

Annual Report 2017



FoRB&RT

European Parliament intergroup

About the Intergroup

The European Parliament Intergroup on Freedom of Religion or Belief and Religious Tolerance (FoRB & RT) is a group of like-minded Members of European Parliament (MEPs) dedicated to ensure that the European Union (EU), in its external actions, promotes and protects the right to freedom of religion or belief as well as religious and belief tolerance.

Contents

4	Introduction from the Bureau	29	– Maldives
		29	– Mali
6	The Intersection between Freedom of Religion or Belief & other Human Rights	30	– Moldova
		30	– Morocco
8	Report Methodology	31	– Myanmar
12	General Conclusions	32	– Nigeria
16	Intergroup FoRB Focal Country Political Recommendations	32	– Pakistan
		33	– Saudi Arabia
17	– Afghanistan	34	– Serbia
17	– Algeria	34	– Somalia
18	– Armenia	35	– South Sudan
18	– Belarus	35	– Sudan
19	– Bosnia and Herzegovina	37	– Syria
20	– Brunei Darussalam	37	– Tunisia
21	– Central African Republic	38	– Turkey
21	– China	38	– Ukraine
22	– Democratic People's Republic of Korea	39	– Yemen
23	– Egypt	40	Central Asia Regional Chapter
24	– Eritrea	42	Annexes
24	– Guinea	43	I. European Parliament on FoRB related issues
25	– India	44	II. European Council on FoRB related issues
26	– Iran	44	III. European External Action Service on FoRB related issues
26	– Iraq	45	IV. FoRB Intergroup Activity
27	– Libya	46	Abbreviations
28	– The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)		

Introduction from the Bureau

The background of the slide is an abstract composition of wavy, layered blue and white patterns, resembling a close-up of a geological formation or a stylized representation of water and sky. The colors range from a deep, saturated blue to a very light, almost white blue, creating a sense of depth and movement.

This year, the report has taken on a completely new format. Through this report, we hope to highlight the practical ways in which the EU can use its influence in the wider world to promote and protect FoRB.

Since its inception in December 2014, the Intergroup has produced an annual report on EU external action and freedom of religion or belief. This year, the report has taken on a completely new format, thanks to a new methodology, and political recommendations written with the spirit of a closer cooperation between the Intergroup, the Parliament, the European External Action Service, Commission and the Council, in mind.

Through this report, we hope to highlight the practical ways in which the EU can use its influence in the wider world, to promote and protect freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief for all people. In addition, we have included signs of hope, in an attempt to appreciate glimmers of light in otherwise dark places.

Nevertheless, much of the world's population is deprived of their right to freedom of religion or belief, thought or conscience. Rohingya Muslims continue to be persecuted in Myanmar, Christians continue to be sentenced to death for blasphemy in Pakistan, Atheists continue to be demonized and non-Hindu's are step-by-step deprived of their rights in India, to name but a few of the many examples of the persecution of religious or belief communities throughout the world.

Our beliefs occupy the very core of our humanity. Therefore, we as an Intergroup are committed to do what is possible within our power to prevent the continued violation of freedom of religion or belief. We must put the people of the world before our financial and political interests. We hope that this report stimulates you in your own sphere to promote and protect the right to freedom of religion or belief.

On behalf of the Intergroup, yours sincerely,

Co-Chairs

Peter van Dalen (ECR) Dennis de Jong (GUE)

Vice-Chairs

Lars Adaktusson (EPP) Margrete Auken (Greens)

Miltiadis Kyrkos (S&D) Gesine Meissner (ALDE)

The Intersection between Freedom of Religion or Belief & other Human Rights

Article 18 Statement

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

Freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) protects the right of everyone to have or adopt the religion or belief of one's own choice, including theistic, non-theistic and atheistic beliefs¹.

FoRB is not a stand-alone freedom. The EU acknowledged the link between FoRB and other human rights and fundamental freedoms in paragraphs 25 through 27 of its Guidelines on Freedom of Thought, Conscience, Religion or Belief, adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council in 2013²:

25. Freedom of religion or belief is intrinsically linked to freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of association and assembly as well as to other human rights and fundamental freedoms all of which contribute towards the building of pluralistic, tolerant, and democratic societies. Expression of a religious or non-religious belief, or of an opinion concerning a religion or belief, is also protected by the right to freedom of opinion and expression enshrined in Article 19 of the ICCPR.

26. Certain practices associated with the manifestation of a religion or belief, or perceived as such, may constitute violations of international human rights standards. The right to freedom of religion or belief is sometimes invoked to justify such violations. The EU firmly opposes such justification, whilst remaining fully committed to the robust protection and promotion of freedom of religion or belief in all parts of the world. Violations often affect women, members of religious minorities, as well as persons on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

27. In dealing with possible violations, use will be made of existing EU human rights guidelines, notably the guidelines on the promotion and protection of rights

¹ UN Human Rights Committee General Comment No. 22 – UN Doc. CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.4 (1993)

² EU guidelines on freedom of thought conscience, religion or belief, June 24, 2013
<https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/137585.pdf>

“The intergroup fully supports the even-handed approach of the Guidelines concerning the intersection between FoRB and other human rights and fundamental freedoms”

of the child, on violence against woman and girls and combating all forms of discrimination against them, on human rights defenders, on torture and on the death penalty, as well as the forthcoming EU guidelines on the enjoyment of all human rights by LGBTI persons, and on freedom of expression online and offline.

The intergroup fully supports the even-handed approach of the Guidelines concerning the intersection between FoRB and other human rights and fundamental freedoms. On the one hand, manifestations of FoRB can take so many different forms, that they often involve manifestations of other human rights, such as freedom of expression, or of association. In this sense, respect for FoRB can be seen as a litmus test for the overall human rights situation in a country. Jan Figel, the EU’s Special Envoy for the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the EU, often mentions this aspect.

On the other hand, certain manifestations of FoRB may encroach upon manifestations of other human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Guidelines refer to a number of other human rights in this respect. In these cases, a balance needs to be struck: manifestations of human rights are never unlimited rights. One of the limitation grounds recognised in international human rights instruments is the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms of others. Striking the right balance means seeking the solution that brings with it as little limitation as possible of any of the rights involved. In this respect, there is no hierarchy of human rights and fundamental freedoms. For example, the right to manifest one’s religion or belief does not prevail over the right of non-discrimination. Since freedom of religion or belief aims at protecting convictions that determine

one’s outlook on life, tensions between one belief and another may be intense and sometimes even violent. In those cases, the State government and in the end the judiciary should be able to act as an independent arbiter.

This poses certain requirements upon the State. As pointed out by the UN Special Rapporteur on FoRB, Ahmed Shaheed, State and religion are best served by maintaining ‘respectful distance’³: ‘Although international law does not prescribe any particular form of relationship between State and religion, it does impose a duty on the State to be an impartial guarantor of freedom of religion or belief to all’.

Maintaining a respectful distance does not mean that the State should turn its back to religions and beliefs. On the contrary, this would amount to the same bizarre situation as when in a football game the referee would take decisions without knowing anything about the players or the game. FoRB literacy is essential for any government who wants to understand the importance of manifestations of FoRB before it decides on which limitations meet the criteria of international human rights law. The same applies for governments who want to reduce tensions and promote tolerance and respect among religious and belief communities. The intergroup has often recommended that the European External Action Service (EEAS) train its diplomats in FoRB literacy. The fact that the EEAS has introduced such training is an indicator that it is an important component of a human rights based approach to foreign policy. Furthermore, the appointment of the Special Envoy on freedom of religion or belief outside of the EU, is a nod to the importance of inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue in the external activities of the EU.

