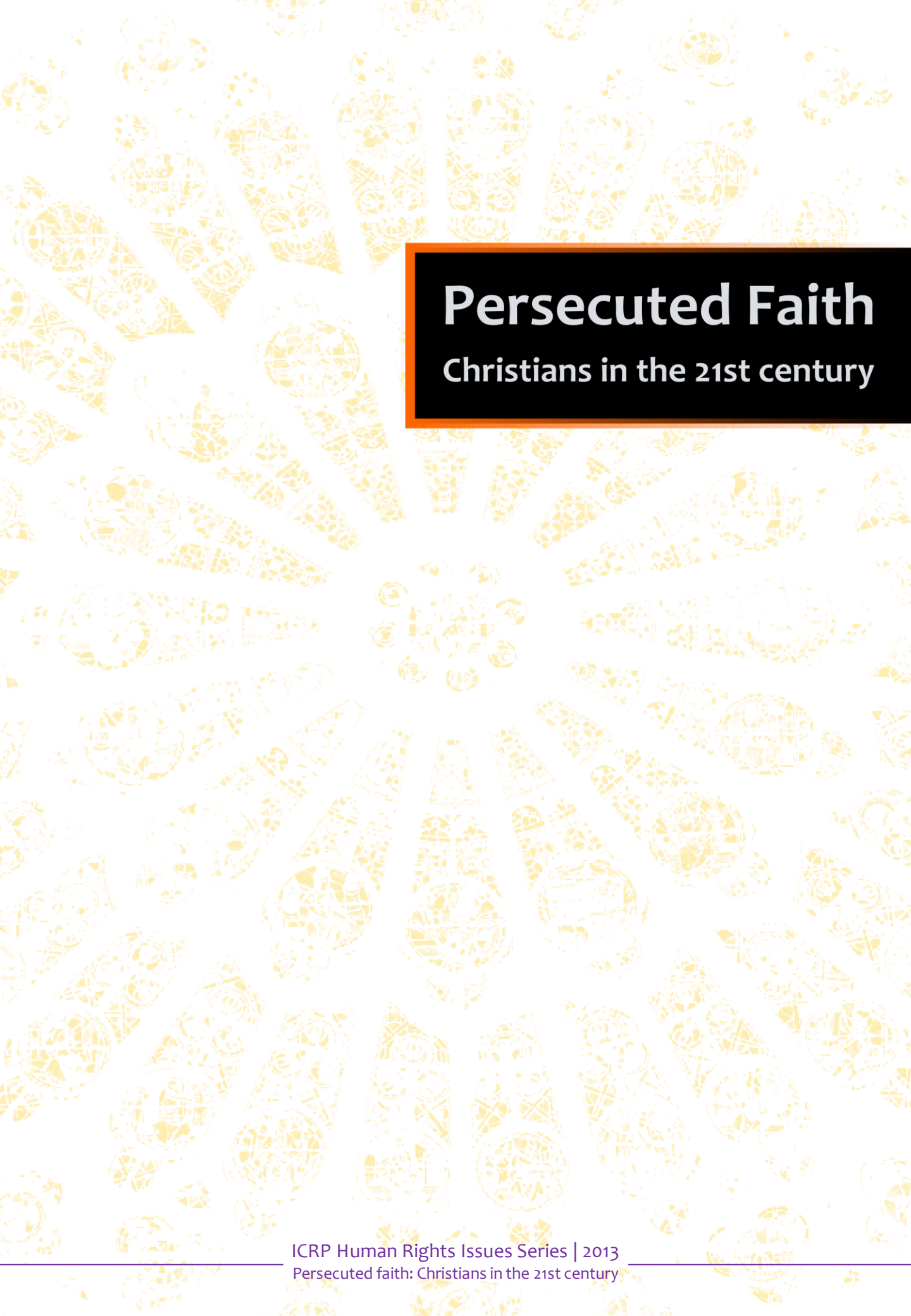




Persecuted Faith

Christians in the 21st century

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Persecuted Faith

Christians in the 21st century

Persecuted Faith: Christians in the 21st century

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Published by | Institute for Cultural Relations Policy
Executive publisher | Csilla Morauszki

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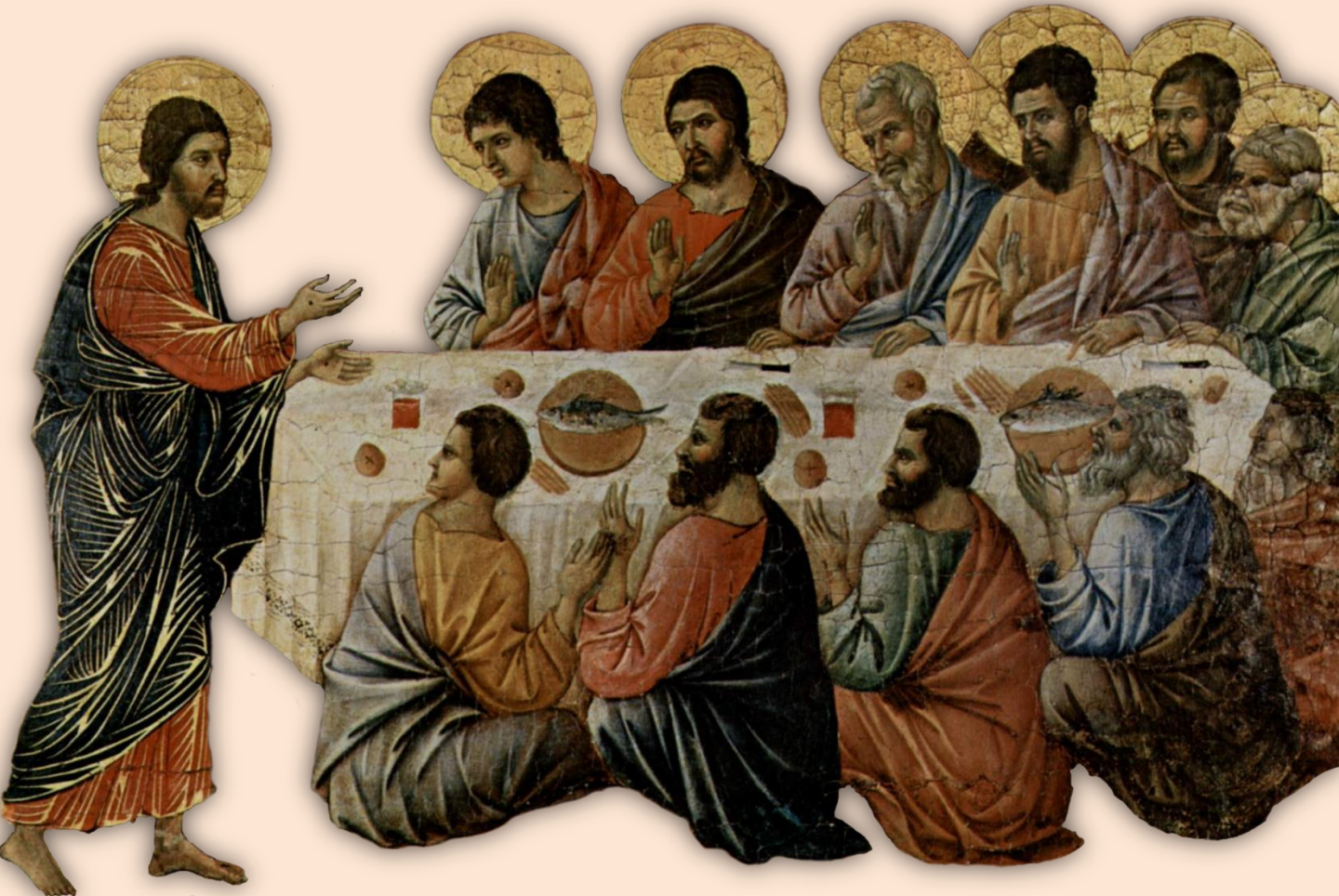
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Foreword

Before we get down to business, it is crucially important to note that the Institute for Cultural Relations Policy is a religiously and politically independent organization. This essay was created to promote a better understanding of the conflicts via facing recent challenges and not to deepen opposition between concerned parties.

The following pages contain articles relevant to the topic including ones products of a global approach and some particular case studies dealing with countries where religious freedom is not without serious challenges. Important, instructive and interesting cases are selected for concise presentations focusing more on the understanding of the social and political background than concentrating on the struggle and misery of Christian believers.



Introduction

The following articles present the struggle of Christianity in a few countries, but first of all a phrase and the broader context need to be sketched in a nutshell. However there is no official definition for religious persecution, it means systematic and deliberate mistreatment of individuals, groups or their interests triggered by the religious belief of the targeted ones – in the case of those who have no religion, this also can evoke harassment. Persecution has a great variety of tools and a long list of perpetrators we find in a global perspective. Determining what is religion and who can be considered as follower of this are heavily disputed questions but estimated numbers show Christianity is the most populous belief with more than 2 billion people, one third of the global population. In each year this huge community absorbs 25 million fresh members from nearly every corner of the world. In the year 2012 some 200 million Christians faced with some kind of suppression in about 100 countries and according to statistics it is the most persecuted religion today.

It is sad to see that the religions are competing with each other in a more and more globalized world. In a multi-cultural and multi-religious environment clashes between such groups occur countless times – disappointingly easily. Even in the most democratic Western states where the idea of world widely respected human rights encountering the freedom of worship rooted, symbiosis of religions is not without problems. The great majority of people backs restrictions of building Muslim places of worship in this region in order to protect the conventional local culture's dominance. Meanwhile these sanctions created an antagonism where essential rights of

individuals come into conflict with the will and reaction of a community showing the cruel experience that the dissemination of human rights is just part of a probable solution, but it cannot be regarded as the proper response in itself.

The growing number of religious people, the recurrent political and economic crises causing radicalization of certain groups, the interconnected Globe which mobilizes and relocates individuals and communities so easily are warning facts that urge civil and spiritual leaders to realize tolerant societies along with non-oppressive state power. In a modern era when everyone is connected using phone and the internet, our responsibility to achieve this goal is bigger than it was ever before. A statement, an action carried out in a corner of the world cause reactions at the far side of the planet. Unfortunately, mostly negative issues proved this high-level interpenetration, just think about the ominous Muhammad cartoons crisis and the film Innocence of Muslims both followed by scandals and riots in Islam countries, or there was the 2012 March proclamation of Abdul-Aziz ibn Abdullaah Aal ash-Shaikh, Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, when he declared: "All churches in the Arabian Peninsula must be destroyed" induced harsh international critics by both Muslims and Christians.

From a religious aspect the vision of future is pretty dark. In spite of the analyses of conflicts, the work of many organizations and the intensifying interfaith cooperation, neither the commonness, nor the brutality of religious persecution seem to decrease. As religions will not go away, the matters follow from the simultaneous presence of different beliefs will remain a great challenge.

A historical overview of Christians' struggle

Dominant majority of the human beings have a special inner need to be linked to the transcendence sphere offering explanations of inexplicable events and providing hope in the most devastating times. Religions are rooted in ages far before the ancient civilizations were founded and faith and society altered affecting greatly on each other.

Christianity arose in an era when Roman Empire took the Mediterranean region under control and the new religion started its long carrier as a sect among a couple of Jewish people. But soon after the new faith was began preached to Jews and pagans around Jerusalem, the Jewish clergy put Christians – considered as apostate Jews upsetting social order – under pressure using state power. Mobs driven by rival sects often targeted believers of the new faith and despite the recurring atrocities, the religion spread across the empire. In 64 AD, the great fire of Rome embedded the first imperially organized persecution blaming Christians were responsible for the disaster. Between the 1-3rd centuries thousands of early Christians refuged to uninhabited areas (deserts, highlands, etc.) to practice their religion without the disturbance of the Empire or followers of other faiths, and set the custom of hermitage lifestyle. On the turn of the 3rd and 4th centuries, the anti-Christian policy peaked and claimed the lives of approximately 20,000 believers.



The Massacre of the Paulicians at the orders of the Byzantine empress Theodora, in 843/844

The violence was stopped by Constantine I, who declared a short-lived tolerance of religions and amnesty for jailed or exiled Christians in the Edict of Milan in 313.



Pagans kill Christians in Pliska

In the early Middle Ages persecution of Christians took place two separate locations. Bloodsheds carried out by Jews killed thousands of people in Jerusalem and its surrounding territories. These two religions are very close to each other in many ways, but that is exactly why they have had a very cruel relationship. Jews tried to restore the exclusiveness of their faith in the Holy Land, while Jews were often depicted by Christians as the guilty nation, which has responsibility for the crucifixion of Jesus. In Europe, Christianity grew the most populous of all beliefs in the continent, but as it became more and more popular, new branches of the religion appeared and increased in importance. In 1054, the Western Latin and Eastern Greek branches separated peacefully because of theological differences and both held their dominancy over their sphere of influence strictly. The Roman Catholic Church organized violent campaigns to suppress heresy. Fighting between Catholics, Cathars, Albigensians and Waldensians were a turning point in the history, because from this time persecutions of Christians

have been partly carried out by Christians belonging to a different Christian denomination.

As Reformation shocked all Christian communities in the Old Continent, massacres, planned and casual attacks, public executions at stakes killed huge numbers of the population. Vatican and its supporter states reacted to the challenge firmly. The Inquisition established by the Holy See in the 12th century was the judicial office of the Roman Catholic Church against heresy and operated on purpose to stress accuses to regret their deeds and return to the Roman Catholic faith. The Reformation and anti-Protestantism caused religion-based violence for two centuries forced tens of thousands to migrate to those territories where their religion was dominant.



