



**UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
2026 ANNUAL REPORT**





Precious Njikonye, the mother of a student at St. Mary's Catholic School, who was abducted by gunmen and later released, sits outside her house in Papiri, Nigeria, Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2025. (AP Photo/Afolabi Sotunde)



An interior view of the Christ Apostolic Church, the day after an attack by gunmen in which people were killed and the pastor and some worshippers kidnapped, in the town of Eruku, Kwara state, Nigeria, November 19, 2025. (REUTERS/Abdullahi Dare Akogun)

Shoes/flip-flops belonging to worshippers are seen following a deadly bomb explosion at a mosque in Maiduguri, Nigeria, Thursday, Dec. 25, 2025. (AP Photo/Josy Ola)

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE U.S. COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

COMMISSIONERS

Vicky Hartzler

Chair

Asif Mahmood

Vice Chair

Mohamed Elsanousi

Maureen Ferguson

Rachel Laser

Stephen Schneck

Meir Soloveichik

Executive Director

Erin D. Singshinsuk

MARCH 2026

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Gretchen Birkle, Senior Advisor

Guillermo Cantor, Director of Research and Policy

Thomas Kraemer, Chief Administrative Officer

Nathan Wineinger, Chief of Public Affairs

Serena Doan, Supervisory Policy Analyst

Kirsten Lavery, Supervisory Policy Analyst and International Legal Specialist

Scott Weiner, Supervisory Policy Analyst

Kurt Werthmuller, Supervisory Policy Analyst

Susan Bishai, Senior Policy Analyst

Sema Hasan, Senior Policy Analyst

Michael Ardovino, Policy Analyst

Mollie Blum, Policy Analyst

Kaylee Fisher, Public Affairs Specialist

Andrew Hamm, Victims List Database Specialist

Veronica McCarthy, Government Affairs Specialist

Hilary Miller, Policy Analyst

Nora Morton, Operations Specialist

Molly Naylor-Komyatte, Policy Analyst

Dylan Schexnaydre, Policy Analyst

Katie Todd, Policy Analyst

Ross Tokola, Policy Analyst

Brett Warner, Administrative Specialist

Jean Wu, Policy Analyst

U.S. COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

732 North Capitol Street, NW, Suite A714

Washington, DC 20401

202-523-3240

www.uscifr.gov

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction and Overview	1
About this Report	2
Implementation of the International Religious Freedom Act	5
Key Developments	5
Legal Framework	5
Multilateral Engagement	6
Sanctions on Individual Violators of Religious Freedom	7
Key U.S. Administration IRF Positions	7
Programs and Other Initiatives to Advance IRF	7
Refugees Fleeing Religious Persecution	8
Notable Congressional Efforts to Promote Religious Freedom Abroad	9
USCIRF Policy Recommendations for 2026	11
Key USCIRF Recommendations Implemented in 2025	13
Countries Recommended for Designation as Countries of Particular Concern (CPCs)	18
Afghanistan	18
Burma	20
China	22
Cuba	24
Eritrea	26
India	28
Iran	30
Libya	32
Nicaragua	34
Nigeria	36
North Korea	38
Pakistan	40
Russia	42
Saudi Arabia	44
Syria	46
Tajikistan	48
Turkmenistan	50
Vietnam	52
Countries Recommended for the U.S. Department of State’s Special Watch List (SWL)	54
Algeria	54
Azerbaijan	56
Egypt	60
Indonesia	62
Iraq	64
Kazakhstan	66
Kyrgyzstan	68
Malaysia	70
Qatar	72