Report Methodology

This is the fourth annual report produced by the Intergroup on Freedom of Religion or Belief and Religious Tolerance. The first and second editions focused on the state of freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) in the world, according to research and reported violations. The third was an interim report which determined what progress had been made by the European Union (EU) in addressing these violations through its external policies.

This year, for the fourth edition, we have worked with a commissioned, expert research consortium, in the preparatory phase, to develop a specific set of indicators and criteria demonstrating in which countries severe violations of FoRB occur and where the EU's activities for the promotion and protection of FoRB can produce most effective outcomes. The core process involved calculating the sensitivity of the EU's influence in each country and the relevance of that country for the EU. This allowed us to attribute a specific focalness score per country in the report. The shortlisted countries were then assessed by a set of legal standards that calculated a score out of 10 on the state of FoRB violations.

Aside from the focal countries short-listed via the consortium's methodology, we also included severe

FoRB violator countries despite the low level of EU sensitivity and relevance assessment.

Our premise in this approach, is to deliver a set of tangible, feasible and practical proposals that encourage EU policy-makers and incentivise our bilateral country partners to engage in, promote and protect Freedom of Religion or Belief & Religious Tolerance more effectively. To this end we share recommendations and where possible signs of hope for each focal country.

All detailed country information can be found in the Consortium Research Annex to the report. In the main report, we have confined ourselves to policy recommendations based on this information, on information received during a range of meetings with EEAS desk officers, as well as from civil society. We thank the EEAS for its co-operation in this respect. We also express our gratitude for the work undertaken by the research consortium led by Mauro Gatti from Luxembourg University and comprised of academics from Cambridge University and the Bruno Kessler Foundation. Their innovative approach and research methodology were a brave step away from past research and provide the basis for future reports. The Annex contains the result of their research activities.

Key

FoRB Situation:








Minor Violations 0–3

Problematic Issues 4–7

Severe Violations 8–10

Focalness:

Lowest	0	
Low	1	
Medium	2	
High	3	
Highest	4	



Global Signs of Hope 2017

This year, we felt that it was important to focus not only on persecution, but also on the signs of hope in the world. Below are a selection of examples from around the world, that provide an encouraging picture of the prospect of freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief for all.

- *21/07/2017 – Religious Leaders launch interfaith rainforest initiative*⁴ Launching the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative at a conference in Oslo on June 19-21, religious and indigenous leaders from 21 countries spoke with forest advocates, climate scientists and human rights experts to develop goals and actions, along with milestones to mark their progress. They expect to follow up with an action plan and a global interfaith rainforest summit in 2018.
- *06/10/2017 – Global Anglican commission to tackle inter-religious tensions*⁵ – A new global commission to “bring mutual understanding and build trust where there is ignorance, fear and hostility” between different faith groups has been launched at the Anglican Communion’s Primates’ Meeting in Canterbury, England.
- *20/10/2017 – Burundi’s faith leaders renew commitment to peace and reconciliation*⁶ – 20 religious leaders signed a communiqué calling on the international community to “re-establish good diplomatic relationships” with their government. The talks brought together leaders from the Roman Catholic Church, the National Council of Churches of Burundi, the Council of Union of Christian Churches, the Islamic Community of Burundi, the Confederation of Churches and Revival of Burundi and the Seventh-day Adventist Church to “examine the current situation in Burundi, as well as the role of religious leaders” in the country “in contributing to enhance peace, security and reconciliation.”
- *08/11/2017 – A sweet note of religious harmony in Indonesia*⁷ – The Constitutional Court of Indonesia issued a ruling Nov. 7 that upholds religious freedom. It ordered the government to no longer discriminate against people whose faith is not one of the six religions that have been officially recognized since 1965 (Islam, Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism). Instead, officials must ensure equality before the law regardless of a person’s faith and honour the Constitution’s guarantee of freedom of religion and worship.

⁴ religious leaders launch interfaith rainforest initiative, June 21, 2017
<https://www.jpost.com/Christian-News/Religious-leaders-launch-inter-faith-rainforest-initiative-497517>

⁵ Global Anglican commission to tackle inter-religious tensions, October 6, 2017
<http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2017/10/global-anglican-communion-to-tackle-inter-religious-tensions.aspx>

⁶ Burundi’s faith leaders renew commitment to peace and reconciliation, October 20, 2017
<http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2017/10/burundis-faith-leaders-renew-commitment-to-peace-and-reconciliation.aspx>

⁷ A sweet note of religious harmony in Indonesia, November 8, 2017
<https://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/the-monitors-view/2017/1108/A-sweet-note-of-religious-harmony-in-Indonesia>

General Conclusions

Since the intergroup's 2016 Annual Report, the protection of freedom of religion or belief has been given more priority by all EU institutions as well as by Member States. As stated above, we are not asking for a special treatment of FoRB, since there is no hierarchy of human rights and fundamental freedoms. However, we do see the need for FoRB literacy as an essential requirement for the EU and its Member States in both their internal and external policies. The mandate of the intergroup is limited to the external relations and therefore our recommendations refer to these policies.

Ministries of Foreign Affairs of a number of Member States have recognised the need for FoRB literacy. The establishment of a "pôle Religions" by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and of a Knowledge Forum for Religion and Development by the Dutch MFA were early examples of this awareness. More recently, new initiatives were taken, such as the appointment by the Danish government of its Special Representative for FoRB and similarly the appointment of the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on FoRB by the UK Government.

This renewed interest of Member States in FoRB literacy of their diplomatic services is reflected in the Council's Working Group on Human Rights (COHOM), which discusses the EU policies in this field and for the first time agreed to a presentation of the intergroup's annual report during one of their meetings.

Finally, special mention should be made of the EU High Level Meeting on Freedom of Religion or Belief, organised by Denmark and held in Copenhagen on 11 January 2018.

Also on the side of EEAS, special attention is paid to FoRB literacy. The EEAS co-chairs the Transatlantic Policy Network on Religion and Diplomacy (TPNRD). Founded in 2015, TPNRD is a policy network that brings together officials from MFA's in the European and Atlantic regions whose portfolios focus on religion. Its biannual meetings address specific policy issues of concern to its membership and allow attendees

to identify possible areas of future cooperation and consultation. TPNRD's secretariat is based at the Cambridge Institute on Religion and International Studies at Cambridge University in the UK.

The EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Mr. Stavros Lambrinidis, raised FoRB during his high level human rights dialogues which form part of the EU's external relations. On various occasions, he shared his findings with the intergroup.

The EEAS has also stepped up its training efforts targeting EU-delegations and diplomats from Member States. An example is the EEAS Seminar on Religion and Foreign Policy, held in Brussels on 17 and 18 April 2018. During their annual meeting in Brussels in September 2018, Heads of Delegations will also devote a session to FoRB related issues.

In Geneva, in March 2018, not only did the EU continue its work in regard of the UN Human Rights Council's Resolution on Freedom of Religion or Belief, but it also organised a number of side events on topics, such as 'Religion and State', 'The Impact of Media on FoRB', and 'Protecting the freedoms of religion or belief and expression for all - sharing good practice in promoting inclusion, diversity and pluralism'. During one of the side events, the 'Freedom of Religion or Belief (FORB) Learning Platform' was launched, an initiative of the Nordic Ecumenical Network on International Freedom of Religion or Belief (NORFORB). The EEAS is interested in working together with the Learning Platform with a view of its own training activities.

On the Commission's side, Special Envoy for the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the EU, Jan Figel, undertook a number of missions, inter alia, to Iraq, Nigeria, Bosnia, Pakistan and Sudan to discuss the promotion and protection of FoRB. The intergroup welcomes the close contacts with the Special Envoy and, in particular, his debriefings concerning his missions.