Richard versus Saladin

In the Islam world, Christians were members of a religion of the book, an accepted belief, so they could practice their faith with some limitations. They had to pay a specific income tax called *jizya* which regarded only for the non-Muslims. The advancement of the Ottoman Empire meant it occupied European territories and the reign for hundreds of years resulted Islamisation of certain Balkan regions. The tolerance of the medieval Muslim world withdrew continuously and as the Empire reached its maximum geographic extension, the system formed into a more rigid structure with less religious tolerance. In the 19th century Assyrian and Armenian Christians were persecuted the most in the Empire and the successor of the Ottoman Empire, the new Turkish state carried on and intensified these attacks to build a coherent modern Turkish Muslim nation.

But Christianity did not concentrated on just Europe, after the age of discovery the process of colonization included cultural and religious reshaping of local populations. Christianity was considered as an infiltration of European influence so emperors in China and Japan did not let their subjects to follow this belief. Rebellions against the European power often targeted Christians of these countries as collaborators of the enemy.



Crucifixion of 26 Christians in Nagasaki, Japan, 5 February 1597

The US-based Mormon Church has been under persecution since its founding in 1830s. They migrated to the actual Western border region of the States to avoid attacks of pioneers generally did not respect them. Finally, they ran out of opportunity to escape under authority of the government since all from the Atlantic to the Pacific became part of the United States. Some Mormons left the country, while others stayed and had to stood legal acts and physical atrocities carried out by authorities, the army and anti-Mormon groups.

The turbulent 20th century put Spanish Christians and their church under pressure foremost. In the anti-Catholic leftist policy hit country, properties of the church were nationalized and religion was forced back in everyday life. The following decades of Franco's dictatorship recovered the position of the Roman Catholic Church and considered it as a strong pillar of his authoritarian system. On the other side, Protestants' agony continued and they suffered discrimination in many different ways. In Germany Nazi ideologists created

the faction of Positive Christianity, a modern comprehensive version of the Catholic and Protestant beliefs. The dogma was expanded with anti-Semitic and racial ideology. However the Positive Christianity was highly supported by the regime, it did not raise it to official state level and remained just a religious movement which fell along the Nazis. German Christians who rejected the Nazis' attempt to politicise religion formed the illegal Confessing Church, a Protestant underground community banned and persecuted by authorities.

During the bipolar era, Soviet-style regimes formed in the Eastern half of Europe and radically repressed all kind of religiousness in many countries. The system expected maximum trust the socialist leaders and not the worship of God and respect of Prophets. But anti-religious policies were very different in countries, such as Poland remained a stronghold of Roman Catholic Church even when it was a people's republic (i.e. communist regime). Albania took a different path and the totalitarian



Leaders of the Soviet Union's security and intelligence agency take a visit at the building of Moscow-Volga canal. The canal was built by mainly Christian prisoners

regime of Enver Hoxha created the first officially atheist country of the world. As part of the democratic transition, ban of religious activities was cancelled in the post-communist countries of Europe.

Nowadays, religion is in the frontline of violence in many parts of the globe. The most important events are ongoing in the Middle East where the development of Islamic political groups concerns many religion analysts and Christian priests in the West who pray for their brothers and sisters live in this unrest region.

Timeline of the most terrifying slaughters

The worst eras for Christian martyrs were the Roman persecution of early Christians, the period between the 12th and 14th centuries when Genghis Khan Timur massacred millions of Christians. In the 1970s there had been 230,000 Christians killed per year. It is presently estimated that some 200 million Christians in 60 countries live under daily threat of persecution. Some estimate that if nothing is done, then by 2025, an average of 210,000 Christians will be being killed each year.

1630: some 300,000 Christians in Japan (mostly Catholic) were executed often by crucifixion. Seventy of them were crucified upside down on the beach at low tide so that they would drown when the tide came in.



1920-1930: some 200,000 Russian Orthodox priests, monks and nuns were slaughtered. Many crucified by nailing them to the door of their churches or stripped naked, doused with water and left to freeze in the winter air.



1960-1970s: During the Cultural Revolution in China, some 400,000 died.



1970s: Under Idi Amin, 100,000 of the 300,000 killed were Christians in Uganda. Amin ruled Uganda from 1971 to 1979, establishing a bizarre rule of terror that stands virtually unparalleled in modern history.



Since 1970: As many as 1,000,000 Christians and Animists have been killed in Sudan by the Muslims of the North.



1994: As many as 500,000 of the 700,000 killed by the Hutus during the Rwandan Genocide were believers.



Theory of persecutions

However religious persecutions have long history and great impact on the past, the present and the future as well, they have not been analysed properly in modern science, perhaps because of the sensitivity of the topic and since the approach of the issue is greatly influenced by the belief of the researchers. Objectivity is precisely a key difficulty of the work and the final product of the research will get probably different receptions from the concerned religious groups. The following brief summary tries to highlight some key features of the 21st century persecutions and shows the more or less obvious elements and establishes a starting point for later in-depth analyses.

The first statement we have to underline is “practice makes the theory and not in reverse.” This fact is an other result why the theoretical background is far behind, and comprehensive researches suffer from the lack of certain factors to compare. Religion driven violence occurs in numerous ways, sometimes a – mostly the politically dominant – group administers different suppressing policies on each religions, proving the complexity of persecution activities within just one political entity. Being consequently aware of the full religious and religio-political picture of the object of the research is necessary because the wider context reveals relations providing a more effective understanding. Keeping this in mind we focus on Christians’ situation hereafter.

There are different *sources* of persecution of Christians in Africa and Asia, the continents with millions of Christians but who are in minority in these countries. The state can be the most effective suppressor

since it owns unique spheres of authority. Leaders of the state control power-enforcement organizations and as the main legislative power, they can establish a legal environment suits the best for interests. Radicalists can also organize anti-Christian campaigns and their preachers often turn moderate mobs against other religious groups.



Illustration of Christian martyrs burned at the stake in Madagascar.
Author: John Joseph Kilpin Fletcher (1900)

There are different *types or stages* of persecution; in most of the cases not only one of them is on-going. In general, a later direct attack is preceded by efforts to undermine reputation of Christians, sometimes the media assists and disinform the public. The next level is discrimination which can happen in two dimensions. One is the dimension of jurisdiction, which means their distinction results an inferior legal status with the limitation of their political and human rights. The other form is a less conceivable way and includes the social degradation of them offering no opportunity to higher education, higher positions in the public sphere, etc. As a

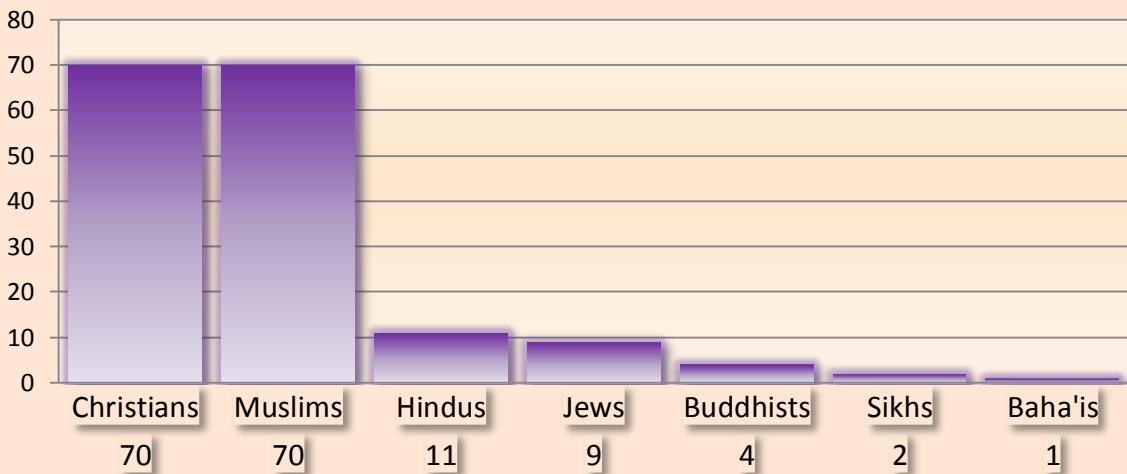
final stage, direct attacks of Christian properties (churches, foundations, family businesses or big corporations and even private property) and attacks threatening the physical existence begin. Besides this classical scenario, strengthening the influence of the dominant religion seems like a long-term policy needs decades to reshape religious conditions. Conversion, restrictions making Christian churches unviable deprive Christianity from new members in a relatively peaceful way.

We should also mention the *purpose* as an important factor of the cases. This question is not just about the perceptible destination of violence (physical destroying, force them to convert or emigrate...). What really matters is the motif behind the actions. Recent days Muslims' persecution of

Christians is a great topic in Western Religious issues are often used by simple political or economic considerations as a tool which makes aims easier to achieve. Faith and ethnic identity are the two most powerful factors can activate millions of people around the world and that makes this policy very effective but dangerous at the same time.

culture. Islamism's advancement in the Middle East, the implementation of sharia and many other issues jeopardize Christians from Mali to the Philippines and no international human rights contract is able to really guarantee freedom of religion. Meanwhile foreign support for Christians of these areas can easily hit back on them and carries the possibility of international conflicts.

Those killed for their faith in history (by millions)



Christian Dirce – oil painting by Henryk Siemiradzki (1897)

Persecution – a global outlook

Persecution of Christians has some specific characteristics in the 21st century. The first and perhaps the most important is that oppositions can be mentioned are very rare between Christian denominations both in global and local levels. However eventual clashes of mainly Protestant Unionists and mostly Catholic Nationalists in Northern Ireland occur sometimes, Christianity has a global image showing a coherent community of more than 2 billion believers. Today's Christianity faces the most significant challenges do not originate inside its own but from the advancement and extension of other world religions.

the “Christian world” and take place in a broad belt from Mauritania and Tanzania to China and Indonesia.

The 2013 World Watch List – a list of countries where situation of Christians is the worst – is dominated by traditional Islam countries; they possess all positions from the 2nd to 10th. While communication and economies have been undergoing a rapid globalization process, their societies are adapting in a much slower way. Everyday life in these countries is highly influenced by the Islam religion. But not these strongholds of Islam mean the



Despite the phrase “world religion” does exist, actually each of these beliefs has its own geographical region, a homeland where it is the dominant and outside of it all of them front with some kind of restrictions. Hence there are no religion can be practiced freely worldwide. If we look at a map showing where Christians are persecuted we will not be surprised at a glance. Concerned countries located outside

real challenge for Christians. Reports and studies focus more on areas where Islam is increasing its influence. In a global aspect extension of Islam is ongoing and as a side effect the destabilization of Islam border zone territories is noticeable in Mali, Nigeria, Philippines, Indonesia, and Muslims become the most radicalized ones in these front lines resulting fanatic violent activities.

An other interesting fact is that persecution of Christians have been always carried out by other religious groups, or the state, but not those who confess themselves non-religious. The phenomenon of atheist or irreligious people is a product of modern society and spread widely mostly among advanced Western countries. But there have been a few ones where the authorities force their citizens to leave classic religions and expect everyone to devote themselves to the nation's "superior interest".

Most notable of them is recent North Korea, the country under a communist dictatorship which has been considered as the worst place for Christians in the world for a decade. The state vehemently bans all kind of religions – not just Christianity which appeared in the late 19th century, but also the traditional Buddhist and Confucian beliefs of the peninsula. The one and only – and mandatory – faith is Juche, an official national belief, the principle of North Korean society and politics. It is not a religion, at least not in the sense we describe religions. This is more a political ideology, a creature of the ruling system and it was implemented into the Constitution of North Korea in 1972. Its teachings include the ideology of self-reliance, the unconditional support for the country and absolute loyalty to the leadership. The ideas greatly rely on borrowed Confucian elements require respect of elders and unquestionable obedience to leaders. To provide a solid basis for the country's way of development, Juche became the only ideology and after Kim Il-sung's death, some new spiritual statements were integrated into Juche. The cult of the Kim-dynasty substitutes all kind of spiritual beliefs. The country-founder Kim Il-sung rose into spiritual sphere after he died, and though he is not a god, he and his successors are expected to be worshipped as main political and spiritual leaders of the nation.

Authorities continue harsh campaign against other religions occur in the country because they determine them as security threats to the system. Meanwhile the success of North Korean development has been getting more doubtful. Famines and the low standard of living are laying claim to such spiritual demands Juche is not able to fulfil. Hence the popularity of religions is rising in spite of the state's efforts. Shamanism is the only – non-officially – tolerated belief, fortune tellers are visited by civilians and high-level officials as well.



The optimistic expectations fostered by the takeover of the new leader Kim Jong-un was ruined as the hoped reforms are not in the notion of the leadership. On the contrary, authorities intensified their activity to reveal and wipe up the small operating underground church networks. Perquisitions, interrogations try to identify members of banned religions, and great reward is offered for those who inform authorities about prohibited spiritual activity. Punishment for those who own a Bible, other religious books or just fall under suspicion is prompt execution without trial or deportation to labour camp. Asian Christian organizations suspect some 70,000 of the estimated 300-400,000 Christians are in concentration camps with not too much chance to survive.

There are two sources of North Korean Christianity. A few old members of the population who practiced it before the anti-

religious restrictions were introduced now become pastors or local religious leaders. The other not less important origin is foreign land, mostly China and South Korea. Christian books are smuggled across the heavily guarded borders. In certain points of the border the security is provided by the North Korean security police instead of the less reliable undermotivated army officers to terminate Christianity's infiltration - which is considered as a foreign effort to undermine social and political stability. In response Christians propagate the Gospel through handwritten copies of the Bible and organizing secret gatherings to listen to the disallowed South Korean Christian radio Far East Broadcasting.