Turkey	74
Uzbekistan	76
Entities of Particular Concern (EPCs)	78
Other Global Developments	81
FoRB Trends in Countries Facing Conflict or Political Upheaval	81
Weaponization of Legal Frameworks to Restrict FoRB	81
Technology, Artificial Intelligence, and FoRB	82
Cross-Border Religious Violence by Foreign Governments and Nonstate Actors	82
Attacks Based on Religious Identity	83
Attacks on and Repression of Religious Leaders	84
Attacks on Houses of Worship	84
The Impact of Global Funding Cuts on Religious Freedom	84
Positive FoRB-Related Developments	84
Appendix 1: Commissioner Biographies	87
Appendix 2: Frank R. Wolf Freedom of Religion or Belief Victims List.	89
Appendix 3: Highlights of USCIRF’s Public Activities in 2025.	91

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Nigeria is facing a terrifying crisis of religious violence. According to recent [estimates](#), targeted violence has claimed the lives of nearly 53,000 Nigerian civilians since 2009—the same year that the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) first recommended Nigeria’s designation as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC)—including around 21,000 in the last five years alone. The violence has also [forced](#) millions of people to flee their homes and communities to find safe harbor in camps and other shelters for internally displaced persons. The unfolding catastrophe is the outcome of a lethal confluence of trends: religiously motivated extremist violence; economic and ethnic tensions, long left to fester; corrosive, state-level blasphemy laws; and years of both inadequate response and pervasive corruption from the Nigerian government. Together, these dynamics have fostered an environment of rampant fear and unchecked religious attacks, abductions of schoolchildren, and killings.

Consider these tragedies from 2025 alone:

- On a still night in November, gunmen charged into the dormitories of St. Mary’s School in Niger State at 2:00 a.m., burning a statue of the Virgin Mary as they seized 303 children and 12 teachers in the country’s worst-ever mass school abduction—just days after kidnappers swept away 25 girls from a school elsewhere in Niger and 12 from a school in Borno.
- Amaye was a food vendor in the village of Kasuwan-Garba in Niger. In August, a verbal altercation with a customer spiraled into accusations that Amaye had insulted the Prophet Muhammad. This allegation prompted a vigilante mob to seize her from her stall and set her aflame, [murdering her](#) on the spot.
- In September, Father Matthew Eya of St. Charles Catholic Church in southern Nigeria’s Enugu State was returning home from his pastoral duties when unidentified gunmen pulled up on a motorcycle, shot out his tires, and then [executed](#) him there in his vehicle.
- The threat of violence from Boko Haram militants has driven thousands of families from their farms and homes in recent years; as one Muslim farmer told [BBC News](#) in October, standing on her farm in northeastern Nigeria from where she and her family had fled: “There is fear—we fear for our souls.”

These examples provide only a brief but illustrative snapshot of the persistent horrors that befell innocent Nigerians in 2025, sacrificing Father Matthew, Amaye, and many thousands of other innocents on the altar of religious bigotry. Meanwhile, an interminable stream of mass abductions by bandits or extremists—some of whom hold their captives indefinitely—has traumatized religious communities in north and central Nigeria since 2009. Such examples sadly abound, such as [Leah Sharibu](#),

a young Christian woman whom Islamic State in West Africa Province seized in 2018 and who remained in captivity throughout 2025, or the 18 Muslim women and children whom militants kidnapped in September as the victims prepared for morning prayers in Zamfara. This year’s Annual Report cover reflects Nigeria’s dire realities as such: its two largest religious communities, Christians and Muslims, have long shared their lives with each other, with followers of traditional African religions, and with many others—and yet they now face an existential struggle and dangerous confluence of armed conflict, nonstate violence, state restrictions, and societal challenges. These dynamics threatened religious freedom and millions of lives across not only Nigeria but also many parts of the African continent throughout the year.

Nigeria’s religious freedom environment is contextually unique in terms of its violent and complex perfect storm of religious, political, social, and economic factors, but it is representative of the alarming persistence of freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) violations that continue to plague millions of people across the globe. Each country in which such violations persist represents a distinct set of internal dynamics that have combined to repress religious freedom: in some places, violent extremist groups act as the primary FoRB violators, while in others, governmental authorities or religiously bigoted mobs assume that shameful role with impunity. In a few select locales, extremist ideology dominates the government’s priorities, rendering these categories essentially indistinguishable from one another.