Finally, Parliament itself decided to appoint Andrzej Grzyb as the Rapporteur for the Committee on Foreign Affairs on the 'EU Guidelines and the mandate of the EU Special Envoy on the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the EU'. The draft report was submitted on 11 July 2018. Moreover, also in the context of the Art. 17 TFEU Dialogue with religious and non-confessional organisations, the European Parliament's and the European Commission's (DG Just) attention for the promotion and protection of FoRB as matter for the EU's external relations has grown.

Against this background, the intergroup can only conclude that many of its previous general recommendations have actually been taken up. However, this does not mean that there is no room for further improvement.

Strengthening the mandate of the EU's Special Envoy for FoRB

At the institutional level, the Intergroup was and is pleased that one of its main goals – the creation of a separate Envoy for FoRB outside of the EU – has been realized with the appointment of Mr. Figel in May 2016. We have seen him very active in the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the EU since his nomination. The Intergroup underlines the importance of more and better implementation of the EU Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of Freedom of Religion or Belief and the role the Special Envoy has played and can continue to play in this respect.

However, the formal position of the Special Envoy is weak. It is not a full time activity, and with limited resources. He serves as a special advisor to the Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development. His mandate has potential conflicting interests with the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, who is within the EEAS advisor to the HR/VP.

As far as FoRB is concerned, we have recently seen that more and more governments and decision-makers

realise the importance of freedom of religion or belief. Within Europe the UK and Denmark both now have Special Envoys on FoRB. And the German government is considering such a position too.

Moreover, it is now ever more widely acknowledged that not only is the role of religion or belief in third countries so important that it cannot be ignored in the EU's external relations, but also that religious and belief organisations and especially their leaders can play a constructive role in the field of peacebuilding, especially through reconciliation, humanitarian assistance, good governance and development policies in general.

Therefore we recommend:

- That starting in the autumn of 2019 the SE for FoRB gets a more visible position, and adequate human and financial resources;
- That the mandate of the SE includes not only the protection of FoRB, but that the SE also becomes the central focus for the EU's external policies in regard of the role of religion or belief, and religious and belief organisations in third countries;
- That therefore the most logical place for the SE is to report directly to the HR/VP since both the work of the EEAS and of the Commission is relevant for the SE's mandate and only the HR/VP brings the two institutions together;
- That the SR on HR and the SE on FoRB discuss their working programmes in such a way that they strengthen one another. And that the SE on FoRB has the full mandate and capacity to do whatever is necessary for the implementation of the EU Guidelines.

EU Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of Freedom of Religion or Belief

The EU Guidelines were adopted five years ago, and a revision is neither foreseen nor necessary. This may be

different for the Guidance Note issued by the EEAS in 2015 for raising awareness among the EU-delegations and Member States' embassies. However, this is still a confidential document and it is difficult to say whether the Guidelines have become better known since the issuing of the Guidance Note.

The intergroup does see, however, the number of training activities increasing and agrees with the broad approach taken during these training activities, for example, focus on religious and non-religious beliefs, focus on the positive role religious and belief actors can play in realising objectives of foreign and development policies as well as meeting the challenges posed by intolerance and violence based on religion or belief.

Based on these considerations, the intergroup's second group of general recommendations relate to the promotion of the implementation of the EU Guidelines:

- The EEAS should rethink the decision not to publish its Guidance Note. MEPs, MPs and civil society together might provide a useful source of ideas for improvement, but they can only deliver if they can respond to a public document;
- The current format of training sessions on FoRB literacy is well-balanced and attracts ever more attention from within the EU-delegations and Member State embassies. The EEAS should continue to invest in these sessions, and could usefully work together in this respect with the FoRB Learning Platform developed by NORFORB;
- Although it is good to see that the Heads of Delegation will be offered a special session on FoRB during their annual meeting in Brussels, the session should be extended in time, so that stakeholders, including representatives of the intergroup, can contribute;
- The EU Guidelines protect all religions or beliefs. During the training sessions, this should be emphasised, calling for particular attention for those religious and belief communities, who are less vocal. For example, because their religion or belief does not have a hierarchical organisation or the adherents are less known and less organised. Delegations and embassies should also reach out to those religious and belief communities, whose religions or beliefs are abused by extremists for advocating violence and terrorism;
- Training sessions should, in particular, focus on relations with religious leaders. While it is not up to diplomats to get involved in theological discussions, they should not shy away from engaging with these leaders in order to strive for commonly held policy objectives, such as peace-keeping and reconciliation, good governance, respect for the environment and humanitarian relief.

European Parliament

In the past, the intergroup's annual reports did not contain recommendations for Parliament itself, but considering the growing interest in FoRB and the increasing activities of both the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Vice-President responsible for the Art. 17 Dialogues, this year a number of recommendations seem relevant to be included:

- The Art. 17 Dialogues should, whenever they relate to the promotion of FoRB literacy, be integrated into the EEAS training activities, the activities of Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee and the intergroup itself. Too often, these Dialogues are stand-alone activities and their outcomes are not widely known, let alone discussed in parliamentary committees and networks;
- Whereas the intergroup welcomes the initiative taken to adopt during this mandate a report on FoRB, it should not become a fig leaf for not acting through other on-going parliamentary activities, such as in the context of the Parliament's delegations with third countries. Once the plenary has adopted the Resolution based on the report, it should also find a way of checking its implementation by all EU-institutions and Member States.
- Instead of formulating only general recommendations on the protection of FoRB, Parliament should try to be more targeted when it comes to the relations with individual third countries. Many of the country specific recommendations below are meant to stimulate EU-delegations and Member State embassies to become active. In its contacts with the EEAS, the Commission, representatives from third countries and with civil society, Parliament should highlight the need for country-related FoRB literacy.



Intergroup FoRB Focal Country Political Recommendations



Afghanistan

Focalness: Low 

FoRB Situation: **SEVERE VIOLATIONS – 10**

In the last 16 years the EU has pledged €3.66 billion in development and aid, making it Afghanistan's fourth largest donor globally.⁸ The EU ranks 11th overall (€95 million) as Afghanistan's trade partner, and 5th (€9 million) for Afghani exports.⁹

Recommendations

Create an EU task force focused on safeguarding FoRB for religious and belief minorities in Afghanistan. Despite Afghanistan being reclassified from 'post-conflict' to 'active conflict' by the United Nations in 2017 and heavily reducing asylum acceptance rates for Afghans in neighbouring and European countries, the Taliban, the Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP), and other insurgent groups attacked and killed leaders of religious minority communities¹⁰. The task force's objective would be to map out a strategy to be presented to the Afghani government that demands better protection and support for Sikhs, Hindus and other religious minority groups in Afghanistan. Notably, a recent terrorist attack killed 17 Sikhs and Hindus on July 1 2018 in Nangarhar, it was justified by the perpetrators on the basis of combatting "polytheists"¹¹.

Create an Afghani "Civil Society meets Policy Makers" forum in Brussels for improving FoRB. Regularly invite pro-democracy/pro-FoRB activists. This could be coupled by bringing human rights focal points from the respective EU and Member State delegations/embassies based in Kabul to Brussels and provide them with a platform to explore and explain how EU bodies and Member States could assist in protecting religious minority communities in Afghanistan.