Browsing in the list of Christian persecuting countries inquirers can find some unexpected ones. The Maldives, a well-known holiday paradise for wealthy Western tourists ranked 6th worst country for Christians. The world do not know much about the religious issues of this tiny archipelago in the Indian Ocean because foreign visitors do not encounter with the situation outside of the hotels and their amazing beaches. The country is separated to two very different parts. There are nearly 90 "resort areas" where tourists spend their holidays, these are particular islands or separated parts of the country with many religious cessions. But outside of them the Constitution allows only Islam, and the law bans the practice of other religion or wearing non-Muslim religious symbols. It is allowed foreigners to practice their faith only in private; there are no non-Muslim places of worship. Only a Muslim can be a citizen of the Maldives so if a citizen converts to other religion it faces the possibility of deportation. Not surprisingly the proportion of non-Muslims in the population is negligible. Annually more than half a million European and Japanese tourists visit the country with just 330,000 citizens.

The other interesting case is Bhutan. The small Buddhist Constitutional Monarchy at the eastern Himalayas is the incarnated place of peace and rest in a modern rushing world. And it is true for local Buddhists and foreign tourists, but not for religious minorities. At state level the freedom of religion is implemented in the Constitution and the King is the protector of all religions in the country with the help of religious institutions - such as the Bhutanese Christians Services Centre - created to promote harmony of beliefs. But harassment comes from local communities or Buddhist monks and Christians have to cope with challenges in free education, employment and access to public water and other sources in one of the least evangelized country.



Christians in the land of pharaohs

The changes in Egypt have been the key events of the Arab Spring, when President Mubarak was toppled by the revolution. Christians along with their Muslim nation members fought for the reforms of the country. But soon after it became clear that these two groups have very different visions of the future, their fellowship fell causing a divide of the population. The more than 8 million Christians – mostly Coptic believers – who take about 10% of the inhabitants are regarded as the most populous Christian community of the Middle East. They have remained during centuries. The group plays a significant role not only within Egypt, but also in Christian-related issues all across the region which forwards to a more Islamized and less tolerant place from a religious point of view. It is said that tens of thousands of Christians have left Egypt since the revolution broke out in 2011, mostly because hostilities against them began to happen more frequently and meanwhile certain Muslim groups have been gaining ground in politics and in everyday life too.

Jihad organizations, al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya and some other groups – many of them defined as terrorist organizations in the European Union and in the United States – have been raising popularity of Islamism as the proper response to the country's political challenges. The declining income from foreign tourists drives the crisis of the Egyptian economy radicalizing all classes of the society seeking for an immediate solution. The political movements with Islamist backgrounds obtained support and votes of rural and poor citizens and their candidate from the Freedom and Justice Party, Mohamed Morsi was elected to President of Egypt in summer 2012. Later

this year his declaration which expanded his power resulted a new wave of protests with clashes of the demonstrators pro and contra to his decree and intensified tension between sympathizers of a secular, pro-Western Egypt – including Christians in general – and those who back a more Islam-based form of governance led by a strong leader with wide authority.



Coptic priests. Photo taken between 1898 and 1914

After his election the President stated he wants to be president of all Egyptians, but his activity showed weakness to protect minorities from attacks of the Islamists who acquired dominant role on the constructing procedure of the new constitution. In order to establish a fresh political era, the new fundamental law replaced the former provisional one which was the product of the Egyptian revolution in 2011. A Christian member of the constitution editing committee and member of the Shura Council, the upper house of Egypt's bicameral Parliament, Dr. Ehab El Kharrat, left the committee in protest against overwhelming Islamist influence of the body. The new constitution was signed into law on 26 December after it passed a

referendum. The judgement of this document is controversial because it proclaims the freedom of religion for the three Abrahamic religions, but it also confirms Islam as the state religion and cites principles of Sharia as the principal sources of legislation. While some of them who belong to religious minorities focus primarily on this statement accusing it as the precursor of sharia's official implementation, others rather mention the success of the new constitution that it left phrases and principles unclear which offer greater freedom for non-Muslims – Islamists pressed for a more certain and stricter drafting of these parts.

But there are some administrative obstacles which seem to operate independently of the articles of the Constitution. Christian church leaders highlighted the situation that all repairs of churches and church-owned facilities need approval from the head of the Governorates appointed by the President. Sometimes it takes years to get it and it is said that building a new church can last for decades since the authorities deliberately delay the approval procedure.



In accordance with the increasing power of Islamist groups not just their members perpetrate attacks, kidnappings and vandal actions against Christians. As the Muslim Brotherhood movement have become the most influential organization nation-wide, anger of Muslims turn against religious minorities without the fear of impeachment. Christian women are frequent targets of both genders. Sexual harassment of them by Muslim men is a



Monastery of Saint Anthony, Egypt. Photo: Berthold Werner

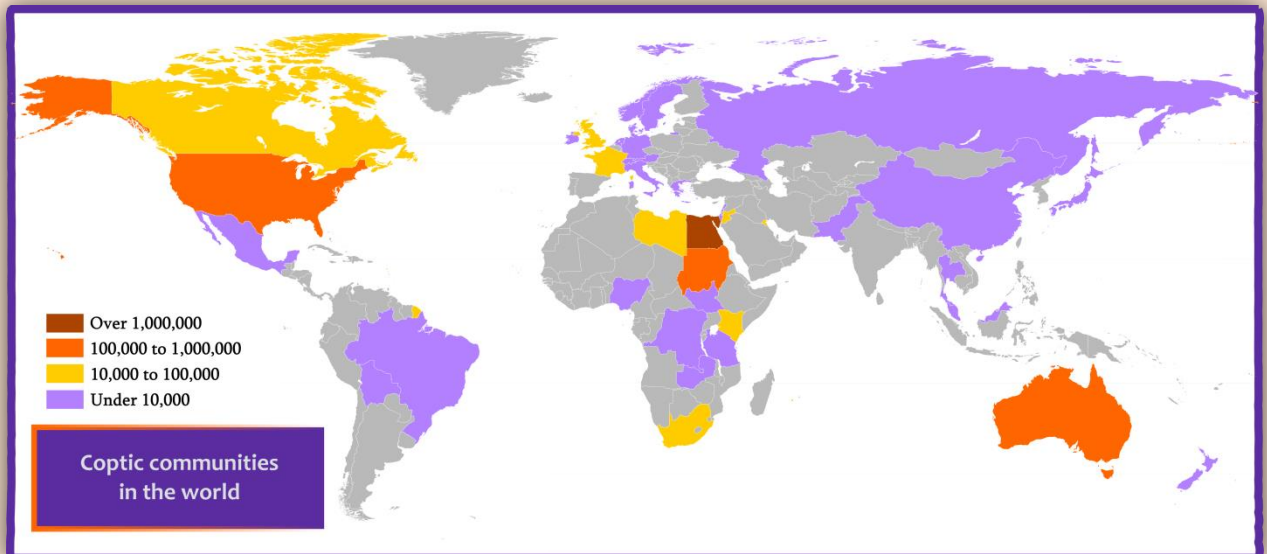
common problem got wide publicity in the West after CBS correspondent Lara Logan was attacked by the mob at Cairo's Tahrir Square. A new occurrence of violence appeared later last year and its curiosity is that these were carried out by women wearing some kind of veil according to Islam customs. Christians who do not wear such clothes face the chance of Muslim women attack them attempting to cut their hair off with scissors. The hair is a symbolic target since if a woman wears the niqab or the hijab – the traditional head gears of women in Egypt and many other Muslim countries – their hair would not be so easy to cut. Many of such incidents happen in those subway cars reserved for women only, so more and more Christian women stay away from using these cars and some other forms of public transport.

Another major problem originates from the fact that an Egyptian ID card contains the religion of the person. However there are

no huge numbers who converted from Islam to Christianity since it is prohibited by Islam law, the bureaus managing administrative issues have no willingness to modify the person's registration form and launch a new ID card because of baptism. In some cases fresh Christians submitted an application for a new card saying their one has lost or damaged. But after it turned out that the religion would be changed, the applicants were charged with destroying official documents and forgery.

Harsh treatment religious minorities have to cope with worries not just members of

these communities. Experts have been defining Egypt as the key country of the Middle East for decades since it played leader role in regional issues. The Islamisation of this country means a prominent link – besides Turkey – of the dialogue between the Christian West and the Islam Middle East is jeopardized. A moderate Egypt is an important factor of peace in the region since it recognizes state of Israel which made it able to broker a cease-fire in the case of the 10-days lasting war of the Gaza Strip in November 2012.



Disappointing example of Nigeria

The secular federal state of Nigeria has a significant role in Africa. The most populous country in the continent suffers from ethnic, religious and regional oppositions threatening it with falling apart. However it returned to civil rule in 1999, the country carries on its burdensome legacy of militias and inner clashes rooted in the civil war hit decades.



Recent Nigeria is a prototype country where the population is separated equally among Muslims and Christians, but the growing influence of Islam takes the state apparatus under increasing pressure. There are important geographical differences in religious aspect. In general, Christians concentrate in the south, Muslims in the north with a wide mixed zone between them. Neither the federal system, nor a probably advanced autonomous system can silence recurring violence driven by the claim of an Islamic state of Nigeria or an independent one breaking up from the federal government. However religious oppositions between Muslims and Christians occur around the country, present situation is the worst in the northern territories. In the past 15 years 12 states and parts of 4 others implemented Sharia law, but this did not satisfied Islam extremists who hold their demand on further Islamic purposes. To escape from

discrimination and harassment most Christians fled from this region to the Christian dominant southern territories or refuted to Cameroon.

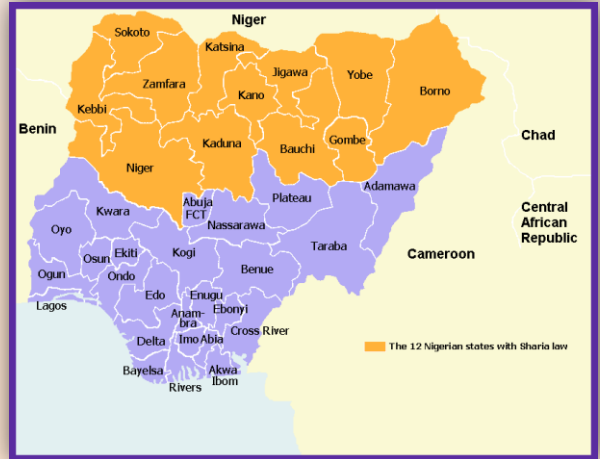
The most well-known group of such Islamists is called Boko Haram – the name means “non-Islamic education is a sin” –, but there are many other smaller militias fighting for an Islamic revolution. The few members of other religions, who stayed, now are facing all kinds of abuses, including selective massacres as well. According to non-official statistics about 800 Christians were killed in year 2012 in Nigeria, and the victims of the last few years are around 3,000. Boko Haram declared war against the government and Christians, while the organization started radical violent campaign after its leader died in police custody in 2009. Beyond the religious veil, targeting Christians has a social explanation too. In most of the cases, members of the political and economic elite belong to the Christian community, while the emerging Islamist groups are formed by poor and marginalized rural residents alleging the previous group with corruption, hence the Islam contra Christianity combat has the disputed appearance of the poor contra rich struggle. The government’s efforts taken to protect persecuted Christians just reaffirm this – usually abandoned – belief. Authorities in the north do not operate properly and they are not able to provide security for the religious minority. Many Muslim leaders take a stand with the aims of the militants speeding up the degradation of the central government’s power in these states. The incumbent President of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan is a Christian politician, member of the ethnical group called ijaw,

which contains dozens of tiny tribes indigenous in the oil-rich Niger Delta region. So his personal influence on Muslims of the north is minor, while he is expected to stop persecution of Christians not just as the head of state, but also as a believer of the faith of Jesus Christ. The inability of the government to stop violence is considered as a big failure of the leadership and may derogate popular support of the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) in an atmosphere where the country seems to be separated in political aspect as well. Jonathan overcame his main rival – the Muslim Muhammadu Buhari, winner of northern districts – easily with his overwhelming success in the Christian south and southwest areas. Buhari's supporters did not accept the final result and rioted in many towns attacking PDP buildings, activists and suspected voters in 2011. This was Buhari's third consecutive defeat in presidential election and many who back him think they have no real chance to achieve their goals via democratic solutions.



The situation of the President and the government is really challenging. It is obvious that the administration cannot break down the Islamist insurgency within a reasonable time, but accepting foreign support clarifies it has just limited power. In this position, federal government often underscores that news of Christian persecutions come from the north sometimes exaggerate the conflict or reports events which was not happened at all. Besides these statements, officials

emphasize the success of measures taken to stop these attacks and set religious harmony all across Nigeria. Goodluck Jonathan's rhetoric focused on the prevented Muslim attacks and not on the casualties in the case of the bloody year-end violence campaign killed dozens of Christians brutally.

