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REAP
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The Discrimination of Religious Minorities in the United States

Key Words:

- Minority Religions
- Discrimination
- Religious Liberty
- 1st Amendment
- Religious Pluralism

Description:

The following issue brief is meant to address discrimination that minority religions deal with in the United States. This includes inhibiting their rights to practice, their rights to build places of worship, and be accepted amongst the community of all religious organizations.

Key Points:

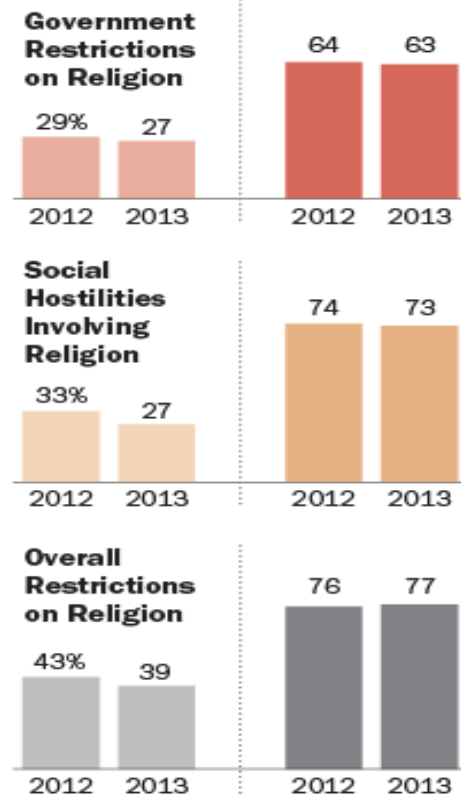
- Religious discrimination is defined as disrespecting a person and inflicting some kind of ill treatment based on their religious beliefs.
- Although discrimination against religion is unconstitutional, it is still practiced in the United States at different levels of severity today.
- There is no direct correlation between just minority religions and specific treatment of discrimination; in essence all religions have experienced religious discrimination in the United States.
- Most recently there has been a global trend of racial discrimination, however the increases in such acts are not appearing within the United States quite as strongly as in foreign countries. Countries where individual rights of practicing religion are more blatantly ignored and discriminated.

2-4 Images:

Restrictions on Religion, by Year

% of countries where levels are high or very high

% of global population living where levels are high or very high



Data are for calendar years 2012 and 2013.

"Latest Trends in Religious Restrictions and Hostilities," February 2015

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

<http://www.pewforum.org/2015/02/26/situation-as-of-2013/>

Major Religious Traditions in the U.S.

Among all adults...

	%
Christian	78.4
Protestant	51.3
<i>Evangelical churches</i>	26.3
<i>Mainline churches</i>	18.1
<i>Hist. black churches</i>	6.9
Catholic	23.9
Mormon	1.7
Jehovah's Witness	0.7
Orthodox	0.6
<i>Greek Orthodox</i>	<0.3
<i>Russian Orthodox</i>	<0.3
<i>Other</i>	<0.3
Other Christian	0.3
Other Religions	4.7
Jewish	1.7
<i>Reform</i>	0.7
<i>Conservative</i>	0.5
<i>Orthodox</i>	<0.3
<i>Other</i>	0.3
Buddhist	0.7
<i>Zen Buddhist</i>	<0.3
<i>Theravada Buddhist</i>	<0.3
<i>Tibetan Buddhist</i>	<0.3
<i>Other</i>	0.3
Muslim*	0.6
<i>Sunni</i>	0.3
<i>Shia</i>	<0.3
<i>Other</i>	<0.3
Hindu	0.4
Other world rel.	<0.3
Other faiths	1.2
<i>Unitarians and other liberal faiths</i>	0.7
<i>New Age</i>	0.4
<i>Native American rel.</i>	<0.3
Unaffiliated	16.1
Atheist	1.6
Agnostic	2.4
Nothing in particular	12.1
<i>Secular unaffiliated</i>	6.3
<i>Religious unaffiliated</i>	5.8
Don't Know/Refused	0.8
	100

Due to rounding, figures may not add to 100 and nested figures may not add to the subtotal indicated.

* From "Muslim Americans: Middle Class and Mostly Mainstream," Pew Research Center, 2007