Improve risk assessment for refugees that EU member states intend to deport back to Afghanistan, in order to reduce/avoid human rights and/or FoRB violations. The Amnesty Report "Forced Back to Danger: Asylum-Seekers returned from Europe to Afghanistan"¹² documents how Afghans who have returned to Afghanistan have been killed, injured, harassed or "left to live in constant fear of being persecuted for their

sexual orientation or conversion to Christianity"¹³. Therefore, the EEAS and the EU Council should encourage member states to provide ample evidence that refugees being sent back to Afghanistan, especially those from religious and belief minority communities, will not face discrimination or fear for their lives.¹⁴

Signs of Hope

The Afghan government faced significant challenges in combating the Taliban and other violent extremist groups and more generally lacked the capacity to protect religious and ethnic communities from violent attacks in 2017. FoRB communities primarily flee or live in fear that any cooperative action may lead them to become targets.¹⁵

Algeria

Focalness: High 

FoRB Situation: **PROBLEMATIC ISSUES – 6**

EU-Algeria cooperation is governed by the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), and the main tool for funding EU-Algeria relations is the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI). In March 2017, the EU and Algeria agreed to follow a number of shared partnership priorities that included political dialogue, governance, the rule of law and the promotion of fundamental rights, including cultural and inter-religious dialogue, migration and mobility¹⁶. Conversations around human rights take place under the auspices of the sub-committee on Political dialogue, human rights and security, which last met in Brussels on March 1 2018.

Recommendations

The EU should facilitate training of Algerian government officials in FoRB literacy, by sharing the programme that it offers to its own diplomats. Within the EU-Algeria partnership priorities, the EU undertakes to support Algeria in the implementation of the new provisions of its constitution¹⁷, specifically Article 42 which relates to the freedom of conscience, opinion and practice of religion¹⁸. The training programme that the EU holds annually for its own diplomats, could be adapted and

8 European Commission. International Cooperation and Development, Afghanistan https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/countries/afghanistan_en

9 European Commission. European Union, Trade in goods with Afghanistan, 2006 https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_114134.pdf

10 IS in Afghanistan: How successful has the group been? <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-39031000>

11 Wheaton, O. Isis claims deadly suicide bombing on Sikhs and Hindus in Afghanistan, The Independent, July 2, 2018 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/isis-suicide-bomber-jalalabad-afghanistan-islamic-state-sikhs-hindus-dead-a8426476.html>

12 Amnesty International, 2017, Forced Back to Danger: Asylum-Seekers returned from Europe to Afghanistan <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/ASA1168662017ENGLISH.PDF>

13 Amnesty International, European governments return nearly 10, 000 Afghans to risk of death and torture, October 5, 2017 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/10/european-governments-return-nearly-10000-afghans-to-risk-of-death-and-torture/>

14 James, C.; Marsh, S. Europe sends people "home" to Afghanistan, where they have never been, The Guardian, December 23, 2017 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/dec/23/europe-sends-people-home-to-afghanistan-where-they-have-never-been>

15 'We Belong to Afghanistan' <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/07/06/we-belong-to-afghanistan-said-slain-sikh-leader/>

16 EU and Algeria adopt Partnership Priorities and report shows strengthened relations, March 13, 2017 <https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/south/stay-informed/news/eu-and-algeria-adopt-partnership-priorities-and-report-shows-strengthened>

17 EU-Algeria partnership priorities, March 7, 2017 <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/24089/st03101-ad01fr17.pdf>

18 Constitution de la republique Algerienne democratique et populaire, March 2016 <https://www.joradp.dz/trv/fcons.pdf>

shared with Algerian counterparts, to foster FoRB literacy.

The EU should encourage the Algerian authorities to consider the amendment of Ordinance 06-03, to make the law compatible with freedom of religion or belief as outlined in Article 18 of the UDHR. As long as Ordinance 06-03 is in force, there is limited freedom of religion or belief in Algeria. The law criminalizes proselytism by non-muslims and places restrictions on all forms of non-muslim worship. Legal provisions have been used to discriminate against Ahmadi Muslims, and Christians as well as other minorities. Changing the law to remove any discrimination towards non-muslims would show a true respect for FoRB.

Signs of Hope

After a series of church closures in 2017 and early 2018, two churches in the Oran Province were re-opened following an order from the Governor. Although the churches are still not considered to be officially registered, the unconditional re-opening is a positive development.¹⁹

Armenia

Focalness: High 

FoRB Situation: MINOR CONCERNS – 3

EU-Armenia cooperation takes place under the framework of the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) signed on 24 November 2017²⁰. Under point 8 of the agreement Armenia and the EU make a commitment to “pay increased attention to the cornerstones of democracy... and to the respect of human rights more generally”²¹. Safety and security, business opportunities as well as better value for money are also listed as key priorities. The High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR/VP), Federica Mogherini highlighted the benefits of CEPA including an empowered civil society. She also referred to an independent platform composed of both Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) from the EU and from Armenia that would monitor the implementation of the agreement²². Following the recent ‘velvet revolution’, an entirely new government has been sworn in. Whilst lacking political experience, the administration has shown a desire to pursue the priorities outlined in the EU-Armenia CEPA.

Recommendations

The EU should assist Armenia with the completion and implementation of its draft law on Freedom of conscience and religious organisations: Priority 8 of the CEPA is a strengthened democracy and human rights. To achieve this, the EU could offer training for government officials on human rights standards, especially on FoRB literacy, and effective implementation methods.

The EU could incorporate an element of intercultural dialogue into the EU4Youth programme. The EU4Youth initiative aims to promote the active participation of young people within Armenian society²³. Taking into consideration that most projects are scheduled to last three years, the EU could look to add workshops on inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue into each project, in order to offer young citizens an opportunity to learn about the benefits of FoRB.

Signs of Hope

Armenia’s draft law on the “Freedom of Conscience and on Religious Organisations” garnered mainly positive feedback from both the Venice Commission and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/OIDHR). It also demonstrates the government’s commitment to ameliorating standards for the protection of freedom of thought, conscience religion and belief within the country²⁴.

Belarus

Focalness: High 

FoRB Situation: PROBLEMATIC ISSUES – 7

The EU is Belarus’ second largest overall trading partner, behind Russia. As of 2017 the EU made up 22.9% of total Belarussian trade, with exports of 26.9% and its imports being 19.4%²⁵.

Recommendations

Develop an EU-UN supported capacity building programme for a National Belarussian Human Rights Institute. The Multiannual Indicative programme (MIP) prioritised three areas regarding Belarus, these were social inclusion, the environment and local/regional economic development. From the year 2014-2020 it was estimated around €129-158 million would be allocated for the Initiative²⁶. Under Objective 5 of the 2014-

19 Algeria: two churches re-open, though pressures continue, June 11, 2018 <http://meconcern.org/2018/06/11/algeria-two-churches-re-open-though-pressures-continue/>

20 Armenia and the EU, May 11, 2016 https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/armenia/896/armenia-and-eu_en

21 CEPA Factsheet, November 24, 2017 https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eng_cepa_factsheet_armenia_dig-ital.pdf

22 New agreement signed between the European Union and Armenia set to bring tangible benefits to citizens, press release, November 24, 2017 https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/36141/new-agreement-signed-between-european-union-and-armenia-set-bring-tangible-benefits-citizens_en

23 EU launches new projects under the EU4Youth Grant Scheme in Armenia, March 20, 2018 https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/armenia/41675/eu-launches-new-projects-under-eu4youth-grant-scheme-armenia_en

24 Armenia: new draft law on freedom of conscience and religious organisations is improvement, but concerns remain over vaguely formulated limitations, and excessive registration and reporting requirements, March 19, 2018 https://www.coe.int/en/web/yerevan/home/-/asset_publisher/KZTsm796k-Frq/content/armenia-new-draft-law-on-freedom-of-conscience-and-religious-organisations-is-an-improvement-but-concerns-remain-over-vaguely-formulated-limitations-1?inheritRedirect=false

25 EC “European Union, Trade with Belarus”, April 16, 2018 http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_113351.pdf

26 Multiannual Indicative Programme Belarus 2014-2017

2017 MIP strategy, the EIDHR “can provide support... including annual contributions to the operations of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and other UN agencies and mechanisms for national human rights institutions and regional networks on training for human rights specialists” amidst others²⁷. The EU and UN could launch such capacity building workshops for local governing officials and civil society in order to empower the Belarussian NHRI and bring the national human rights plan to fruition.