Several key contexts around the world demonstrated these persistent or emerging challenges to FoRB in 2025. In Syria, former leaders and members of Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham—which USCIRF had recommended as an Entity of Particular Concern (EPC) for the previous seven years—have led transitional authorities since the fall of the former regime in December 2024. Despite their rhetorical support for the rights and protection of religious minorities, some of their militant supporters massacred an estimated

1,500 [Alawi civilians](#) in the coastal areas in March and around 1,000 mostly [Druze civilians](#) in Suweida in August. Along with the June suicide [attack](#) on Mar Elias Greek Orthodox Church in Damascus, which killed 22 and injured 63 Christian worshipers, those violent incidents—and the tepid response from leadership in Damascus—have raised serious concerns that mass FoRB violations and sectarian violence are likely to plague post-war Syria.

Elsewhere, China continued its longstanding campaign to destroy all independent religious expression in the country by broadly [targeting religious leaders](#) with insidious tools of repression and launching a massive [crackdown](#) against Protestant Christian house churches. In October, Chinese Communist Party officials ordered the detention of Zion Church founder Pastor Mingri “Ezra” Jin as well as the brutal arrest of dozens of other religious leaders and church staff in multiple regions.

Each country in which such violations persist represents a distinct set of internal dynamics that have combined to repress religious freedom

Anti-Muslim sentiment continued to threaten lives in South Asia, Europe, and elsewhere. Beginning in May, India [expelled](#) hundreds of its own Muslim citizens and dozens of Rohingya refugees to Bangladesh; during the same campaign, authorities reportedly detained 40 Muslim and Christian Rohingya refugees and then beat, interrogated, and tossed them into the ocean with lifejackets near the coast of Burma, forcing them to swim back to those same shores from which they had fled ongoing genocide. In July, a man stabbed to death 26-year-old Rahma Ayat, a Muslim Algerian nursing student in Hannover, Germany, after months of harassment about her hijab.

In [Central Asia](#), backsliding predominated over improvement as Kyrgyzstan followed the precedent of neighbors such as [Kazakhstan](#) by passing a new religion law that [compounded challenges](#) to registration for religious groups and further enabled authorities to penalize peaceful religious activities, among other concerning elements. In Africa, nonstate militant groups continued to wage war against peaceful religious communities; the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) – Democratic Republic of the Congo (also known as the Allied Democratic Forces) murdered nearly 180 Christians, beheading many of them, in four separate incidents during the year. A brutal drone strike by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) struck a mosque in al-Fasher, Sudan in September, killing over 70 people. In fact, religious violence in Darfur and elsewhere in Sudan—where one of the world’s worst humanitarian disasters continues to unfold—led USCIRF to recommend the RSF’s designation as an EPC for 2026.

In [Latin America](#), the governments of Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela each wielded political repression hand-in-hand with pervasive harassment, arrests, surveillance, and other tactics against religious communities and clergy. And in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia continued to [execute](#) Shi’a Muslim dissidents for actions they allegedly took as minors; Qatar continued its recent [crackdown](#) on the Baha’i community, including sentencing one leader to five years in prison; and [Iran](#) persisted in repressing religious minorities, women, and religious dissidents as it continued to revel in its antisemitic ideology by elevating Holocaust denials, publishing Jewish caricatures, and harassing Iranian Jews at their sacred sites. Antisemitism continued its disturbing rise far beyond Iran, including through societal harassment internationally as well as repeated instances of targeted mass violence.

