*International Institute for Religious Freedom*

**Bonn • Brussels • Cape Town • Colombo • Brasília • Delhi • Tübingen • Vancouver**
www.iirf.global

# Incident Reporting Guide

***Violations of the Right to Religious Freedom***

December 2023

## 1. Purpose

This document contains the criteria and guidelines for reporting incidents of violation of religious freedom and to search for incidents in our database.

The International Institute for Religious Freedom (IIRF) collects information on incidents of physical and non-physical violence. Information regarding physical violence can be found online in our Violent Incidents Database (VID). The self-reporting of both types of incidents can be done through our online form.

The VID is a service designed to present discrete information about religious freedom restrictions, which gives greater visibility to the phenomenon and is intended to be used by our collaborators or anyone interested in religious freedom.

The VID attempts to present publicly sourced information with transparency of sources. Incidents in the database are selected according to the reference criteria developed in this document. We hope that this database may be used as empirical support for studies on the state of religious freedom.

## 2. Who reports the incidents?

The IIRF works with research assistants and key collaborators in the different countries. These collaborators are usually people who, due to their professional or social environment, have a greater opportunity to know about this type of incident. The invitation to report incidents is also

extended to anyone who has knowledge of actions or omissions involving a violation of religious freedom. We encourage our collaborators to provide all the details they consider relevant, as well as the respective sources (reports, news, interviews, etc.).

It is important to note that the IIRF does not have the resources to validate each reported incident. If users or our collaborators detect that the information provided is not entirely correct or incomplete after an incident is uploaded, it may be deleted and/or modified.

## 3. Reference criteria

The following conceptual framework inspires the incident reporting:

### a) Definitions

- *Religious identity*

Condition of belonging to a religious group that follows a particular belief system (self-identification criterion).

- *Active religious behavior*

Notion under which a belief system (or religious convictions) leads its followers to behave in a particular way. This includes participation in religious events, but also any form of behavior inspired by religious convictions, such as participation in civil society or politics.

- *Religious freedom*

Inherently pluralistic, interdependent and multidimensional, this right implies the possibility of having, maintaining and expressing any religious belief, to disagree with the religion or majority position in society or, simply, not to belief.[1] It is a right that can be exercised individually or

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[1] Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 12 of the American Convention on Human Rights.

collectively, both in public and in private. In practical terms, religious freedom encompasses freedom of religious expression in all spheres of society, and can be restricted by both state and non-state actors.

- *Spheres*

Religious freedom can be violated in different spheres of society. Believers and/or religious groups, regardless of their religious denomination, can live or express their faith personally, that is, considering their interior life, the *forum internum*, freedom of opinion and conscience, or their religious life within his family. Socially, understood as the interaction between them and the community in which they carry out their activities, beyond the personal and/or family life of its members. And publicly, either for their participation in the public/political life of the country or for their interaction with state authorities in general.

- *Violations of religious freedom:*

We can understand this category as any omission or action directed towards those who identify with a religious denomination and/or follow active religious behavior, both in the context of personal religious worship and in the manifestation of expressions of religious freedom in the different areas of experience of faith.

- *Restrictions or violations of the right to religious freedom can be identified in two ways:*
  - *Non-physical violence:* Understood as all actions or omissions, in the form of pressure, discrimination, social or other forms of exclusion, that in any way restrict or limit the free exercise of religious freedom.
  - *Physical violence:* Understood as violent actions that directly seek to cause physical damage, whether through physical abuse, kidnapping, murder, robbery, etc. or damage to properties (temples, businesses, residences, etc.), through vandalism or any other way.

### b) *Nature of the incidents: possible scenarios of violations of religious freedom*

Considering the concepts described, in order to identify possible violations of religious freedom, we can take into account the following possible conditions. It is important to note that this is an illustrative list, not limiting. If other limitations to religious freedom are identified, they can be added.

- *Non-physical violence*

Personal Sphere

1. Have people with a religious identity or active religious behavior been forced to carry out actions that threaten their conscience or beliefs?
2. Have people suffered any type of discrimination in their study centers, work or other spaces (public or private) due to their religious identity or their active religious behavior?
3. Has the conscientious objection of people with a religious identity or active religious behavior been violated or ignored in any way or circumstance?
4. Have parents with a religious identity or active religious behavior been free to ensure that their children receive an education that is in accordance with their own convictions?
5. Other:

Social Sphere

1. Have opinions or points of view been restricted, prevented or sanctioned when they have been made known in the social sphere, due to the religious identity or active religious behavior of those who have expressed them?
2. In any social event / activity, have those with a religious identity or active religious behavior been prevented from participating?

3. Has the registration, financing or activities of organizations whose distinctive character is related to a religious identity been impeded?

4. Other:

Public sphere

1. Have opinions or points of view been restricted, prevented or sanctioned when they have been made public, due to the religious identity or active religious behavior of those who have expressed them?

2. In any public or political event/activity, have those with a religious identity or active religious behavior been prevented from participate?