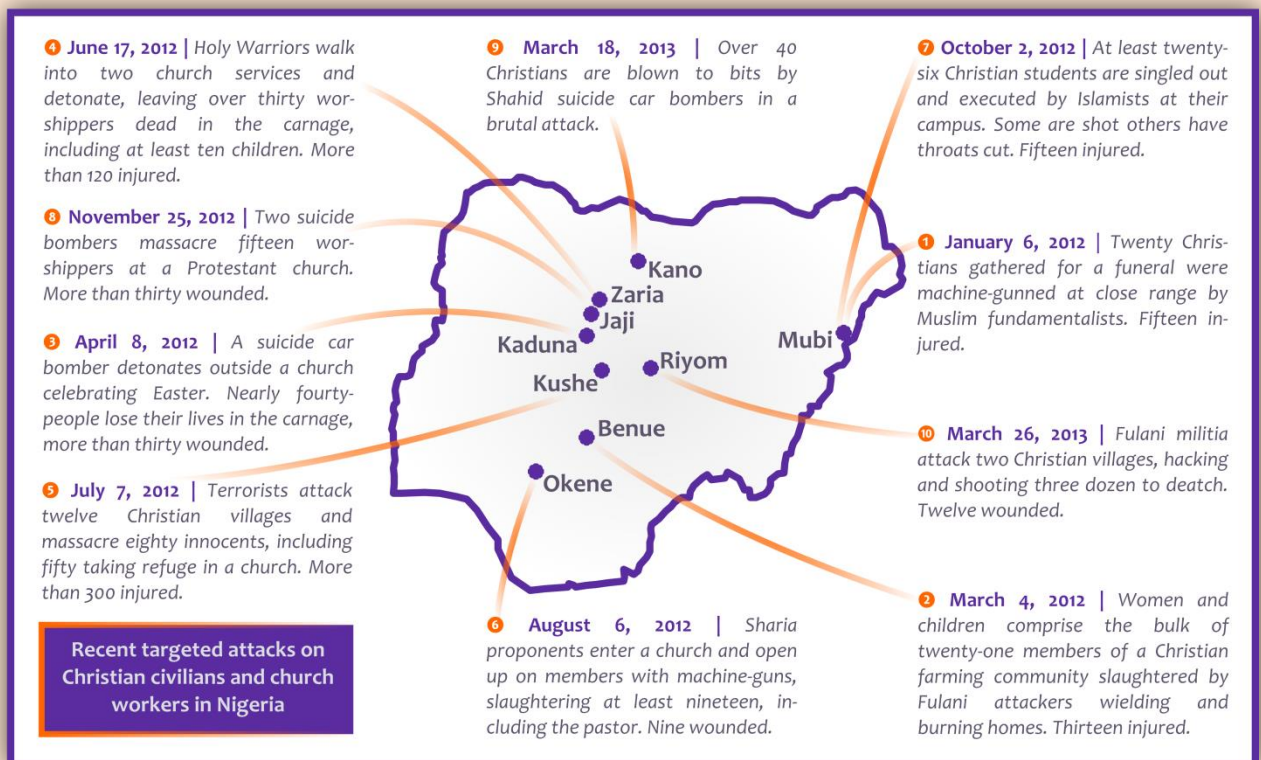


As Christians had enough of this standoff, they started to initiate a solution coming from abroad. The Christian Association of Nigerian Americans (CANAN) handed a petition to the White House in order to urge the US government to declare Boko Haram as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). Fellows of CANAN hope that the designation of the Islamist group will hit badly on the supply of Boko Haram deterring its sympathizers to support it. But many claims arose against the designation originating opposition between Christian Nigerians inside and outside the country and the government of Nigeria. There is no agreement on how this would really moderate persecution because Boko Haram is regarded getting support from Muslims inside Nigeria and finance itself by kidnappings, bank robberies. An official designation may raise its international prestige which can attract more subventions from other Islamist groups. The side impact may stop foreign investors making new business in the country and they will choose another location to their capital. This is the very reason why the

Nigerian government opposes the labelling and tries not to let the issue slipping out of its control.

In January, Nigeria decided to take part in the international military campaign aiming to restore peace and the rule of law in northern Mali, which is in the hands of Islamist militants. Abuja operates a specially trained battalion of 1,200 troops, and some Alpha Jet fighters of the Nigerian Air Force are also involved and provide close air support for allied ground forces. Federal government stated many of the Boko Haram insurgents were trained in

Mali or by those fighters, and high-level officials suppose that some Malian rebels hide in Nigeria's northern Muslim territory. Christians criticized the participation pointing out the government should deploy these soldiers inside the border to ensure security. Some people highlighted the country's involvement could drive Boko Haram to intensify attacks in order to force the government to withdraw the army from Mali, and the offensive just brings closer Muslim militant groups of West Africa to link their activity forming a real international crime network.



List of recent attacks against Christians in Nigeria

January 6, 2012 | Mubi: Twenty Christians gathered for a funeral were machine-gunned at close range by Muslims fundamentalists. Fifteen injured.

Januar 22, 2012 | Tafawa Balewa: Militant Muslims hurl grenades into Christian homes, killing some as they slept and then shooting others as they tried to escape. Twelve injured.

March 4, 2012 | Benue: Women and children comprise the bulk of twenty-one members of a Christian farming community slaughtered by Fulani attackers wielding machetes and burning homes. Thirteen injured.

April 8, 2012 | Kaduna: A suicide car bomber detonates outside a church celebrating Easter. Nearly forty people lose their lives in the carnage, more than thirty wounded.

April 29, 2012 | Kano: Sixteen Christians, including professors and doctors, are massacred by Islamists, who bomb their church service and then shoot them in the back as they try to flee. Sixteen wounded.

June 3, 2012 | Bauchi: A Holy Warrior runs his car into a church service and detonates, taking out over twenty praying Christians. 45 wounded.

June 17, 2012 | Zaria: Holy Warriors walk into two church services and detonate, leaving over thirty worshipers dead in the carnage, including at least ten children. More than 120 injured.

July 7, 2012 | Kushe: Muslim terrorists attack twelve Christian villages and massacre eighty innocents, including fifty taking refuge in a church. More than 300 injured.

August 6, 2012 | Okene: Sharia proponents enter a church and open up on members with machine-guns, slaughtering at least nineteen, including the pastor. Nine wounded.

October 2, 2012 | Mubi: At least twenty-six Christian students are singled out and executed by Islamists at their campus. Some are shot, others have their throats cut. Fifteen injured.

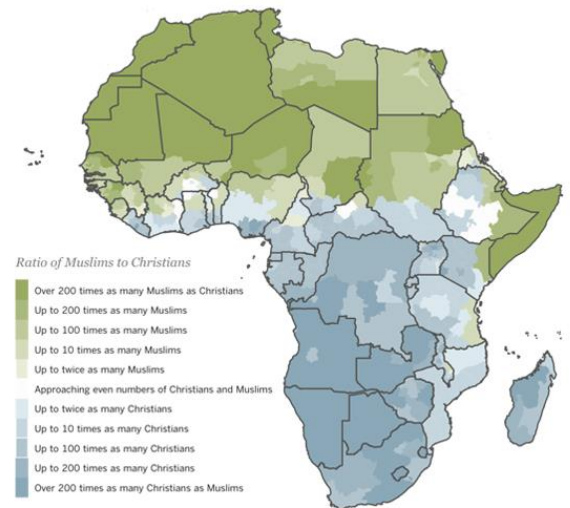
October 10, 2012 | Riyom: Three children and their mother are among over a dozen Christians are slaughtered during a raid on their village. Five wounded.

November 25, 2012 | Jaji: Two suicide bombers massacre fifteen worshippers at a Protestant church. More than thirty wounded.

December 26, 2012 | Bachit: Suspected Fulani murder five villagers, including a married couple, in attacks on two Christian homes.

Muslims and Christians in Africa

This map shows the ratio of Muslims to Christians in each country and province. The north is heavily Muslim, and the south is heavily Christian.



Sources: censuses, demographic and health surveys, and the World Religion Database
Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, April 2010

February 2, 2013 | Kogom: Fulani Muslims fundamentalists hack ten Christian family members to death including five small children.

March 18, 2013 | Kano: Over 40 Christians are blown to bits by Shahid suicide car bombers in a brutal attack.

March 26, 2013 | Riyom: Fulani militia attack two Christian villages, hacking and shooting three dozen to death. 12 wounded.

March 31, 2013 | Ataka: Nomads attack a Christian village, butchering nineteen people, including women and children

May 5, 2013 | Njilan: Extremists stage a Sunday morning attack on a church and a nearby cattle market, killing at least ten.

May 24, 2013 | Gwoza: A pastor and a church member are brutally slain by gunmen. In the same day in Borno some members of Boko Haram murder an elderly Christian woman in her home.

June 18, 2013 | Bakin Rijiya: At least one resident is killed when Muslim terrorists attack a Christian village and burn four churches.

Christians in the fist of separatism

In the Eastern African country of Tanzania religions lived together with peace and harmony for centuries until recent years. The population of circa 45 million is divided between Christianity, Islam and group of indigenous beliefs or people with no religion. The proportion of these is a matter of dispute since census surveys do not include religious status of the citizens, but most researchers estimate roughly equal number members of the three group. Protestantism is a product of German, Anglican Church is of the Britain colonial era, and Roman Catholicism was first spread by Portuguese missions. This country-level balanced religious environment contains significant local differences established the chance of religious conflicts.



The small archipelago of Zanzibar has its own history, flag and other symbols. 97% of its population is Muslim. It became independent from Britain in 1963, and then joined to the mainland entity called Tanganyika forming together the United Republic of Tanzania. Zanzibar owns a semi-autonomous status with its separate government and the House of Representatives. Ideology of a real independence is rooted in the ruling of first

President of Tanzania Julius Nyerere, and most Zanzibaris agree that the policy of the state government did not favour Zanzibar and planned to put down its autonomy. After the popular party advertising full sovereignty (Civic United Front) compromised with the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party, sympathizers of separatism became supporters of UAMSHO, the religious political movement that fights for independence and urges a referendum on the issue. Part of the highly polarized Muslim community of the islands joined UAMSHO because of political reasons, but also empowered its fundamental religious programme at the same time. As it advanced to the main promoter of separatism, in April 2012 the governments of Zanzibar and Tanzania banned all gatherings to prevent the group increase its influence, but they could not stop UAMSHO and its campaign. Meanwhile it obtained more and more supporters, Islamism grew stronger all across Muslim territories.

On 26 May 2012 clashes between police and Islamist protestors broke out in the Stone Town of Zanzibar city and violence continued the following days. Mob actions occurred in many parts of Zanzibar. Rioters armed with machetes and bars invaded churches and set some of them on fire. On the third day of unrest police arrested 30 members of UAMSHO despite the group stated it has nothing to do with the violence. Vandalism continued by UAMSHO members as a protest against their detention. Religious tolerance was not without challenges in the mainland, but real conflicts were seldom, however Christians blamed mosques trying to increase popularity with offering food or

financial support for those join Islam. In July a 17-year old girl Eva Abdullah who converted from Islam to Christianity was sentenced 2 years in prison with the charge of desecrating a Quran by a judge allegedly influenced by local Muslims. This case encouraged Islamists who carried on threatening Christians and forcing them to change belief. In the southern Ruvuma Region a mob attacked a Christian residential area killing 60 pigs and burning 6 houses. On 28 September a Christian doctor travelling by car was attacked but owing to the intervention of passers he did not hurt seriously.

Aggression reached its peak in October. The turbulence started with an unharmed opposition between two teenagers on 10 October. A 12-year old Muslim boy left from a madrassa met with his Christian friend who asked him let he see the Quran. He gave it but bragged if someone desecrates the Quran he would be transformed to a snake or dog or rat. That interested him so that he tried it out urinating on it. The Muslim boy informed his parents who wanted to discuss the deed with the parents of the boy, but did not find them home, this time he decided to report the issue to the mosque, and things started to escalate. Muslims gathered and attempted to punish the boy according to Islam law threatens the boy with beheading. Police was informed of the situation and the officers put the boy into protective custody and transferred him to



Saint Joseph church, Dar es Salaam

the police station to save him from the mob's revenge. But rioters surrounded the station and called the police to hand them the boy, but the claim was refused. After this – driven by the belief that the boy was sent by Christian leaders – the group turned against churches and vandalized properties. The news from the capital Dar es-Salaam spread rapidly and caused numerous attacks on Christians and churches in Tanzania. Police tried to provide enhanced protection to Christian places but despite their efforts several churches suffered more or less violent actions. Both Tanzania's and Zanzibar's government took a stand against violence what was seen as the collaboration of the political elite and the Christians, so the

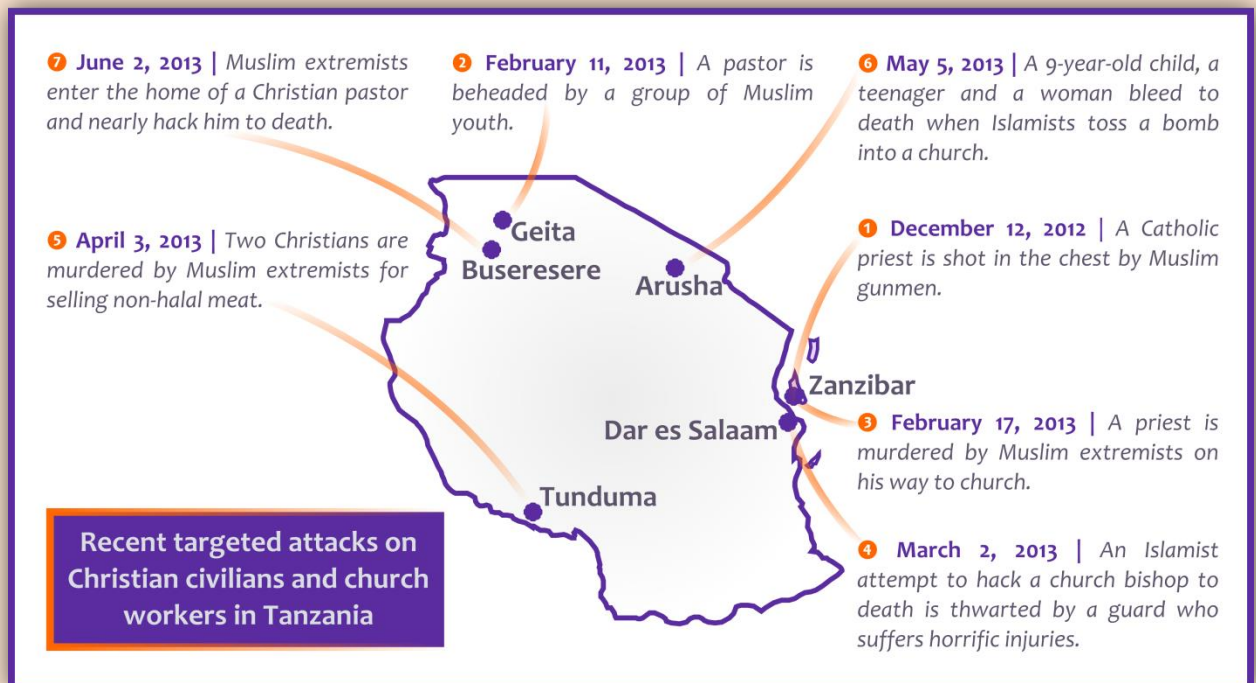


Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

relation between UAMSHO and authorities worsened. Tension became critical on 16 October, after the Islam cleric Sheikh Farid Hadi Ahmad announced that he had been captured and detained by armed masked policemen. While police officially rejected the complaint, it arrested 7 leaders – including the sheik as well – of the Islamist movement on 20 October, aggravating the situation. Persecution of Christians have not ended yet, but lowered in intensity in Zanzibar and still remained a certain level across Tanzania.