Recommend launching an EU-Belarussian implementation plan according to the OSCE Guidelines on the Legal Personality of Religious or Belief Communities²⁸. Set up a sign-up support mechanism assisting those involved – including civil society – in drafting and applying legislation in this area. The EEAS in partnership with the OSCE could provide this guidance²⁹. The EEAS could launch discussions on this basis at the 5th EU-Belarus Human Rights Dialogue.

The EEAS could work to expand the EU4Youth Programme to incorporate human rights training and workshops for students and teachers. The EU4Youth Programme helps young Belarusians develop skills and build youth organisations³⁰. There could be a specific session dedicated to diversity, tolerance and inter-faith organisations.

Signs of Hope

‘The National Action Plan on Human Rights’, adopted as an initiative by Belarussian council of ministers³¹. The Belarussian Council of Ministers adopted Resolution No.860 which provides a full action plan on implementing the accepted recommendations from the Second Universal Periodic review of the UN Council and from the Human Rights Treaty Bodies

Abolition of the Death Penalty discussed in Minsk³². On 18 April 2018 a Round Table on “Legal Aspects of the Abolition of Death Penalty” was organised in Minsk by the Council of Europe. The Round table was organised in the framework of the project “Human Rights for All”, as a part of the European Union/Council of Europe Joint Programme “Partnership for Good Governance”.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Focalness: Highest 

FoRB Situation: **MINOR CONCERNS – 3**

Bosnia and Herzegovina’s primary interest is in its commitment to the European Union accession process. The Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been recognised by the EU as a “potential candidate country” for accession since the decision of the European Council in Thessaloniki in 2003. The Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) has been ratified and entered into force on 1 June 2015³³. On 1 February 2017, the Adaptation Protocol (AP) adapting the SAA between BiH and the EU provisionally entered into force. The SAA AP affects 8 percent of BiH’s agriculture and food imports from EU and Croatia.³⁴

Recommendations

In the reporting and monitoring of all initiatives awarded funding under the EIDHR instrument country based support scheme, provide adequate guidance and support towards the inclusion of FoRB as a right within other rights (use the FoRB Guidelines for reference). FoRB is already clearly stipulated in the project description “Supporting freedom of expression and freedom of religion or beliefs”³⁵. However, it is crucial that in the context of these activities, specific attention be given to the role of religious and belief communities and their leaders within CSO partners in the ongoing process of reconciliation and permanent dialogue.

Recommend financial support for projects aimed at the elimination of discrimination based on religion or belief at the workplace. Encourage in this respect dialogue and partnerships between religious and belief communities and businesses. These could include business grants for prospective employers to build capacities in human rights with FoRB as one of the thematic sections to cover. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the EU are already successfully implementing business grant programmes³⁶. The businesses awarded the grant could be partnered with local human rights and FoRB CSOs for training and support to promote and protect human rights and FoRB within this right in the workplace.

- 27 EU Human Rights and Democratization Policies: Achievements and Challenges (Routledge/UACES Contemporary Euro-pean Studies) 1st Edition (May 10, 2018)
https://books.google.gr/books?id=Vb9aDwAAQBAJ&pg=PT155&lpg=PT155&dq=EU+MIP+funding+national+human+rights+institutes&source=bl&ots=c-cgxPU-v_5&sig=Jje2Hamr8FQnzr18OmnlQo8I25w&hl=el&sa=X&ved=2a-hUKEwipr4DD2sbcahWhKJokHWDVB3QQ6AEwA3oECAMQAQ#v=one-page&q=EU%20MIP%20funding%20national%20human%20rights%20institutes&f=false
- 28 Guidelines on the Legal Personality of Religious or Belief Communities, February 4, 2015
<https://www.osce.org/odihr/139046>
- 29 OSCE/ODIHR launches guidelines on registration and recognition of religious or belief communities, February 4, 2015
<https://www.osce.org/odihr/139051>
- 30 Belarus and the EU, May 11, 2016
https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/belarus_en/15975/Belarus%20and%20the%20EU
- 31 Information regarding Belarus improvements on Human rights, October 24, 2016
http://mfa.gov.by/upload/doc/plan_all_eng.pdf
- 32 Abolition of death penalty discussed in Minsk, April 18, 2018
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/human-rights-rule-of-law/-/abolition-of-death-penalty-discussed-in-minsk>

- 33 European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement: Bosnia Herzegovina, December 6, 2016
https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/bosnia-herzegovina_en/
- 34 Stabilisation and Association Agreement between Bosnia Herzegovina and the European Union, August 1, 2017
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/28222/117863-WP-PUBLIC-BiH-SAA-Study-Final-Revised.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- 35 EU International Cooperation and Development Website
<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-ser-vic-es/index.cfm?ADSS-Chck=1532957179192&do=publi.detPUB&orderby=upd&orderbyad=Desc&searchtype=QS&page=1&aoref=159738&nbPubliList=15&userlanguage=en>
- 36 EBRD and EU supporting small businesses in Bosnia and Herzegovina, January 10, 2018
<https://www.ebrd.com/news/2018/ebd-and-eu-supporting-small-businesses-in-bosnia-and-herzegovina.html>

Signs of Hope

Grand Mufti Husein Kavazovic of Bosnia visited and met with all relevant EU FoRB and human rights representatives from the European Parliament, European Commission and European External Action Service³⁷

A high-level delegation of dignitaries, scholars and intellectuals participated in the fourth annual Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. The delegation was headed by H.E Mustafa Ceric, former Grand Mufti of Bosnia³⁸. The final communique for the forum stated that “The phenomenon of Islamophobia is also senseless and unethical, because it fuels hatred and discrimination in the West, which ultimately gives way to extremism...” an action plan was announced for all participants to stand united in combatting rising anti-Muslim hatred and to encourage dialogue with others international FoRB groups to agree on a constructive form of cooperation³⁹.

Sarajevo hosted a Muslim Jewish conference in which Bosnia’s Muslim, Jewish, and Christian leaders agreed that more can be done to achieve peace⁴⁰. Bosnia’s religious leaders highlighted that despite political resistance they would continue their efforts towards reconciliation. In 2017, approximately 120 leaders from 27 countries arrived in Sarajevo to take part in a meeting organised by the youth-led Vienna based Muslim Jewish Conference.

Brunei Darussalam

Focalness: Lowest 

FoRB Situation: PROBLEMATIC ISSUES – 6⁴¹

The EU is Brunei’s fourth largest trading partner (€346 million) after China, Singapore and Malaysia. The imports to the EU are much smaller (€16 million/0.3% of overall exports⁴²)⁴³. Brunei is not considered to be sensitive to the influence of the EU given that only 0.4% of its GDP relies on exports to the EU, it receives no fiscal or infrastructural aid and is not bound by any restrictive

measures. Brunei does not fall within the remit of the variables that the intergroup has defined to have an impact on relevance to the EU either, for example as an Accession Candidate state, a priority country for migration or a GSP+ beneficiary.

Recommendations

The EEAS should explore the willingness of Brunei to host a “FoRB and Intersectional Human Rights” round table discussion as part of the activities of the Asian Regional Forum and provide them with the necessary logistical support. Such a discussion could, for example, be integrated in the upcoming “ARF Workshop on Preventive Diplomacy: Skills and Tools towards Effective Peace-building providing training for civil society, policy-makers and businesses at the next ASEAN Regional Forum”. This roundtable discussion should highlight the importance of religious and belief tolerance and respect in diplomacy and peace-building⁴⁴.