Along with these country-specific threats to religious freedom, USCIRF reported throughout 2025 on several alarming trends that persisted or deteriorated across the world. Many of the countries that USCIRF recommended for CPC designation often [torture FoRB victims](#) or subject them to a cruel menu of ill-treatment options, from medical neglect to forced religious conversion. As highlighted above in relation to Burma, [refugees fleeing religious persecution](#) in South and Southeast Asia have faced a particularly dire era of displacement and an increasing threat of refolement along with other threats. Additionally, the direct correlation between [mass atrocities](#) and religious freedom violations remained disastrously evident—serving both as an early warning tool to identifying potential hot zones of religious violence and as a reminder that advancing FoRB contributes

to protecting the lives of whole communities. And perennial religious freedom violators such as Eritrea, Iran, and Turkmenistan continued to [deprive prisoners](#) of their basic religious rights, including access to religious literature, while subjecting FoRB prisoners to torture, isolation, forced conversion or recanting of their beliefs, and other egregious conditions, including execution in some cases.

In terms of U.S. policy, 2025 brought some significant and positive developments to U.S. and global efforts to advance FoRB. The religious freedom crisis in Nigeria in particular, as described above, sparked a groundswell of related attention and advocacy that brought together civil society organizations and U.S. government officials, and others—including USCIRF, which has devoted substantial attention to the issue in recent years. In fact, President Donald J. Trump personally announced the designation of Nigeria as a CPC in October, while senior members of the administration also spoke out on related issues, such as Vice President JD Vance’s pledge of support for protecting FoRB during his remarks at the International Religious Freedom (IRF) Summit in February.

The U.S. Department of State also recognized the importance of IRF amid its 2025 reorganization with a new role of Undersecretary for Foreign Assistance, Humanitarian Affairs, and Religious Freedom. Furthermore, members of the U.S. Congress held various hearings and put forward nearly 50 bills and resolutions related to religious freedom conditions in specific countries, including China and Nigeria, as well as to global IRF issues such as global religious freedom restrictions and refugees fleeing religious persecution.

Throughout the year, the administration of President Trump enacted several policy shifts involving agencies and programs that have often played an integral role in advancing IRF. For example, the administration subsumed the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) into the State Department in July, impacting key foreign assistance to faith-based and other related humanitarian programs for Burma, Iraq, Nigeria, Sudan, and other contexts in which religious persecution had devastated millions of lives. The State Department terminated or ended approximately 25 existing IRF-specific programs, leaving a handful in place. Furthermore, the Office of International Religious Freedom did not fund any new IRF-specific programs in fiscal year 2025. The administration also significantly [scaled back](#) refugee and asylum [admissions](#), including for individuals fleeing religious persecution. It also ended temporary protected status (TPS) for asylum seekers from countries with significant FoRB challenges, including Afghanistan, Burma, Syria, and Somalia, while several other TPS designations are set to expire in 2026. This report’s chapter on implementation of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (IRFA) provides a fuller discussion of these policy shifts, the implications of which continued to emerge at the end of the year.

About this Report

Created by the International Religious Freedom Act ([IRFA](#)) in 1998, USCIRF is an independent, bipartisan U.S. government advisory

the direct correlation between mass atrocities and religious freedom violations remained disastrously evident

body, separate from the State Department, that monitors and reports on religious freedom abroad and makes policy recommendations to the president, the secretary of state, and Congress. USCIRF bases these recommendations on the provisions of its authorizing legislation and the standards in the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights \(UDHR\)](#), the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights \(ICCPR\)](#), and other international documents. USCIRF's [mandate and annual reports](#) are different from, and complementary to, the mandate and annual reports of the State Department's [Office of International Religious Freedom](#).

USCIRF's 2026 Annual Report assesses religious freedom violations and progress in 29 countries during calendar year 2025 and makes independent recommendations for U.S. policy. The key findings, recommendations, and analysis in this report are based on a year's research by USCIRF, including hearings, travel, and meetings. The annual report is approved by a majority vote of Commissioners. IRFA expressly provides each Commissioner the right to include in the annual report a statement with his or her own individual or dissenting views. Various Commissioners have done so many times over the years either to elaborate on or to disagree with some aspect of the report. This year, the chapters on implementation of the International Religious Freedom Act and Azerbaijan include individual or dissenting views.