The Constitution of Tanzania guarantees the freedom of religion in the country and

all authorities do their best to restore rest and peace. President of Zanzibar publicly condemned UAMSHO, which became evidently the organizer of riots after its flag was raised upon a ruined church. Tanzania should cope with the separatist political and religious fundamental challenges parallel. Reconsidering Zanzibar's sovereignty is certainly not enough to prevent further support for Islamists all across the country and may encourage local Islamists to set off their movement for autonomy, independence or to the introduction of sharia.



Christians of the Holy Land

A tiny part of the Middle East has very important places of Christian, Jewish and Islam religions and became a symbol of multi-religious issues, especially conflicts. As revolutions of the Arab Spring raised political-based violence through the region and the reforms reaffirm the role of Islam in many concerned countries, Christians are facing the danger of more radical Islamic movements and organizations. The only non-Muslim state in the region is Israel, but this fact cannot guarantee peace and freedom of religion for Christians. There are 158,000 believers of this faith – circa 2% of the population – live in territories under direct Israeli control, however some foreign Western citizens living here should be also mentioned. Smaller Christian communities locate in Palestinian territories adding about 53,000 people to state-wide statistics. In the past 60 years proportion of Christians fell from 18% to under 2% and it seems that Christianity will disappear from the land where it was founded 2,000 years ago.

Persecution of Christians in the Holy Land do not include so harsh and brutal attacks happen in some parts of the globe, but the situation is may the most complex in this case. Modern issues originate from the founding of state Israel. During Jews struggle to establish, protect and extend their own country, atrocities perpetrated by the armed forces or Zionist organizations occurred in both war and peaceful periods. In 1948 the army expelled Christians from Kafr Bir'im and Iqrit and Israeli military operations of the following wars destroyed – deliberately or not – churches, schools and other interests belonged to the Christian communities. Despite severe investigations were made and some court decisions ruled in favour of Christians, real



Christian Pilgrims Celebrate the Epiphany in the Jordan Valley. Photo: IDF [Flickr]

remedy was carried out in a very few cases because of the resistance of Zionist Jews who reject the chance of providing compensation and regret of Israel for non-Jewish people.

Speaking about persecution of Christians in Israel contains three different stories each with its own location and background. Gaza, the West Bank and main Israeli territories are the places we have to overview the conflict.

The Gaza Strip is home of 1,300 Christians who would like to live in peace with the 1.6 million Muslim majority under such bad circumstances where the Israeli blockade have already made life more difficult. The status of Christians have been worsening since the more radical Hamas took over the territory from Fatah in 2007, since then the

number of Christians has dropped its half. As a result of the overwhelming Muslim dominance they have to live in accordance with Muslim customs in many ways. Christian families left the Strip to find a place easier to live and to practice their faith freely, but leaving Gaza is not an easy matter. Since more than 80% of Christians in all parts of Israel are ethnically Palestinians – their mother tongue is Arabic too – they are treated as hard as Muslim Palestinians if they attempted to reside in other places of Israel. Their ethnic discrimination by the Israeli authorities is a key component of the situation.



The Israeli Ambassador to the United States Michael Oren, who was formerly the advisor at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Israel, stated all efforts made by the government aim to protect the country from terrorist attacks and unfortunately the measures may cause some inconvenience for Christians. But these difficulties contribute to Christians of Gaza and the West Bank spread across the world and just a part of them remained residents of Israel. Christians in the West Bank strive from similar difficulties, however the main ruling political group here is Fatah, many fanatic Muslims regard Christians as supporters of Israel and the Jews. The construction of the 700 kilometres long

barrier separating Palestine from Israel and the walls isolate Jewish enclaves in the West Bank left Christians as the only targets for intolerant Islamists. Huge numbers emigrated because it is not easy for Christians to earn a living in the Bank and it is also difficult to obtain the permit to cross the wall and get a job at the other side. The city where Jesus was born, Bethlehem is slowly turning into one of those sacred locations which do not have vital Christian communities and church leaders fear the places of their worship will serve as museums or places of interests visited by tourists and no more will be traditional strongholds of the faith.

In the cases of the two Palestinian territories – Gaza and the West Bank – Israel blames Muslims causing the sharp decline of Christianity, meanwhile Arabs accuse Israel created these areas unable to provide atmosphere of prosperity and the chance of tolerance for Christians and other minorities. They also pointed out that Israeli authorities have no willingness to repress orthodox Jews who condemn worshippers of other religions. Some news came out last year damaged the reputation of Israel which defines itself as the last safe haven of Christians in the Middle East. Reports highlighted that in the social and legal system there are significant restrictions affect badly on Christians. Most atrocities concern young Christians in the schools or in the streets, but strict rules regulate inner-family relations too. For instance, Christian parents are not allowed to teach their children religious issues – according to Israeli human rights activist Maria Pesikova.

Christianity is depicted as a rebel sect and Jesus was executed under charge of idolatry as orthodox Jews consider. They insult Christians and especially Messianic believers – members of the 10,000 strong syncretic religion combines Jewish and Christian elements – regularly, but fortunately the attacks do not exceed

spitting, cursing or throwing rocks. In some hardline Jewish schools teachers present such actions as doctrinal obligations of their faith and encourage youths to participate in these affairs. In 2012, the rising anger of Jews was manifested in a series of vandal incidents against Islam mosques, Christian churches and monasteries, setting them on fire and painting graffiti with hurtful slogans on their walls – such as “Mohamed is a pig” or “We killed your God, you Nazis!” After such experience Christians of the Holy Land could not take seriously Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s opinion who called Christians of the Middle East to rally around Israel state to protect it as the last place of the region where they can freely practice their religion.

There are two major resources of persecution here. One of them is Israel’s attitude to ignore abuses perpetrated by Jews. Congregation leaders urged the government to implement more effective measures to protect religious minorities. In order to push on this change, Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa clergyman who is responsible for all Christian sites in the Holy Land towards Vatican wrote a letter



Stained glass in the English Mission Hospital, Jerusalem

to President Simon Peres prompting him to embrace this initiative. The other we have to mention is the political-religious radicalization of Jews and Muslims. Political Judaism and political Islam have become more intolerant and Christianity suffers from their clashes heavily and may annihilate in their struggles.

Christians in India

In India 80% of the population over a billion people is Hindu, 13% is Muslim and only 2.3% considered as Christian. The huge country is a conglomerate of countless ethnic groups, and religious violence has been an accompanying phenomenon of the peninsula during human history. Persecution of Christianity is a real issue despite we have not heard much about it – news of religious intolerance from India are mostly limited to Hindu-Muslim and Hindu-Sikh conflicts. In a so messed up environment Islam extremists occasionally target Christians too in Kashmir, Jammu, Kerala and West Bengal, but the majority of persecution is carried out by Hindus in all parts of the country.



A local church near Mangalore. Photo by Gopal Venkatesan [Flickr]

In recent cases, attacking Christians has no linkage to the colonial past, but it is a consequence of rising Hindu nationalism. 2008 was the divide year when more than 100 Christians were killed by Hindu radicals falsely suspecting that Christians were the murderers of the Hindu monk and spiritual leader Swami Lakshmananda Saraswati. So far violence has become permanent at high level causing the deaths

and migration of Christians, but there is more and more difficult to find a peaceful place to reside – bigger cities offer better religious tolerance, but their higher living prices keep away poor agricultural families abused in the countryside.

Modern Hinduism's aggression originates from the ideology called Hindutva after VD Savarkar's book of the same name was published in 1923. Since then the militarization and radicalization of some Hindu groups have occurred in order to establish the exclusively Hindu state of India. Hindutva reached the highest levels of federal and local politics as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) – the country's second most influential party – implemented Hindutva or also called Cultural Nationalism into its own political philosophy. But it should be noted that Hindutva is a nationalist political, not a religious agenda, however it discriminates religious minorities heavily. At lower levels, Hindutva is considered more as the concept of Hindu superiority and it drives Hindus attacking members of other religions aiming not especially to kill, but more to force them to leave India, the fatherland of Hindus.

Christianity in India has been declining in numbers of believers and proportion of the population for decades because of persecution and the few cases of conversions. In many parts of the country converting from Hinduism to any other religion is not just against the law and customs, but it is also not respected by the community. There are reported cases when the closest family members were the ones who abused and humiliated their relatives who switched to Christianity.



Attur church in Karkala. Photo Manasa Malipeddi [Flickr]

Persecutions take place in the poor rural areas of India where Hinduism with its static caste system has still remained the major frame of everyday life – in spite of the federal government aims to cease this rigid, cruel ancient formation and tries to modernize these territories in every aspects. Not surprisingly, the few who converted to Christianity come from the lowest and most condemned castes, they are mostly the “untouchable” Dalits, or belong to any other marginalized groups. With their conversion they also put on a new way of life and getting distant from the Hindu community. The most important reason of violence against these persons is that the community does not let them to tackle their fate and their fair role given by the caste system in such easy way. The existence of this religious, social and economic construction is clearly endangered if members of the lowest castes leave it. To prevent vanishing of the inferiors, not just radicals, but also the moderate Hindu communities established social boycott of Christians disallowing them to use public water sources, to collect firewood from the public forests or to trade with Hindus in general. Local Hindus form a block to carry out well-organized actions and sanctions to make Christians unviable. They prove alibi for those Hindus who attacked Christians or they cover the bail collectively for detained perpetrators, so justice service has no real chance to investigate the cases properly and deter upcoming persecutions.

Authorities are also aware of the hard situation and take efforts to mediate between the religious groups organizing mutual meetings to find a possible solution. But these officially arranged agreements do not create lasting peace and Hindus break the rest sooner or later. Since no real solution is seen police recommends Christians not to confront with the Hindus. The police guarding of Christians and their places of worship is unsolved in many villages and sometimes Christians have to pay 2,000 Indian rupees per police officers to be able to keep ceremonies under protection. The capacity and willingness of police and other authorities vary widely among regions. Where the officers are deeply influenced by radical Hinduism persecuted people find it impossible to get a fair investigation and sometimes the attacked ones suffer from show trials based on trumped-up charges. In Tamil Nadu, where only 11 anti-Christian attacks were reported in 2012, police shows a much energetic reaction to stop Hindu extremist groups. After the attacks which claimed the lives of two Christians, authorities ordered more than 1,000 policemen to provide security for the religious minority and arrested some persons including the Bharatiya Janata Party’s District President. Members of the party rejected his involvement in violence against Christians and started protesting against the charge of their local leader. Police responded firmly and arrested 751 members, even the BJP’s President in the state.



Open Air Rock Cross in front of St Marys Church, Kuravilanagud, Kerala

Unfortunately just part of Indian Christians can enjoy this kind of support from the authorities and most of them are facing hard persecutions. Gang-rapes are the most desperate way of violence. Groups of young Hindus show a preference for targeting Christian girls most of them do not survive the attack. The government established all-woman police stations specialized on crimes against women, but victims reported the cases tend to lost in the bureaucratic system of administration.

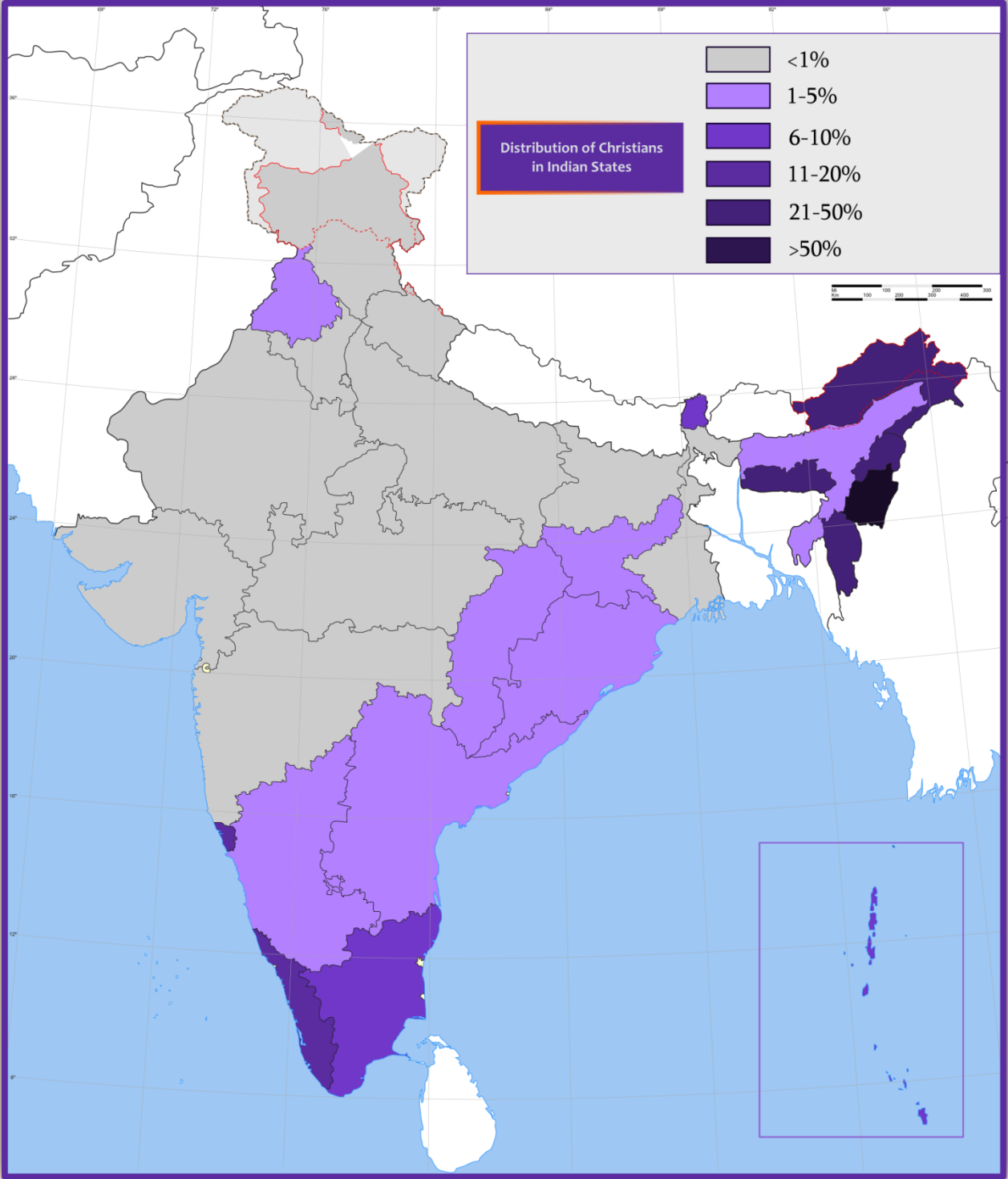
Minorities Commissions of India investigated the situation and attempt to adjust the legal system to suit better the challenges. The number one purpose is to enact the Communal Violence Bill to proscribe many forms of actions – inflammatory speeches for instance – have