The EU task force on human rights commitments in the Framework of the EU-ASEAN Member States Trade negotiations. There is an increasing role for the Association of the South East Asian Nations states as part of a new push to strike trade pacts after US President Donald Trump suspended talks on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.⁴⁵ In any future negotiations human rights programmes, initiatives and considerations should be taken into account before concluding any such agreements. Within the negotiations framework a permanent human rights dialogue would be needed, focusing, inter alia on FoRB.

Launch a youth based initiative like the “My Nature My Hero Video Competition” across the ASEAN region hosted by the ASEAN International Film Festival & Awards (AIFFA). AIFFA is held once every 2 years and supported by the ASEAN secretariat⁴⁶. The EU could offer logistical support and funding for an award with a FoRB and human rights thematic approach. This could be done through programming priorities for an EU-ASEAN agenda. An example could be a youth exchange competition workshop to foster dialogue and creativity between different belief and non-belief groups at the local, national, regional or international levels⁴⁷.

Signs of Hope

Brunei has declared itself an Islamic State with the exclusion of the rights of adherents of other religions

- 37 Mairead McGuinness, EP vice president meets with Husein Kavazovic, grand mufti of Bosnia, May 3, 2017 https://multimedia.europa.eu/en/mairread-mcguinness-ep-vice-president-meets-with-husein-kavazovic-grand-mufti-of-bosnia_20170503_EP-052789A_GVW_029_p#ssh
- 38 Upon conclusion of the fourth annual forum for promoting peace in muslim societies, scholars and intellectuals visit the Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum, December 15, 2017 <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20171215005255/en/Conclusion-Fourth-Annual-Forum-Promoting-Peace-Muslim>
- 39 Fourth Annual Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies Concludes with Call for Action Plan to Address Islam-ophobia <http://aetoswire.com/news/fourth-annual-forum-for-promoting-peace-in-muslim-societies-concludes-with-call-for-action-plan-to-address-islam-ophobia/en>
- 40 Bosnia's Muslims, Jews, Christians chide politicians, August 9, 2017 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-bosnia-religion/bosnias-muslims-jews-christians-chide-politicians-idUSKBN1AP1UM>
- 41 This score was ranked out of 8 and not 10, an assessment on the priority area of ‘violence’ could not be determined given we were not able to find any reports of religion-related violence in Brunei in 2017
- 42 European Commission. European Union, Trade in goods with Brunei, April 16, 2018 http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_113360.pdf
- 43 ibid

- 44 ASEAN Regional Forum: Schedule of ARF Meetings and Activities <http://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/links/55-content/events/467-schedule-of-arf-meetings-and-activities.html>
- 45 ASEAN countries unconvinced by EU trade pact, March 21, 2018 <https://www.euractiv.com/section/asean/news/asean-countries-unconvinced-by-eu-trade-pact/>
- 46 Toursim blog <https://sarawaktourism.com/event/aiffa/>
- 47 EEAS:Delegation of the European Union to Myanmar. My nature my hero video competition, August 11, 2017 https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/myanmar-burma/31013/my-nature-my-hero-video-competition_en

and beliefs. Therefore, no signs of hope can be retrieved⁴⁸.

Central African Republic

Focalness: Medium 

FoRB Situation: SEVERE VIOLATIONS – 10

The European Union is the largest donor (€475 Million) of humanitarian assistance to the Central African Republic (CAR).⁴⁹ “Since January 2017, the number of internally displaced people has increased by more than 70% due to attacks by armed groups across the country. Extreme poverty and lack of basic services further exacerbate living conditions.⁵⁰” The EU is the premier trading partner (€121 Million) for the CAR globally⁵¹. Furthermore, the EU is also its number one export destination (€25 Million).⁵²

Recommendations:

*As a member of the UN, the EEAS could request FoRB literacy training to be undertaken by the UN Human Rights Office and the staffers at the UN Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA)*⁵³. The core mandate of the SCC is to “investigate and bring to court serious human rights violations and violations of International Humanitarian Law committed on the territory of the Central African Republic since 1 January 2003, as defined by the Central African Penal Code and by International Law.⁵⁴” The EU should make the case that serious FoRB violations be included in the SCC’s work, and should offer support to the SCC pertaining to legal advice, criminal investigations, and any other pertinent elements.

The EU should offer further support to the “Interfaith Platform” (IP) of CAR. IP was created by three of the most senior religious figures in CAR and is funded by the EU. The core objective of IP is to reduce inter-communal tensions and improve and facilitate peace-building measures.⁵⁵ The EU should invite these religious leaders to Brussels for a Question and Answer session, conduct a needs assessment, and increase capacity building

both logistically and financially through the Bêkou Trust Fund.⁵⁶

The EU should finance the training of inter-faith mediators. In order to reach more affected villages and regions within CAR, the EU, with the support of the religious communities and authorities on the ground, should co-create a training curriculum for inter-faith mediators and finance the project through the Bêkou Trust Fund.

Signs of Hope

Central African Republic Christians and Muslims united to host a workshop focused on healing trauma⁵⁷. The workshop involved participants sharing characteristics they appreciate in each other and it ended with discussions on how they could uproot mistrust in their communities. These efforts are part of the CAR Interfaith Peacebuilding Partnership, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). In partnership with the Catholic Relief Services, World Vision and Islamic Relief aid agencies and Palo Alto University, the five-year project aims to promote reconciliation by supporting local religious leaders, improving opportunities to make a living, and providing psychosocial trauma healing.

China

Focalness: Lowest 

FoRB Situation: SEVERE VIOLATIONS – 10

EU-China cooperation occurs under the framework of the 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation. The document highlights peace, prosperity, sustainable development and people-to-people exchanges as priorities⁵⁸. The EU has also unilaterally published EU Council conclusions and a joint communication for an aligned strategy regarding China. In terms of trade, the EU is China’s largest importer in 2017 (€374 billion) and China is the EU’s second largest partner (€198 billion⁵⁹), after the United States in 2017. The 36th EU-China Human Rights Dialogue took place in Beijing on 9-10 July 2018. During the meeting, the EU raised cases of human rights lawyers and defenders who are currently imprisoned and specifically mentioned the promotion of FoRB and the rights of minorities⁶⁰.

48 Political Islam gaining ground in SouthEast Asia <https://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/2132033/how-political-islam-gaining-ground-southeast-asia-despite>

49 European Commission. European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations: Central African Republic, 22 May 2018 https://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/africa/central-african-republic_en

50 ibid

51 European Commission. European Union, Trade in Goods with Central African Republic, April 16, 2018 https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2011/january/tradoc_147240.pdf

52 ibid

53 Submission by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees For the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights’ Compilation Report Universal Periodic Review: 3rd Cycle, 31st Session <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5b56e2c47.pdf>

54 International Federation for Human Rights. What is the Special Criminal Court? August 30, 2017 <https://www.fidh.org/en/region/Africa/central-african-republic/what-is-the-special-criminal-court#>

55 Conciliation Resources. Interfaith Platform <https://www.c-r.org/organisation-profile/interfaith-platform>

56 International Cooperation and Development, Bêkou Trust Fund-Introduction, July 19, 2018 https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/bekou-trust-fund-introduction_en

57 Central African Republic Christians, Muslims unite to heal trauma, January 5, 2017 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-centralafrica-reconciliation-idUSKBN14P0DF>

58 EU-China Relations factsheet, July 16, 2018 https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/external-investment-plan/34728/eu-china-relations-factsheet_en

59 ibid

60 The European Union and China held their annual Human Rights Dialogue, Press release, July 10, 2018 https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/iran/48217/european-union-and-china-held-their-annual-human-rights-dialogue_en

Recommendations

The EU should use its dialogue with China to raise concerns about the deteriorating situation in Xinjiang province. Numerous reports⁶¹ have highlighted the increase in surveillance and police presence in this province, as well as new policies aimed at further pressing the Uighur population. The Chinese government should be pushed to ensure that policies used to oppress minorities are reversed and that international human rights law is respected.