3. Has the registration or participation in public or political activities / debates prevented any political party or organization whose distinctive character is related to a religious identity?

4. Has the media disseminated defamatory or biased information regarding persons, organizations or parties related to a religious identity or active religious behavior?

5. People with an active religious identity or behavior, have they made use of discourses with any religious foundation or motivated by religious beliefs, with any discriminatory nuance?

6. Other:

Physical violence

1. How many people have been killed (including executions sanctioned by the State) for their religious identity or their active religious behavior?

2. How many places of worship or religious buildings (schools, hospitals, cemeteries, etc.) have suffered (attempts at) attacks, damage, bombing, looting, destruction, fire or desecration?

3. How many places of worship or religious buildings (schools, hospitals, cemeteries, etc.) have been closed or confiscated?

4. How many people have been arrest or detained without trial for their religious identity or their active religious behavior?

5. How many people have been sentenced to prison, to a forced labor camp, sent to psychiatric hospitals as punishment or similar things for their religious identity or their active religious behavior?

6. How many people have been abducted for their religious identity or their active religious behavior?

7. How many people have been sexually assaulted or harassed because of their religious identity or their active religious behavior?

8. How many young women with a religious identity or active religious behavior have been forced to marry non-believing men or of a different faith?

9. How many people have been otherwise physically or mentally abused (including torture, abuse and death threats) because of their religious identity or their active religious behavior?

10. How many people's houses or property have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed or burned harassed by their religious identity or active religious behavior?

11. How many stores/shops, businesses or institutions of faith adherents have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed or burned harassed by their religious identity or their active religious behavior?

12. How many people have been forced to flee their homes or hide in their country because of threats or risks due to their religious identity or their active religious behavior?

13. How many people have been forced to flee their country because of threats or risks because of their religious identity or their active religious behavior?

c) *Category of actors responsible for violations of religious freedom*

The responsible actors for violations of religious freedom may be individuals and/or groups that carry out actions or omissions that in some way restrict the free exercise of the right to religious freedom or, in other words, the free experience of the faith, whatever the context. We can distinguish:

- Responsible Actor Category

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|---|
| Religious leaders |
| Ethnic group leaders |
| Extended family |
| Government officials |
| Ideological pressure groups |
| Multilateral organizations |
| Normal citizens |
| Organized crime |
| Political parties |
| Revolutionaries or paramilitary groups |
| Violent religious groups |
| Unknown |

- Responsible Actor Religion

| |
|---|
| Unknown |
| Christian |
| Islam |
| Hindu |
| Buddhist |
| Jewish |
| Animist, ancestor worship, or traditional religion |
| Other |

All above categories in red have the following sub-categories:

| |
|---|
| Christian, Catholic |
| Christian, Protestant |
| Christian, Orthodox |
| Christian, Other |
| Christian, General |

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|---|
| Islam, Sunni |
| Islam, Shi'i |
| Islam, Other |
| Islam, General |
| Other, Zoroastrian |
| Other, Baha'i |
| Other, Confucian |
| Other, Chinese Religions |
| Other, Sikh |
| Other, Mormon |
| Other, Other |

d) Religion of the victim

This section specifies the religion professed by the victims of religious freedom violations.

- Religion of the victim

| |
|---|
| Unknown |

| |
|---|
| Christian |
| Islam |
| Hindu |
| Buddhist |
| Jewish |
| Animist, ancestor worship, or traditional religion |
| Other |

All above categories in red have the following religion sub-categories:

| |
|---|
| Christian, Catholic |
| Christian, Protestant |
| Christian, Orthodox |
| Christian, Other |
| Christian, General |
| Islam, Sunni |

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| Islam, Shi'i |
| Islam, Other |
| Islam, General |
| Other, Zoroastrian |
| Other, Baha'i |
| Other, Confucian |
| Other, Chinese Religions |
| Other, Sikh |
| Other, Mormon |
| Other, Other |

## 4. How to report incidents

Incidents of both physical and non-physical violence can be reported through our online form (in English) or by completing the form attached to this document.

When filling out the form, please carefully review the criteria explained above and provide the most complete information possible. You can consider the following:

| Incident report |
|---|

| Name: |
|---|
| Last name: |
| E-mail: |

## General information

| You answer this form as | Victim |
|---|---|
| | Witness / third party |
| | Other |
| Country about which the case is reported | |

## Incident to report

| Place where the event occurred | |
|---|---|
| Incidence date | |
| Religious denomination of the victim (s) | |
| Other | |
| Other information about the victim (s) | |
| The event was carried out by | State actors |
| | Non-state actors |
| Specify | |

| Description of the event | |
|---|---|
| Continuity of the situation<br><br>(In your opinion, this situation occurs in your country/city or community) | Frequently |
| | Sporadically |
| | Occasionally |

Backup Sources
(If the information or other data related to the incident is online (media or others), add the corresponding links)

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| Additional Information |

If you have any additional questions, please contact info@iirf.global