not been codified. A modernized and more transparent legal background can raise effectiveness of police's activity; however it is too optimistic to expect a significant change. What really can matter is the official suppression of the more or less paramilitary right-wing Hindu organizations such as the RSS, Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and its youth wing named Bajrang Dal which are hard-line promoters of Hindutva and the vision of an all-Hindu India. Violence supposed to become more intense in 2014, in the year of the next general election when Christians will be threatened not to vote for the moderate parties. The question is that BJP can reaffirm its position or new more radical parties will rise in politics.

State	Population	Christian (%)	Christian (numbers)
Mizoram	889,000	90.5	804,545
Nagaland	1,990,000	90.0	1,791,398
Meghalaya	2,319,000	70.3	1,630,257
Manipur	2,294,000	34.0	779,96
Goa	1,343,998	26.0	349,439
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	356,152	21.7	77,178
Kerala	31,841,000	19.0	6,049,790
Arunachal Pradesh	1,097,968	18.7	205,548



Bishops of the Indian Orthodox Church



Conflicts in Sri Lanka

Christianity reached the island of Sri Lanka located in the Indian Ocean eastwards from the Hindustan peninsula in the early centuries. Portuguese presence boosted popularity and influence of Roman Catholic religion in the 1500s. During the following centuries the religion spread steadily among the inhabitants, but remained a minority besides the dominant Buddhism. The Dutch expansion took power over the island after the Dutch-Portuguese war, and their Protestant worship turned up in those coastal territories they captured. Britain occupied the island in 1796 and the foundation of Anglican churches began. As a result of the competing European powers and the rotation of promoted religions, Christianity could not involve locals in great numbers. Its relative popularity culminated in the early 18th century, when an estimated 21% of the population was considered as Christian. Many Sri Lankans defined Christianity as an instrument of Western colonization and after it became independent in 1948 – under the name Ceylon, which was replaced with non-colonial appellation Sri Lanka in 1972 – proportion of Christianity fell rapidly.

The separatist ethnic movement of the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) sharpened dissent between religious groups attacking religious targets: mosques, Christian churches and the two holiest Buddhist places, the Sri Maha Bodhi Tree and the Temple of the Tooth. Since the war erupted in 1983 the religious division has been often cited to serve interests of political clubs and although the civil war ended in 2009, this fact has not changed significantly. Afraid of the Sinhalese revenge, thousands of ethnical minority

Tamils and especially those who was not Buddhist, left the country.



Catholic Karava flag of Sri Lanka from the 16th century

The population is over 20 million, 82% Sinhalese, 9.2% Tamil, 7.9% Moor according to 2001 census, while 76.7% Buddhist, 8.5% Muslim, 7.8% Hindu and only 7% Christian. Ethnic and religious groups do not match with each other with one exception. The term "Muslim" can refer to a religious group and also the ethnic group of Moors. Christianity includes both Sinhalese and Tamils and located mostly on the west coast – its stronghold is the Puttalam District where one third of the population is Christian, but most Christians live in the densely inhabited Gampaha district.

After the Sinhalese government managed to defeat Tamil separatists, the Buddhist lobby became more and more powerful and demand of an ethnically and religiously uniformed state focuses violence against religious minorities including Christianity. By law, freedom of religion is incorporated

in the Constitution, but it also declares “Buddhism the foremost place and accordingly it shall be the duty of the State to protect and foster the Buddha Sasana.”



Abandoned Christian Shrine in Sri Lanka. Photo by Indi Samarajiva [Flickr]

The freedom of religion suffers from serious problems in everyday life. Taxation, employment and education are the most common areas of discrimination. Morning Star News reported that efforts to reform the religious issues are forming. They stated the Ministry of Buddhasasana and Religious Affairs led by the Buddhist Prime Minister D. M. Jayaratne requires all churches to register and the government intends to define what a church is. State regulation is a neuralgic question, especially for the small Christian churches increasing their presence. While Roman Catholic Christianity has been losing importance for centuries, new Evangelical churches (Methodist, Baptist) have been rising since 1980s, although they represent circa 1% of the population. Progress of these churches can be very easily stopped by a state-level measure and if the proposed reform come into force many of them would carry on service illegally.

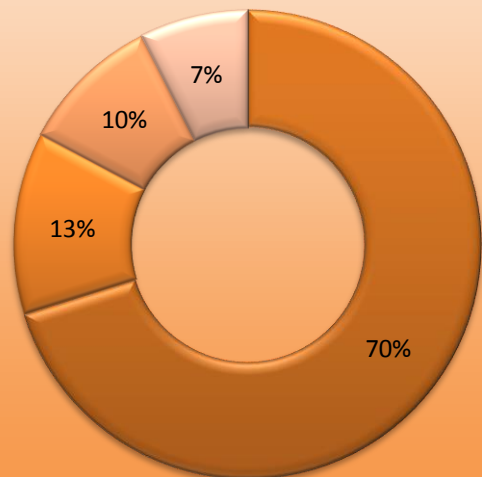
Besides these legal issues the religious intolerance shows a more violent face as well. Since 2005 when the first isolated

incidents were reported, hundreds of various intensity atrocities have happened. The actions have been carried out by radical Buddhists against Christians, Hindus and Muslims, and the victims blamed the government did not take firm steps to stop or prevent further attacks. They said the government even does not want to intervene effectively because the events suit its interest.

In 2012 August attacks against Christians became frequent in the southern Matara District, where Buddhists are in huge majority with 94%, and this area is one of the less Christian part of Sri Lanka. On 9 August a group attacked the pastor, his wife and a worker of the church in Deniyaya, suffering light injuries. Buddhist monks occupied the Seventh-Day Adventist temple in the city and converted it into a Buddhist temple. The church's leaders were attacked and beaten by a mob of estimated 100 people outside the local police station when the victims attempted to report the former incident to the authorities. In

Sri Lanka religiosity

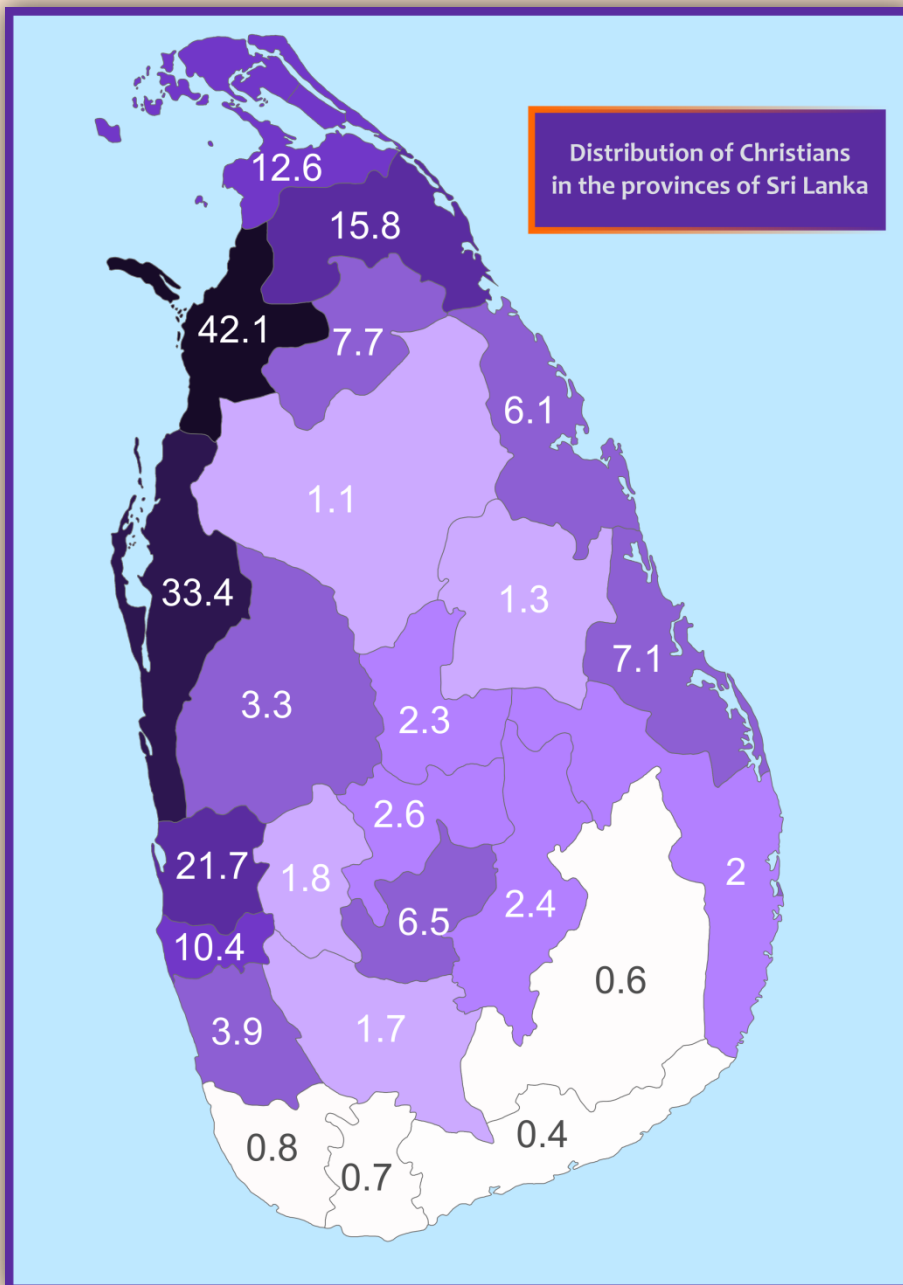
■ Buddhism ■ Hinduism ■ Islam ■ Christianity



December, a huge company crushed through the police shield and assaulted a church in a neighbouring district. They vandalized the properties, hurt the pastor and two police officers. Leaders of the mob explained, they called the pastor to close the church and the action happened because he did not do so. Generally, the atrocities were committed by Buddhists driven by their radical preachers, but it is alleged that Buddhist vigilante groups are setting up all across the island these days in

order to intensify pressure on non-Buddhists.

So far pastors, freshly converted ones and temples have been in the focus of attacks while Christians who just participated ceremonies have got away unharmed, but the level of persecution is expected to extend in the near future. Sri Lankan Christian leaders urge a real dialogue between religions and the keeping of religious freedom which is indispensable for peace and prosperity.



Christianity in the most populous Muslim country

The fourth most populous country in the world, Indonesia is very diverse in economic, social and religious aspects. Beneath the overwhelming Muslim majority – what takes an estimated 85% to 95% of the approximately 240 million population – the religious picture is really complex. According to official statistics, in Flores, Sumba and West Timor residents are dominantly Christians and the North Sumatran Batak region and some parts of Kalimantan also show numerous believers of this faith. Bali is a Hindu stronghold with at least 90% of its population considered as Hindu. The Muslim community mostly consists of Sunnis with the differentiation of a traditional (combination of local customs and original Islam beliefs, located primarily in Java) and a modernist (a more “classical” in theology) groups. However census and other surveys do not mention that animism still has significant popularity in the eastern provinces. Estimating their numbers is difficult because of lack of concrete facts. This originates from the nation’s ideology called Pancasila, and the 29th Article of the Constitution which determines “the belief in the One and Only God”. This statement is prior than the freedom of religion, that means being animist is against the Constitution and technically illegal.



Group portrait with members of the Roman Catholic Mission in Borneo in the 1930s. Photo by Tropenmuseum of the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT)

Because of the same reason atheism is also unwelcomed: Alexander Aan, who gave up his belief in God and posted his standpoint on Facebook sentenced two and a half years in prison with the charge of insulting religious people with this act. The government respects 5 religions: Islam, Christianity (Roman Catholic and Protestant churches), Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. Recently, all other rising religions have to undergo a though official recognition procedure starting with the establishing a social organization.