The EU and China are in the process of negotiating a Comprehensive Agreement on Investment⁶². The EU should ensure that a chapter on human rights includes a meaningful dialogue between the EU and China on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms as laid down in international human rights instruments. The EU is China's biggest trading partner. At the same time, China also represents an important market for EU based companies. Thus, it should leverage this relationship by discussing the importance of the rule of law for trade relations and, make any final agreement conditional to the setting up of a channel for permanent and meaningful dialogue on human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the promotion and protection of FoRB.

The EU should include elements of FoRB literacy and inter-cultural dialogue in the people-to-people exchanges foreseen under point 4 of the EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation⁶³. Various exchanges take place within the programme, including between students and the press. The EU could incorporate training on FoRB literacy into these exchanges, to expand the grassroots understanding of the importance of FoRB, both in the EU and in China.

Signs of Hope

The temerity of Civil Society in China is its only notable sign of hope. Despite the increasing oppression of the state, mass surveillance and censorship, disappearances and indefinite detention of many human rights activists and lawyers, Chinese activists continue to fight for the human rights of their fellow citizens. Cases are taken to court to seek justice for violations and local human rights organisations continue to speak out against the state.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Focalness: Low 

FoRB Situation: **SEVERE VIOLATIONS – 10**

In 2017, the EU was responsible for 0.4% of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) world trade, it stood 7th in the DPRK imports ranking, and 12th in its exports ranking, standing at an overall total trade rank of 7th⁶⁴. Furthermore, restrictions by the EU are maintained to ensure the prevention of the use of services for nuclear weapons development. Other restrictions implemented by the EU include, financial assistance, investment, transfer or clearing of funds, financial institutions working in representative offices in the EU, bonds on trade and prohibition of member states to facilitate ship-to-ship transfers from DPRK flagged vessels⁶⁵.

Recommendations

UN-EU led taskforce for a human rights roadmap working towards lifting sanctions. Develop an incentivised programme for DPRK to improve their human rights record including a roadmap towards the ratification of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)⁶⁶

Fund programs fostering intercultural dialogue and conflict management between the DPRK and the Republic of Korea (include human rights and FoRB workshops). Given recent positive exchange at the inter-Korean Summit whereby Presidents Moon Jae-in and Kim Jong-un signed the Panmunjom Declaration, the prospect for future dialogue between the two governments is positive. The EU should facilitate this dialogue, not only on conflict management and denuclearisation but also on human rights issues, including the protection of FoRB. It could potentially offer such funds via the Instrument for Peace and Stability (ISP). If not, it could also be done via Erasmus Mundus or development funds. Currently Members of the DPRK are allowed to participate in EU education, research and innovation programmes, as long as they do not violate current restrictions on scientific and technical cooperation with the DPRK⁶⁷.

61 China had turned Xiajiang into a police state like no other, May 31, 2018 <https://www.economist.com/briefing/2018/05/31/china-has-turned-xinjiang-into-a-police-state-like-no-other>
Human Rights Watch World Report 2018, China <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/china-and-tibet>

62 EU and China begin investment talks, January 20, 2014 <http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/press/index.cfm?id=1013&title=EU-and-China-begin-investment-talks>

63 EU-China Strategic Agenda for Cooperation, November 23, 2013 http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/china/docs/eu-china_2020_strategic_agenda_en.pdf

64 European Union trade with North Korea, April 16, 2018 http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_113428.htm

65 EU-DPRK relations, January 24, 2018 [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/8899/EU-Democratic%20People%27s%20Republic%20of%20Korea%20\(DPRK\)%20relations](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/8899/EU-Democratic%20People%27s%20Republic%20of%20Korea%20(DPRK)%20relations)

66 Ratification status of the DPRK https://tbinet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=47&Lang=EN

67 EU-DPRK relations, January 24, 2018 [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/8899/EU-Democratic%20People%27s%20Republic%20of%20Korea%20\(DPRK\)%20relations](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/8899/EU-Democratic%20People%27s%20Republic%20of%20Korea%20(DPRK)%20relations)

Signs of Hope

While relations between the United States and North Korea seem to be improving considerably since the positive meeting that took place between President Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un at the summit in Singapore. North Korea has since said they plan to dismantle their nuclear and ballistic weapons programme, however, there are currently no signs of North Korea's leadership putting a stop to grave human rights abuses suffered by its people for decades⁶⁸.

Egypt

Focalness: High 

ForB Situation: SEVERE VIOLATIONS – 10

EU-Egypt cooperation is governed by ENP and is guided by the EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities 2017-20. Furthermore, Egypt is an EU priority for migration. Funding for cooperation between Egypt and the EU falls under the ENI. The EU is the biggest investor in Egypt, responsible for 75% of foreign investments in 2017. The EU is also Egypt's biggest trading partner (€27.3 billion⁶⁹); a figure which has more than doubled since the conclusion of the EU-Egypt association agreement, in 2004. In 2017, Egypt's exports to the European Union increased by 24% from 2016 (€7.5 billion⁷⁰).

Recommendations

To use the evaluation and monitoring system proposed under the EU partnership priorities to ensure that the Egyptian government strives to uphold all of the obligations, specifically those concerning democracy and human rights, as agreed under the priorities. The EU and Egypt agreed on a number of partnership priorities for the period 2017-2020, including the "deepening of the political dialogue on democracy and human rights..."⁷¹. Under these priorities, the EU and Egypt have also agreed to develop an evaluation and monitoring system, as well as to undertake a mid-term review. This agreement provides the basis for constructive actions towards a reopening of civil society through mutually agreed aims.

The EU should push the Egyptian government to recognise the rights of all religious and belief communities including but not limited to, Christians, humanists and atheists, as per its obligations under the UDHR and the ICCPR. These efforts are key to promote tolerance and respect for people who do not follow Sunni Islam. The situation for citizens from minority

religions and beliefs in Egypt remains a difficult one. Although President Al-Sisi regularly talks about the need for acceptance, and for Egyptians to live together in peace, minority communities are subject to structural violence as well as physical attacks from non-state actors. Outside of the Capital, and away from the view of the media, Coptic Christians encounter multiple forms of daily discrimination. The Jehovah's Witnesses and members of the Baha'i faith are not recognised by the government; the practice of the Baha'i faith is considered to be blasphemy. Atheists in the country are subject to blasphemy charges, with a number of high profile cases taking place in the past few years, alongside a government effort to subjugate atheism within the country. The government's recognition of the rights of all religious and belief communities will provide the basis for the much needed protection of these communities.

Use the ENI to assist the reform of the educational system, and to provide training on the role of the educational system in promoting tolerance and respect based on religion or belief. The government is currently implementing an overhaul to the education system a part of which includes updating textbooks with inaccurate information about minority religions. Actors from across the spectrum and from various faith groups are involved, from the head of the Al-Azhar University to the head of the Coptic Church. Government ministers, specifically those in the Ministry for Education and the Ministry of Religious Endowments and the President are vocal in their commitments to improving the situation of certain minorities. These efforts provide an opportunity for the EU to share best practices with Egypt.

Signs of hope

President Al-Sisi has acknowledged the need for religious tolerance and inclusion, and has attended the Coptic Christmas Mass more than once⁷². Furthermore, the Egyptian government continues to show itself to be open to dialogue with other international actors about ForB and similar issues.

