

7 Facts About Global Religious Persecution

A new study by the Pew Charitable Trusts and the John Templeton Foundation reports on the extent to which governments and societies around the world impinge on religious beliefs and practices. Here are seven figures you should know from the latest study on trends in religious hostilities:

1. Of the 198 countries included in the study—covering 99.5 percent of the world's population—105 (53 percent) experienced widespread government harassment of religious groups, up from 85 (43 percent) in 2014 and 96 (48 percent) in 2013. Cases of harassment that were isolated or affected a small number of groups also rose, taking place in 52 countries (26 percent) in 2015 (up from 44, or 22 percent of countries, in 2014). (Note: North Korea is not included in the study.)
2. Government use of force against religious groups increased as well, with 23 countries (12 percent) experiencing more than 200 cases of government force in 2015, up from 21 (11 percent) in 2014. There was an even bigger increase in the number of countries with at least one, but no more than 200 incidents of government use of force against religious groups: 83 nations (42 percent) fell into this category in 2015, an increase from 60 countries (30 percent) in 2014.
3. Nearly all Muslims, Jews, Hindus live in countries where their group was harassed in 2015: 128 for Christians, 125 for Muslims and 74 for Jews. Hindus were harassed in 14 countries and Buddhists in seven. Religiously unaffiliated people—including atheists, agnostics and those who do not identify with any religion—were harassed in 14 countries.

4. Christians were harassed by governments in 97 countries in 2015, up from 79 in 2014. They were targeted by the highest number of governments in the Asia-Pacific region, where 33 countries harassed Christians in 2015.
5. Jews continue to be harassed by individuals and social groups in many more countries than by governments, although the number of countries where individuals or social groups harassed Jews decreased (from 80 in 2014 to 67 in 2015) while the number of countries where governments harassed Jews increased (from 31 to 43).
6. There was a large increase in the number of countries where governments harassed Muslims in 2015, from 80 in 2014 to 106 in 2015. The governments of 32 countries in Europe harassed Muslims in 2015—up from 27 in 2014.
7. Among the world's 25 most populous countries, Russia, Egypt, India, Pakistan and Nigeria stand out as having the most restrictions on religion (as of the end of 2015) when both government restrictions and religious hostilities are taken into account. (Countries in the upper right of the chart have the most restrictions and hostilities.) Brazil, Japan, South Africa, Ethiopia and the Philippines have the least restrictions and hostilities as of 2015. (Countries in the lower left have the least restrictions and hostilities.)

Click [here](#) to read the entire report.

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