This report's primary focus is on two groups of countries: first, those that USCIRF recommends the State Department should designate as CPCs under IRFA and second, those that USCIRF recommends the State Department should place on its Special Watch List (SWL). The report also includes USCIRF's recommendations of nonstate

actors for designation by the State Department as EPCs under IRFA. In addition, the report analyzes the U.S. government's implementation of IRFA during the reporting year, recognizes the ways that the administration and Congress met USCIRF's recommendations to more effectively advance religious freedom abroad, and provides new and updated policy recommendations for the same. This year, the report delineates USCIRF's recommendations in a standalone chapter, including all relevant designations as well as policy options for the administration and Congress.

Additionally, this report includes a chapter discussing key global developments in religious freedom during the reporting period, including countries in which religious freedom challenges are present but that did not merit CPC or SWL designation. This section assesses trends involving attacks on houses of worship, state targeting of religious leadership, the FoRB impact of global foreign assistance cuts, religious freedom in conflict zones, religious deregistration as a tool of FoRB violations, transnational repression against religious communities, and other issues.

In this report, USCIRF uses the terms "religious freedom," and "freedom of religion or belief" interchangeably to refer to the broad right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief—including the right to nonbelief—protected under international human rights law. As USCIRF monitors and identifies concerns about religious freedom conditions abroad, its reporting documents violations of FoRB perpetrated or tolerated by governments and entities not covered in this report. The full range of USCIRF's work on a wide variety of countries and topics can be found at uscirf.gov.

USCIRF-RECOMMENDED FOR SPECIAL WATCH LIST (SWL)

KEY FINDINGS

In 2025, religious freedom conditions in Egypt remained poor. The government continued to systematically restrict freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) for religious minority communities and individuals who express ideas that differ from the state’s interpretation of Islam.

Egyptian authorities subjected to prolonged pretrial detention those suspected of violating Law 98(f), which punishes “ridiculing or insulting a heavenly religion or a sect.” After the January release of Christian convert [Nour Fayez Ibrahim Gerges](#), imprisoned in 2021 on blasphemy and terrorism charges, state security summoned him for interrogations in March. In July, judicial authorities charged [Said Abdelrazek](#), a Christian convert, with “contempt for Islam” and joining a banned terrorist organization. In October, authorities arrested [Dr. Augustin Samaan](#), a researcher specializing in Christian apologetics, for allegedly promoting “contempt of Islam” online. The government also continued targeting nonbelievers. In September, authorities arrested Maged Zakaria Abdel Rahman, known as the “Mufti of Humanity.” Authorities later arrested individuals who appeared on his YouTube program or posted video clips of themselves on the “Arab Atheists Network and Forum” Facebook page. Throughout the year, state security arbitrarily arrested 14 individuals, including atheists who deviated from the state’s religious views for religious expression online. Although the government reportedly lifted its travel ban on Qur’anic Muslim [Reda Abdel Rahman](#) in 2024, authorities continued to bar him from obtaining a passport and traveling outside Egypt.

Although President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi’s administration previously solicited draft personal status laws from Christian denominations, the government took no further action in 2025. In October, a Cabinet-appointed committee approved 160 church building permits pursuant to the Church Construction Law, bringing the total number of permits to 3,613 since the law’s 2016 adoption. However, the government has yet to act on roughly 2,000 legalization requests for churches and Christian facilities. In contrast, the Ministry of Endowments announced plans in February to reopen 115 mosques, part of a 2024 plan announced to invest 18.6 billion

pounds (\$366,000) into the renovation, maintenance, and development of more than 12,000 mosques.

In May, a judicial ruling on a property dispute regarding St. Catherine’s Monastery raised concerns that the government was undermining the monastery’s autonomy. While authorities have limited researchers’ access to its manuscript collection and undermined the religious monastic community that has preserved the site for centuries, it continues to allow worship at the monastery and has stated its commitment to protecting religious and cultural identity.