Pancasila



Believe in the one and only God



Just and civilised humanity



The unity of Indonesia



Democracy led by the wisdom of deliberations among representatives



Social justice for the whole of the people of Indonesia

The proportion of Christians has been about 10% for decades, with Protestant majority. Religion-based conflicts occurred mostly in those areas, where extremists of the Muslim majority intend to expand



Stations of the Cross, Javanese-Christian Stations of the Cross

influence of their religion and the small numbers of distinct believers offer an easy target and a good chance to achieve their goals. But it is also important to mention, that the tiny Shia community is in the most desperate situation, facing the most attacks perpetrated by modernist Sunnis. They threat and force members of the under 1% minority to convert to Sunni Islam.

Actions taken against other religions appear also in areas, where huge numbers of animist followers allow to rapidly

enlarging the influence of Islam. In the Indonesian territory of New Guinea island Islam and Christianity seem to be competing with each other in outreaching these "potential believers". Conversion and immigration are the major tools to obtain these territories in religious approach.

Implementation of Islamic law is an issue has been rising more and more times, but not in a state level. The Republic of Indonesia maintains a federal operating system; the government rejects its implementation as the prime source of justice, but permitted most of Aceh's provinces to establish a new codex deeply influenced by sharia as the basis of their local legal practice. This produces opportunity to legally discriminate non-Muslims, while proving a more permissive procedure for those, who do not tolerate presence of other religions. As one of the government's criteria, this legal system is not valid for members of other religions, but this exemption does not work perfectly in reality and Christians also have to accommodate to its regulations. Local politics are also in the hand of Muslims since they dominate in polls, and a candidate who aims a political career is recommended to cooperate with Islam leaders and to propagate a programme satisfying needs of the Muslim majority. The newly elected mayor of the West Javanese city of Tasikmalaya vowed to introduce sharia in return for the support he got from Muslim leaders. His initiative cited religious affairs to the stage of politics and encourages Islamists.

Muslim groups often threaten Christians to keep away from services and sometimes deprive congregations from their places of worship forcibly. Collective movements take over control of churches and authorities do not and cannot stop persecutions. Pastors who lost their churches try to find a new place for celebrations, but they have to acquire an



Christ as a Javanese Prince, Ganjuran, Bantul, Java, Indonesia

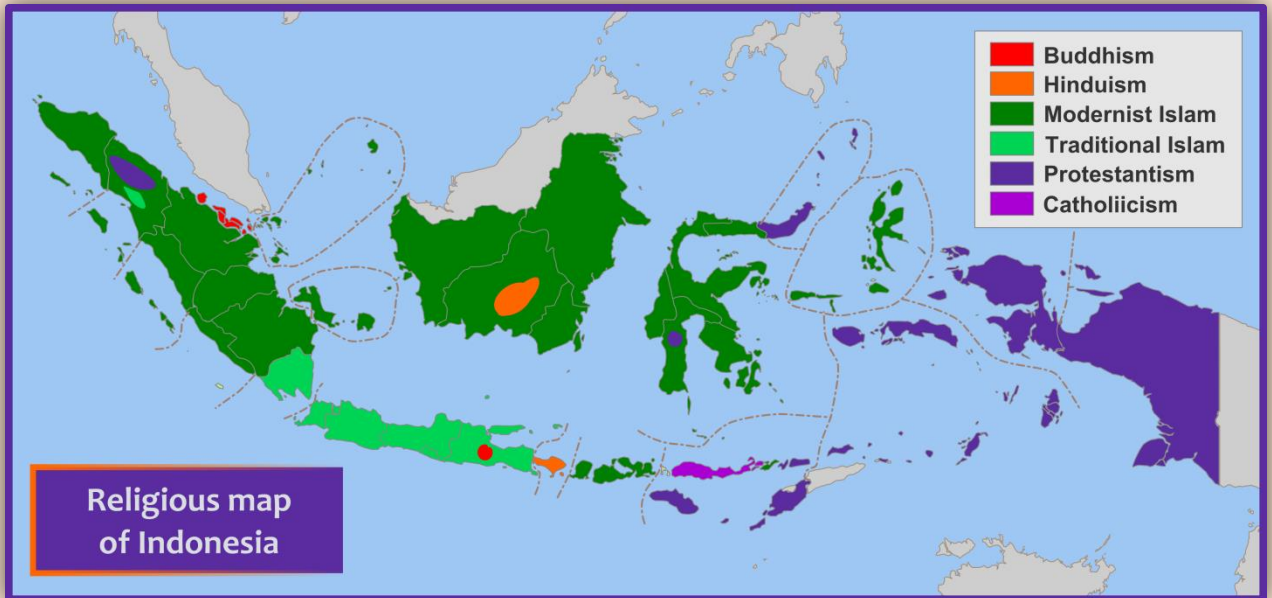
official permission to establish a new place for worship. The cost of the permit can be as high as 125,000 US dollars equal Indonesian rupiahs and public institutions obstruct the permission procedure using administrative obstacles. The claim for a new Christian church requires a petition of supporters has to be signed by at least 90 Christians and 60 Muslims and after this it takes for years to get the permission.

Since the church of Bogor town was closed in 2010 by the mayor who stated it had no valid permission to host worship legally, its congregation has been holding services in front of the Merdeka presidential palace to protest against the government's inactivity. As an action to call President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's attention to the intolerable situation, Protestants sent 6,000 postcards to him asking for revision of their



Indonesian Christian Defense League logo. The Indonesian Christian Defense League (ICDL) is an Indonesian Christian freedom Community which opposes what it considers to be a spread of Radical Islamism, Sharia law and Islamic extremism in the Republic of Indonesia. The League was found in September, 2010

permission claims. But there is not much hope of the Christians. The Muslim leader of Religious Affairs Ministry Suryadharma Ali rejected all complaints about religious conflicts, and insisted strictly on his statement: "Indonesia is the most tolerant country in the world."



Chances for effective interreligious dialogue

In an ideal world, religion should play a significant positive role in finding real and lasting solutions on conflicts between various cultural and religious groups. But reality is much more about that faith is a triggering reason of violence in many corners of the globe and the results of cooperation between religious leaders, communities in favour of peace has a tiny effect in comparison with the persecutions carried out. Unfortunately, religions, politics or even various forms of selfish interests are not separated along certain demarcation lines causing very complicated situations and interfering interreligious dialogues. The most obvious example is the problem complex of the Holy Land, which contains ethnical, territorial and legal oppositions besides the simple arguments of Muslim and Jewish believers. Although the actio radius of cross-faith cooperation is limited because of such reasons, the shared interests and mutual purposes can establish a fragile background of dialogues with the hope of actual tolerance. It is necessary to underline: what we are talking about is a harmony, not a unity of religions. A unity is not just out of chance, nevertheless it is even not wanted since it would require believers to give up some parts of their culture and identity.



The Temple of All Religions in Kazan, Russia. It consists of several types of religious architecture including an Orthodox church, a minaret, and a synagogue, among others



But surprisingly, dominance of a local religious group facilitates tolerance and cooperation between persecuted ones, and conflict situations bring attention to the value of religious freedom and general peace. Rising of Islam – in numbers of believers and their political influence – urged the rapprochement of Christian churches in these regions. As these congregations are very close to each other in theology and lifestyle, when violent attacks come from outside of Christianity, the chance of common actions increase. The first and most common form of religious dialogues takes place within the big world religions. Ecumenical movement is a rather successful incorporation of this level and acts globally. Both local and international levels, collaboration of different Christian churches aims to preserve Christianity – a more comprehensive phenomenon which includes their worships – in turbulent areas.

In those cases, when religious and human rights abuses are not present or perpetrated by religion-independent groups, humanitarian emergencies are the motif of collaboration and in a multi-religious environment a real interreligious co-operation can form in local level. Very secular reasons drive these initiatives and focus attention to the basics of religious

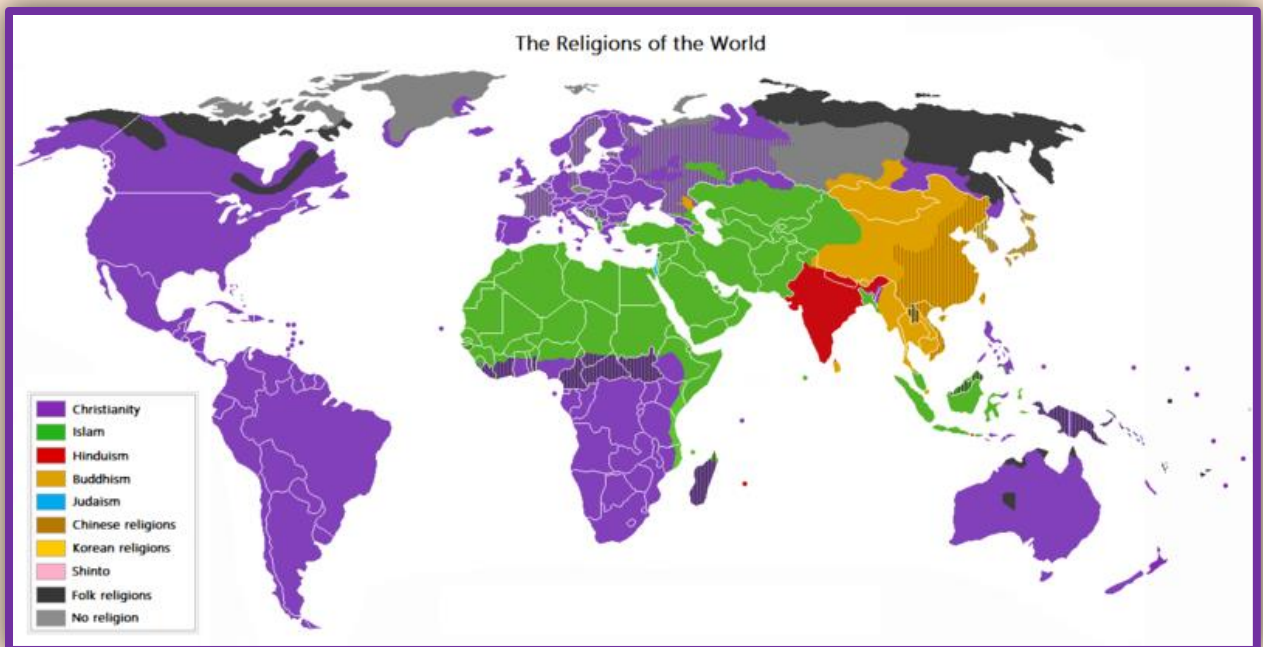
teachings, relatively close to each other in most of the widely spread religions. Maintaining the dialogue in an effective level after the founding causes have disappeared is a great challenge, but interreligious organizations try to carry on collaboration launching projects such as establishing religious roundtables, forums, mutual visits at places of worships, etc. On the other hand, tolerance has to appear in the method of cooperation as well. Taboo topics, like status of women can be very confronting with some communities and the efforts taken to influence youths are also problematic because this social group embodies the future of all religions. Education of general human rights – including freedom of religion as well – is another way to strengthen people's awareness of tolerance.



A variation of Coexist glyph sticker. COEXIST is regarded as a way to demonstrate the support of religious freedom, tolerance and understanding

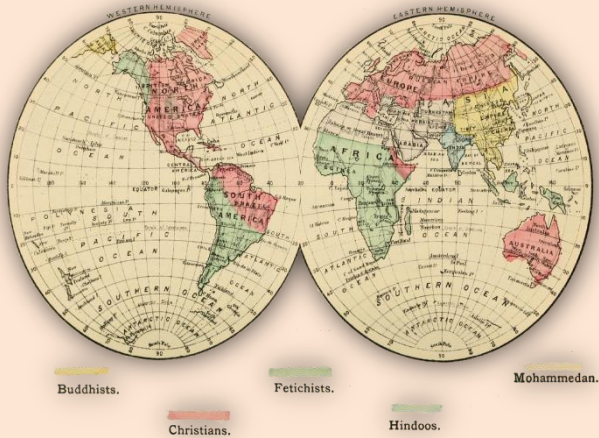
Realizing the dialogue in international scale is the unique highest level collaboration we heard about a very few times. One of the major problems is that – excepting the Roman Catholic Church – religions are constructed in a more or less decentralized way resulting there are no clearly authorised representatives of the faiths. To tackle this difficulty, the solution is a “parliament-like” method of discussions. The Parliament of World's Religions is a more than 100 years old initiative holds huge gatherings in every 5 years to promote tolerance peace and sustainable development.

As a purpose of the United Nations, the interfaith collaboration has been encouraged by the organization since the 2010 Resolution. In order to foster interreligious and intercultural dialogues, understandings and cooperation for peace, the first week of February is declared as World Interfaith Harmony Week in every year.



Christianity in the 21st century

Case studies of this publication outlined the persecution of Christians in some parts of the world. Now it is the time to expand the focus and embed suppression in a more comprehensive overview of challenges Christianity has to face with in recent and following years.



An 1883 map of the world divided into colours representing "Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Mohammedans, Fetichists"

The starting points are the global religious facts. Despite of all bad news and studies deal with Christians' persecution this faith is going to keep its first place by number of adherents in the foreseeable future. Commonly all significant religions increase the number of their followers – the only exception is Shinto which produces annual global decrease with about 1% – but their neck and neck race result that their percentage of world population probably will not suffer noticeable changes according to forecasts analysing the trends up to 2050.

