheim’s definition appeals to the place of holy symbols or objects in human society
- Anih (1992) citing Taylor (1972) sees religion as a coherent embrace of convictions, ceremonies and customs associated with a deeper and greater reality Supreme Being compared with material reality.
 - the recognition of our duties in accordance with divine commands.
-