In rural Upper Egypt, local authorities have failed to protect communities from violent attacks, and hostile attitudes towards Christians are more pronounced than in urban areas. While security services sometimes moved expeditiously to quell violent incidents against churches in Upper Egypt, authorities often failed to sufficiently investigate such incidents and hold perpetrators to account. In February, authorities neglected to pursue a full investigation into a fire that broke out in the Church of Archangel Michael in Qena Governorate. In May, after security forces extinguished a fire at St. George Church in Qift, local authorities attributed the event to a candle placed in an incense holder, even though this defies Coptic ritual practice. Anti-Coptic harassment—including the disappearances of young Coptic women—persisted, with reports that authorities were reluctant or unwilling to investigate potential cases of religiously motivated abduction or coercion.

Amid these concerns, Egypt’s government maintained some initiatives to encourage religious inclusivity. In January, President el-Sisi delivered a message of interfaith tolerance and respect at the Coptic Orthodox Nativity Cathedral. In March, Al-Azhar Grand Imam Ahmed el-Tayyeb emphasized the need for interreligious dialogue. In October, President el-Sisi expressed Egypt’s commitment to religious freedom while meeting with the World Council of Churches after the group concluded its Sixth Assembly, hosted by the Coptic Orthodox Church. Multiple state agencies continued efforts to revive the Holy Family Trail, which includes landmarks sacred to the Coptic community.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT

- Include Egypt on the Special Watch List for engaging in or tolerating severe violations of religious freedom pursuant to the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA);
 - Raise with the Egyptian government during bilateral engagements the need under international law to repeal Article 98(f) of the Criminal Code and phase out its enforcement in the interim;
 - Integrate religious freedom improvements into broader U.S.-Egypt security cooperation efforts and foreign assistance, such as releasing prisoners of conscience and lifting travel bans on religious dissidents; and
 - Direct U.S. Embassy officials to engage in roundtables in Upper Egypt, including with local religious leaders, civil society organizations, and government officials, to discuss approvals of houses of worship, religious heritage preservation, and interreligious tolerance.
- The U.S. Congress should:
- Hold a hearing on religious freedom in Egypt prior to the next designation of foreign military funding (FMF) with topics addressing attacks on and forced disappearances of Copts; and
 - Conduct bipartisan congressional delegations to Egypt in 2026 to raise key FoRB issues, including implementation of the 2016 Church Building Law, anti-Christian targeting in Upper Egypt, and FoRB prisoners.

KEY USCIRF RESOURCES & ACTIVITIES

- **Country Update:** [State Restrictions on Religious Freedom in Egypt](#)
- **Spotlight Podcast:** [Egypt’s Continued Repression of Religious Minorities](#)
- **Frank R. Wolf Freedom of Religion or Belief [Victims List](#) and [Appendix 2](#)**

Background

Egypt's population is approximately 111.2 million, an estimated 90 percent of whom are Sunni Muslims. Shi'a, Qur'anist, and other non-Sunni Muslims comprise less than one percent. Egypt's Christians account for about 10 percent of the population, constituting the largest Christian minority in the Middle East and North Africa region. Over 90 percent of Christians belong to the Coptic Orthodox Church, while a minority belong to Evangelical, Catholic, and some smaller denominations. Baha'is number between 1,000 and 2,000; Jehovah's Witnesses account for up to 1,500; and the Jewish population has reportedly declined to fewer than 10 people. Article 2 of Egypt's constitution names Islam as the state religion, with the "principles of Shari'a" constituting the primary source of legislation. Although Article 64 ostensibly provides for freedom of belief, only followers of the three "heavenly religions" (Islam, Christianity, and Judaism) have a legal basis to publicly practice religion and build places of worship. Since the 1960s, the government has banned Jehovah's Witnesses and Baha'is.