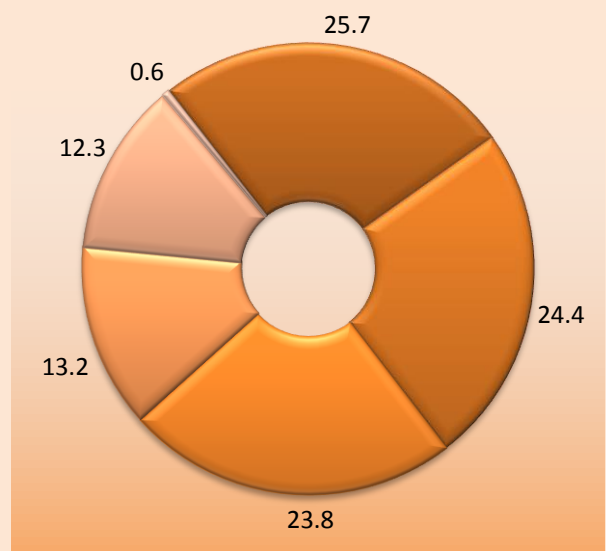
So it is easy to admit that the problems will root from lower levels. Europe, the centre of today's Christianity is expected to lose part of its specific importance since the population's slow growth sets strict limits to expansion and tendency of growing numbers of non-religious people affects against increasing Christian presence. The main continents where dynamic

advancement is anticipated are Africa, Asia and the Americas where demographics and the non-baptised groups represent great opportunities for the future. Meanwhile this progress is not a way without increasing chance of persecution or even harder clashes of religions because other faiths will also attempt to win these people and territories for their own.

Global situation of recent Christianity fosters the cooperation of the denominations since they face very similar challenges – perpetrators who persecute Christianity do not distinguish between them. This fact brings closer persecuted

Percentage of world Christian population in each region as of 2010

- Europe
- Latin-America-Caribbean
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Asia-Pacific
- North America
- Middle East-North Africa





local Christians and connects them to international organizations dealing with these issues. The great number of non-denominational human rights and religious freedom organizations proves that mutual interests link Christian believers easily in the hope of giving support for their suppressed brothers and sisters. And upcoming challenges will be the main sources not just to continue but to deepen their joint work globally.

Within denominations the basic ground of connection between remote congregations are the alliances and associations of them. These networks channel a wide range of support for those in need. Ensuring technical and spiritual support for fresh Christian communities and sharing stories of persecuted ones, these organizations provide an international backing for Christians living in unfavourable environment. Another advantage of this cooperation is that members of such alliances live in other countries where suppressions take place can lobby for a more beneficial foreign policy or attitude at their own government to stress persecuting leaderships to reconsider their activity. In general, a global advancement of more or less direct Christian policy influencing potential is expected parallel with the increasing problems of religious freedom.

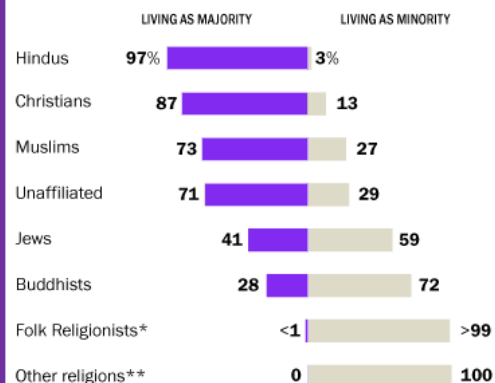
proper solution, a perfect balance between modernizing and keeping structures is the key to a viable religious community. The leading role of this mission is transferred to the Pope who is not only the head of the Roman Catholic Church but also a non-official representative of Christianity, the most influential Christian spiritual leader. According to Forbes Magazine Benedict XVI was the 5th most powerful people in the world in 2012, so his responsibility is extraordinary for the future of the entire faith. During his years as Bishop of Rome he took steps to adjust Christianity to the modern era. He facilitated interfaith dialogues, appeared on Twitter to keep contact with the believers. But after he declared his resignation Christians and the media started taking into account the difficulties the next Pope will face. They did it in order to find the person who suits the best and will be able to guide the Catholic Church and indirectly Christianity towards prospering and peaceful decades.

Trends in annual growth of adherence		
1970–1985	1990–2000	2000–2005
3.65%: Bahá'í	2.65%: Zoroastrianism	1.84%: Islam
2.74%: Islam	2.28%: Bahá'í	1.70%: Bahá'í
2.34%: Hinduism	2.13%: Islam	1.62%: Sikhism
1.67%: Buddhism	1.87%: Sikhism	1.57%: Hinduism
1.64%: Christianity	1.69%: Hinduism	1.32%: Christianity
1.09%: Judaism	1.36%: Christianity	
	1.09%: Buddhism	

Christianity along with other religions is required to adapt and tackle challenges but it also has to preserve its ancient heritage. This is the challenge where finding a

Majority or Minority

Percentage of each religious group that lives in countries where its adherents are a majority or a minority



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

**Includes Bahá'í, Jains, Sikhs, Shintoists, Taoists, followers of Tenrikyo, Wiccans, Zoroastrians and many other faiths.

Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life • Global Religious Landscape, December 2012

10 Countries with the Largest Number of Christians

	ESTIMATED 2010 CHRISTIAN POPULATION	PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION THAT IS CHRISTIAN	PERCENTAGE OF WORLD CHRISTIAN POPULATION
United States	243,060,000	78.3%	11.2%
Brazil	173,300,000	88.9%	8.0%
Mexico	107,910,000	95.1%	5.0%
Russia	104,750,000	73.3%	4.8%
Philippines	86,370,000	92.6%	4.0%
Nigeria	78,050,000	49.3%	3.6%
China	68,410,000	5.1%	3.1%
DR Congo	63,210,000	95.8%	2.9%
Germany	56,540,000	68.7%	2.6%
Ethiopia	52,070,000	62.8%	2.4%
Subtotal for the 10 countries	1,033,670,000	40.0%	47.6%
Subtotal for Rest of the World	1,139,500,000	26.4%	52.4%
World Total	2,173,180,000	31.5%	100.0%

Population estimates are rounded to ten thousands. Percentages are calculated from unrounded numbers. Figures may not add exactly due to rounding.
Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life • Global Religious Landscape, December 2012

Regional Distribution of Christians

Population by region as of 2010



10 facts about Christian persecution

❶ Two thousand years ago, Jesus prophesied that his followers would be attacked: "Remember what I told you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also."

❷ Robespierre ordered the execution of 300,000 Christians in the Vendée Region of France (more than the quarter of its population) in 1793. The War in the Vendée was the first modern genocide.

❸ During the Red Terror in Spain 6,832 clergymen were executed by leftists, which included communists and anarchists. On the night of 19 July 1936 alone, some fifty churches were burned across Spain.

❹ The total number of Christians killed, as a result of Soviet state atheist policies, has been estimated at over 20 million, while tens of thousands of churches were destroyed or converted to other use.

❺ A survey reported in 2010 that at least 75% of religious persecution, reported from 2008-2010, around the world was directed at people of the Christian faith.

❻ 163,000 Christians die every year for their faith. Half of all the Christians who have ever died for their faith did so in the 10th century alone, some 35 million.

❼ It is estimated that as many as 70,000 Christians are imprisoned in North Korea simply for being Christian, and the act of carrying a Bible can result in execution.

❽ Seventy per cent of Christians killed around the world in 2012 died in the African country of Nigeria, where the persecution continues today.

❾ In Colombia pastors have been targeted by guerrilla movements such as FARC, with 400 churches being forced to close in areas under the control of armed groups. Christians have also been killed for speaking out against violence and the widespread drug trade.

❿ Communist leaders in some districts of Laos have implemented a program called "New Mechanism" in which anyone who does not convert to Buddhism or animism is forcibly removed from their district. Christian villagers have been forced to sign documents renouncing their faith.

For further information

To start

Religion Facts

<http://www.religionfacts.com/>

If you are seeking for help to overview the world's religions and beliefs, this page will satisfy this need. The site is a great source of information about religions – even about those you have never heard about. It provides the most important facts easily accessible by religion or by country. Giving quick comprehensive scope it is a good starting point to explore religious issues of the world. The most interesting initiative is the comparison of beliefs highlighting similarities and differences between them. One of its most useful content is a great catalogue of religious symbols explaining the meaning and the use of these icons.

RELIGIONFACTS
Just the facts on religion.

United States Commission on International Religious Freedom

<http://www.uscirtf.gov/>



United States Commission on
International Religious Freedom

This is a bipartisan independent commission of US federal government, its members are appointed by the Congressional leadership of the two major parties along with the President. Founded in 1998, the Commission's responsibility is to analyse recent events related to religious freedom, then to make policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State and the Congress. In each year it publishes an annual report that overviews the challenges of religious freedom globally. Factsheets and special reports present on-going issues and advocacy documents reveal its policy influential activity.

Persecution of Christians

International Christian Concern

<http://www.persecution.org/>

PERSECUTION.org
INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN CONCERN

The Washington-based non-governmental watchdog organization was founded to act as a bridge between persecuted Christians and believers of free countries offering aid and encouragement for Christians facing suppression. Advocacy, assistance and awareness are the keywords of its work. In accordance with its efforts to raise publicity and share information the site contains interactive maps and a huge number of up to date articles presenting challenges of Christians from many countries.

Open Doors

<http://www.opendoors.org/>



Founded in 1955 by Brother Andrew, Open Doors is a non-denominational mission focuses on persecuted Christians and distributing their belief under the motto "Serving persecuted Christians worldwide". From the home page the access of 22 national sites from all populated continents is easy. These pages contain a lot of stories and news regarding persecuted Christian communities and individuals. The organization publishes its World Watch List which is an annual list ranking the worst 50 countries by the severity of religion-based anti-Christian suppression.

Christian Solidarity International

<http://www.christian-solidarity-international.org/>



This Christian human rights organization was established in Switzerland in 1977, but there are national member organizations recently. It devotes itself to campaign for religious liberty and human dignity. It provides medical treatment, food and other forms of aid to victims of persecution or disasters globally. Their most notable project is an anti-slavery campaign runs in Sudan; however their field missions appear in other hotspots of the world too. The organisation also launch lobby campaigns to stress political leaders and institutions to take actions against abuses of human rights and freedom of religion.

Barnabas Fund

www.barnabasfund.org/



This is a Christian organization supporting oppressed and discriminated Christians to strengthen individuals and communities worldwide. The fund provides direct spiritual support and channel material aid between believers, especially for those living in Muslim environment. Its wide range of projects include even support of small family businesses in order to enable Christians to earn a decent living in unfavourable conditions. For persecuted people support means providing legal advocacy, safe houses for abused ones and technical aid restoring damage of Christian facilities.

Voice of the Martyrs

<http://www.persecution.com/>



The non-profit inter-denominational Christian organization founded by persecuted Romanian pastor Richard Wurmbrand in 1967, after he moved to the USA with his family. This is not a centralized organization with a centre of leadership instead this name is an umbrella term of several national independent ones, each with their own missions. These entities offer aid and support for Christians under suppression. Voice of the Martyrs give a voice for persecuted Christians to inform broader international public presenting news from anti-Christian hostilities.

Interreligious issues

Inter-religious dialogue

<http://irdialogue.org/>

INTERRELIGIOUS™
DIALOGUE

This is the website of the Journal of Inter-religious Dialogue, a forum of issues connecting to religion, including disputes, open discussions towards probable solutions. The site publishes articles monthly with the purpose of increasing quality and frequency of interfaith cooperation promoting ideas and methodologies originate from cutting-edge researches. Managed by a multi-faith team, the journal is a promoter of a tolerant society based on more efficient long-term dialogues. Using and promoting online tools of regional and global interreligious work, the Journal encourages religious and political leaders to participate in efforts to get closer to the harmony of world's religious communities.

Interfaith Encounter Association

<http://www.interfaith-encounter.org/>



The non-profit organization founded in Israel in 2001, is a major contributor of interreligious tolerance and the culture of peace in the Holy Land. Focusing its efforts on the Middle East, the Association organizes and maintains interfaith encounter groups and centres to create mutual respect and friendship of different communities via monthly sessions each of them dedicated to a particular topic. Meetings and conferences of the regular Israeli-Palestinian Dialogue aim to foster peace building initiatives in an interreligious non-political aspect. Sponsored trips visiting sacred places and archaeological sites facilitate the understanding of the roots of the three Abrahamic beliefs and bring individuals and communities together.

Council for a Parliament of World Religions

<http://www.parliamentofreligions.org/>



After the first Parliament was held in Chicago, 1893, the institute has been a key promoter of interfaith initiatives for over a century. It was created to involve religious and spiritual communities and their leaders along with influential civil leaders into a global discussion. Parliaments are held in every 5 years to compete with challenges like global peace and sustainability, and besides conferences and meetings a branch of cultural programs contribute to a real multi-religious, multi-cultural experience.

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PERSECUTED, *not* ABANDONED

Picture by International Christian Concern

CATHOLIC WORLD
TRUTH SACRIFICE PRACTICES CERTAIN SUPERSTITION GENERAL
BELIEVE TAOISM RITUALS THEOLOGY DEITY OLD
MANY CONCEPT MODERN CULTURE TRUE
ABRAHAMIC WESTERN EXAMPLE PUBLIC
OBJECT VIEW SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS CULTURES FAMILY DIVINE
FAITH TODAY BAHAI FREEDOM VIOLENCE HINDUISM NEED
GLOBAL THOUGHT FEELING WORSHIP DIVINE INSPIRATION HELP SCIENCE
HUMAN EXISTENCE KNOWLEDGE MORALITY INFLUENCES
SACRED PRIEST GOD ETHICS LIFESTYLE NEW
NATURE ANCIENT COSMOLOGY SECULAR HOPE LIFE SIKHISM TEMPLE
IDEA ONE CHURCH CENTURY BUDDHISM MYTH PARTICULAR PERSONAL
ETHNIC BELIEFS COMMUNITY JUDAISM SERMON FUTURE LAW
DEFINED ISLAM CHRISTIAN PATH INDIAN
CHRISTIANITY LOCAL RIGHT REFORMATION
BELIEF COMMON DISCIPLE MOVEMENT PHILOSOPHY CULTURAL CONFLICT GROUP
WORLD VIEW SOCIETY MEANS PERSECUTION PRACTICE WAY PAST IDEAS
RELIGION POPULATION BILLION THEORY



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