<http://religions.pewforum.org/reports#>

	FY 1997	FY 1998	FY 1999	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
Receipts	1,709	1,786	1,811	1,939	2,127	2,572	2,532	2,466	2,340	2,541	2,880	3,273	3,386	3,790	4,151	3,811	3,721	3,549
Resolutions	2,137	2,247	2,187	2,230	2,217	2,729	2,690	2,676	2,352	2,387	2,525	2,727	2,958	3,782	4,608	4,219	3,865	3,575
Resolutions By Type																		
Settlements	89	97	144	156	182	237	221	241	227	244	282	253	270	330	368	327	331	268
	4.2%	4.3%	6.6%	7.0%	8.2%	8.7%	8.2%	9.0%	9.7%	10.2%	11.2%	9.3%	9.1%	8.7%	8.0%	7.8%	8.6%	7.5%
Withdrawals w/Benefits	74	81	87	94	77	100	86	101	98	118	133	138	162	203	188	171	198	177
	3.5%	3.6%	4.0%	4.2%	3.5%	3.7%	3.2%	3.8%	4.2%	4.9%	5.3%	5.1%	5.5%	5.4%	4.1%	4.1%	5.1%	5.0%
Administrative Closures	614	559	532	429	382	451	434	490	384	364	418	459	585	626	1,012	621	610	687
	28.7%	24.9%	24.3%	19.2%	17.2%	16.5%	16.1%	18.3%	16.3%	15.2%	16.6%	16.8%	19.8%	16.6%	22.0%	14.7%	15.8%	19.2%
No Reasonable Cause	1,265	1,363	1,269	1,343	1,349	1,729	1,744	1,672	1,442	1,524	1,498	1,705	1,805	2,309	2,737	2,800	2,558	2,327
	59.2%	60.7%	58.0%	60.2%	60.8%	63.4%	64.8%	62.5%	61.3%	63.8%	59.3%	62.5%	61.0%	61.1%	59.4%	66.4%	66.2%	65.1%
Reasonable Cause	95	147	155	208	227	212	205	172	201	137	194	172	136	314	303	300	168	116
	4.4%	6.5%	7.1%	9.3%	10.2%	7.8%	7.6%	6.4%	8.5%	5.7%	7.7%	6.3%	4.6%	8.3%	6.6%	7.1%	4.3%	3.2%
Successful Conciliations	32	42	42	56	43	54	67	38	36	38	81	42	43	73	57	137	49	34
	1.5%	1.9%	1.9%	2.5%	1.9%	2.0%	2.5%	1.4%	1.5%	1.6%	3.2%	1.5%	1.5%	1.9%	1.2%	3.2%	1.3%	1.0%
Unsuccessful Conciliations	63	105	113	152	184	158	138	134	165	99	113	130	93	241	246	163	119	82
	2.9%	4.7%	5.2%	6.8%	8.3%	5.8%	5.1%	5.0%	7.0%	4.1%	4.5%	4.8%	3.1%	6.4%	5.3%	3.9%	3.1%	2.3%
Merit Resolutions	258	325	386	458	486	549	512	514	526	499	609	563	568	847	859	798	697	561
	12.1%	14.5%	17.7%	20.5%	21.9%	20.1%	19.0%	19.2%	22.4%	20.9%	24.1%	20.6%	19.2%	22.4%	18.6%	18.9%	18.0%	15.7%
Monetary Benefits (Millions)*	\$2.2	\$2.6	\$3.1	\$5.5	\$14.1	\$4.3	\$6.6	\$6.0	\$6.1	\$5.7	\$6.4	\$7.5	\$7.6	\$10.0	\$12.6	\$9.9	\$11.2	\$8.7

<http://www.eoc.gov/eoc/statistics/enforcement/religion.cfm>

Changes in Social Hostilities

*Changes on the Social Hostilities Index (SHI)
from 2012 to 2013*

POINT CHANGE	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES	% OF COUNTRIES	
2.0 or more increase	2	1%	
1.0 to 1.9 increase	11	6	18%
0.1 to 0.9 increase	22	11	
No change	45	23	23%
0.1 to 0.9 decrease	64	32	
1.0 to 1.9 decrease	42	21	60%
2.0 or more decrease	12	6	
Total	198	100	

Point changes are calculated by comparing SHI scores from year to year. Percentages may not add exactly due to rounding.

"Latest Trends in Religious Restrictions and Hostilities,"
February 2015

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

<http://www.pewforum.org/2015/02/26/situation-as-of-2013/>

Brief:

Religious discrimination is illegal in the constitution, as stated under the 1st amendment, which grants the freedom to practice any religion he/she wishes. Nevertheless, discrimination still occurs. Today, there has been an increasing trend in global discrimination against religion, however sites like the US State Department and the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission have claimed that the United States has not partaken in such trends.

The United States is unique in that it serves as a home for over 350,000 congregations of religious practice. As a result, the acceptance and freedom to practice is expected to be more welcoming. Nevertheless, it cannot be said that our country does not struggle with religious discrimination either. According to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), we still find discrimination of religion through harassment claims, employment processes, work situations, public accommodations, and more. In another study as part of the EEOC, there has been recorded data claiming that since 2008, claims made about religious discrimination under title VII have increased in small amounts (almost a hundred a year).

In reality, the religious denominations in the United States are all minority at times, depending on where they live within the country. Aside from the more well known religious organizations, like Catholics, Christians, Jews, and Protestants, there are so many more that can qualify as minorities: Pagans, Baptists, Amish, Atheists, Buddhists, Muslims, Jehovah's Witness, Krishnas, Mormons, Scientologists, and more. Even with a simple search of "religious discrimination" online, there are pages and pages of various cases of religious discrimination happening from the suburbs of South Carolina to the urban cities of New York and Chicago.

One of the most recent cases of minority discrimination is the protest against the building of a Muslim Mosque two blocks away from ground zero in New York City. When this issue erupted, it became clear that discrimination towards Muslim was an apparent strong sentiment still alive even 9 years after the attacks of 9/11. The event in 2010 revealed the sentiment that many New Yorkers still had against the Muslim religion, as if though the religion itself was involved with the 9/11 attacks. The hopes for setting up a mosque in the area was presented by the Cordoba House Project, which was created through collaboration between the American Society for Muslim Advancement and the Cordoba Initiative. When New Yorker got word of the project, protests and disappointment ensued, as people found it insensitive to have a Muslim mosque so close to the site of Ground Zero.

- <http://www.cnn.com/2010/US/05/07/new.york.ground.zero.mosque/>

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- Religious Discrimination articles from the Huffington Post
 - o <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/news/religious-discrimination/>
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