Legal and Administrative Challenges

Egypt has several laws that coerce compliance with the government's interpretation of Islam. The government continued to detain and charge individuals under religiously grounded provisions of the Cybercrime Law (175/2018), which the government uses to censor the expression of religious beliefs and other ideas considered threatening to the state's interpretation of Islam. In June, authorities arrested at least seven social media creators for purportedly violating "values in Egyptian society" under Article 25 of the Cybercrime Law. In May, Egypt's Parliament passed a new Fatwa Regulation Law, further entrenching state control over religious affairs. The law gives exclusive authority to state-backed Islamic institutions, including Al-Azhar and Dar al-Iftaa, to issue religious edicts over public and private affairs. In June, lawmakers submitted draft amendments to the education law that would mandate state schools to increase the amount of religious education. Even though Muslim and Christian students take separate religious courses, the new law would systematically disadvantage Christian students, given a shortage of Christian religious education instructors and resources.

In March, authorities carried out arrests of more than 12 Ahmadi Religion of Peace and Light members for hanging a banner advertising a religious TV channel on a pedestrian bridge. Throughout the year, prosecutors repeatedly extended their pretrial detention on charges related to blasphemy and membership in a banned group. Detainees have reportedly been subject to torture and cruel treatment in detention, including denial of food and access to medical care.

National identity cards present challenges to those who do not identify as Muslim, Christian, or Jewish, as those documents allow only for those affiliations. Baha'i religious identity is marked with a dash, denying equal protection of FoRB under the law. Baha'is' exclusion

from the existing personal status law results in their inability to legally marry, obtain residency permits and birth certificates, pursue formal education, or gather for worship. Because of these legal obstacles to obtain official status, a Baha'i woman in Egypt continued to face imminent deportation and separation from her children in 2025. In September, authorities closed a Cairo facility where community members planned to teach Baha'i educational materials. Authorities also continued denying Baha'is burial land while prohibiting them from using Muslim cemeteries. In April, United Nations experts [called](#) on the Egyptian government to address systematic discrimination against Baha'is.

State Antisemitism

Despite the government's investment in restoration projects for historic synagogues, authorities continue to tolerate and promote antisemitic ideas. State-backed media continued to invoke antisemitic tropes and Holocaust distortion, fostering an environment in which Egypt's dwindling Jewish community feels increasingly threatened. A 2025 study found that of 180 opinion and commentary articles referencing Jews from the state-funded *Al-Ahram* and *Al-Gomhuria* newspapers published between January 2024 and March 2025, nearly 30 percent included explicitly antisemitic ideas. These included stereotypes of Jewish greed, depictions of Jews as disloyal and traitorous, and Holocaust denial. A February 2025 article in *Al-Gomhuria* claimed that Jews control global powers through financial influence and will be responsible for a third world war in their quest for wealth. In June, a television host for state-run Al-Hadath Al-Youm TV used the antisemitic Protocols of the Elders of Zion hoax to blame Jews for the purported destruction of Arab and Islamic societies.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Culture continued to deny community leaders' request to access and digitize the historical Jacques Mosseri Geniza documents, which have remained in the government's possession since 2016.

Key U.S. Policy

The United States and Egypt continued strong bilateral ties on a range of issues, including a defense partnership, economic cooperation, and regional security. [Congressional leaders](#) introduced legislation highlighting religious freedom conditions in Egypt. In July, Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) [introduced](#) the Muslim Brotherhood Terrorist Designation Act of 2025 co-sponsored by Senator John Fetterman (D-PA), among others. The bill seeks to designate the Muslim Brotherhood as a Foreign Terrorist Organization and impose sanctions on the group. The House also [introduced](#) a companion bill. President Donald J. Trump and Secretary of State Marco Rubio spoke or [met several times](#) throughout the year with President el-Sisi and other high-ranking Egyptian officials in efforts to [broker](#) an end to the Israel-Hamas conflict.