The government has prioritised the building and rebuilding of a number of minority places of worship, including St Marks Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in Cairo, following the Palm Sunday bombing that took place in April 2017⁷³, and the Eliyahu Hanavi synagogue in Alexandria⁷⁴.

Egypt is in the process of reforming its educational system in a bid to provide more nuanced education, and to remove extremist ideas from textbooks. In addition

68 Commentary: More than a month since Trump met Kim, still too early to call Singapore summit a success. Read more at <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/commentary/trump-kim-summit-singapore-too-early-to-call-success-10564536>

69 Commission and its priorities – Egypt, May 24 2018 <https://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/egypt/>

70 A look into Egypt-EU thriving trade relations, March 20, 2018 <https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/3/45743/A-look-into-Egypt-EU-thriving-trade-relations>

71 EU-Egypt partnership priorities 2017-2020, June 16, 2017 <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/23942/eu-egypt.pdf>

72 We are one and no one will divide us, Sisi tells Egypt's Copts, January 6, 2018 <https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/we-are-one-and-no-one-will-divide-us-sisi-tells-egypt-s-copts-1.693284>

73 Alexandria Cathedral undergoes renovations following Palm Sunday bombing, April 13, 2017 <http://www.egyptindependent.com/alexandria-cathedral-undergoes-renovations-following-palm-sunday-bombing/>

74 'A great project for all Egyptians' Egypt to repair synagogue in city of eight jews, September 6, 2017 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/06/egypt-to-repair-middle-east-s-biggest-synagogue-eliyahu-hanavi-alexandria>

to this, the government is in the process of identifying, and closing, private madrasas that teach extremist ideology⁷⁵.

Eritrea

Focalness: Medium 

ForB Situation: SEVERE VIOLATIONS – 10

EU-Eritrea cooperation is governed by the Cotonou Agreement. The plan outlines the basis for development partnership and political dialogues with a number of ACP countries. In January 2016, the EU and Eritrea signed the National Indicative Programme (NIP). Through the NIP €200 million was allocated to Eritrea, €25million of which is dedicated to governance and supporting measures⁷⁶. Eritrea also benefits from the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR); in June 2016, the EU launched a call for a Country Based Support Scheme (CBSS) with a budget of €295 thousand⁷⁷.

Recommendations

The EU should introduce an element of conditionality into the development assistance that it offers to Eritrea. The second package of projects foreseen under the NIP should be subject to the acceptance of an EU delegation visit to Eritrea, to assess the human rights situation, and to provide training to assist officials of the Eritrean government to meet its obligations as indicated in the NIP⁷⁸.

The EU should encourage the Eritrean government to allow unrestricted access to UN officials, to carry out an assessment of the human rights situation in the country. In her final report, the UNSR for Eritrea lamented the fact that during her six year mandate, she was never granted access to the country⁷⁹. The EU should use its influence to encourage Eritrea to allow a UN delegation to go to the country in order to facilitate a review of the implementation of the recommendations that Eritrea agreed to during its second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review on Human Rights, in 2014⁸⁰.

The EU should work with the Eritrean government to revise laws that restrict FoRB and to encourage the recognition of the rights of all religious and belief communities within the country, beyond the four that the government officially recognises. The UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights indicated that the OHCHR has received “worrying allegations of restrictions of freedom of religion”⁸¹. The EU should raise these concerns to the Eritrean government, and insist that international human rights law is respected.

Host an EU-ACP States high-level political summit ahead of the renegotiations of the Cotonou Agreement termination in 2020. The agreement which is funded through the EU-ACP partnership will imminently be under review⁸², any signatories to the renegotiated agreement should stipulate commitment to the ratification of human rights treaties, commitment to the 2030 sustainable development goals and include FoRB provisions.

Signs of hope

The Eritrean government has allowed certain diplomats, parliamentarians and envoys from various countries to visit Asmara, the capital. This indicates a willingness to engage with the international community. The government also invited the OHCHR to Asmara to host a workshop on human rights and the administration of justice⁸³.

On July 9, 2018, Eritrea and Ethiopia signed a historic peace agreement ending over 20 years of conflict⁸⁴ between the two nations, who also agreed to an exchange of ambassadors thus re-establishing diplomatic relations almost immediately.

Guinea

Focalness: Highest 

ForB Situation: MINOR CONCERNS – 1

EU-Guinea cooperation is governed by the Cotonou Agreement⁸⁵. Under the 11th NIP €244 million has been allocated to Guinea, €92 million of which is dedicated to good governance, strengthening the rule of law and bolstering democracy⁸⁶. In terms of trade, the EU is Guinea's biggest export partner.

75 Quaranic schools are Egypt's newest weapon against radicals, July 16, 2017 <https://theArabweekly.com/quaranic-schools-are-egypts-newest-weapon-against-radicals>

76 Eritrea-EU Cooperation, National Indicative Programme, January 28, 2016 https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eritrea_national_indicative_programme_2014-2020_en.pdf

77 European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) Country Based Support Scheme (CBSS) – Eritrea, September 19, 2016 <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome&nbPubliList=15&orderby=upd&orderbyad=Desc&searchtype=RS&aofr=153356>

78 Eritrea-EU Cooperation, National Indicative Programme, January 28, 2016 https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eritrea_national_indicative_programme_2014-2020_en.pdf

79 Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, July 24, 2017 http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?m=201

80 Database of Recommendations, Universal Periodic Review of the UNHRC https://www.upr-info.org/database/index.php?limit=0&f_SUR=55&f_SM-R=All&order=&orderDir=ASC&orderP=true&f_Issue=All&searchReco=&resultMax=300&response=&action_type=&session=&SuRRgrp=&SuROrg=&SM-RRgrp=&SMROrg=&pledges=RecoOnly

81 Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on Eritrea <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22804&LangID=E>

82 AU Summit 31: Reconfiguring the African Peace Facility post-Cotonou, June 26, 2018 <https://allafrica.com/stories/201806260753.html>

83 Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, July 24, 2017

https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?m=201

84 Statement of the chairperson of the AUC on Relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia, July 9 2018 <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20180709/state-ment-chairperson-commission-relations-between-eritrea-and-ethiopia>

85 Guinea and the EU, May 11, 2018 https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/guinea/18975/guinea-and-eu_en

86 UE-Guinee, Programme indicatif national pour la période 2014-20, December 6, 2014 https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/pin-guinee-conakry-fed11-2014_fr.pdf

Recommendations

The EU could facilitate exchanges between journalists from the EU and Guinea, to share best practices and to develop acknowledgement of FoRB in media, and the promotion of pluralism. Given the link between freedom of expression and FoRB, the EU should use funds allocated under the EDF to provide workshops in which journalists from Guinea and the EU can exchange ideas, and work together on a final project about the benefits of Freedom of Expression and FoRB for their respective countries.

The EU should work with the Guinean government and its officials to facilitate the implementation of the new criminal code and access to justice, as well as to work on the revision of certain problematic elements. The new criminal framework adopted by Guinea on 4 July was much welcome given that it abolished the death penalty and provided for the implementation of the Rome Statute. However, the law failed to remove penalties for defamation and insults aimed at public figures⁸⁷. The EU should ensure funds allocated under section one⁸⁸ of the NIP are used to provide training to all relevant actors within the justice system, and to encourage a review of the law so as to provide for the protection of a true right to freedom of expression.

Host an EU-ACP States high-level political summit ahead of the renegotiations of the Cotonou Agreement termination in 2020. The agreement which is funded through the EU-ACP partnership will imminently be under review⁸⁹, any signatories to the renegotiated agreement should stipulate commitment to the ratification of human rights treaties, commitment to the 2030 sustainable development goals and include FoRB provisions.

Signs of hope

Guinea has not featured in any major reports on FoRB since 2016, which indicates that the situation in the country has improved.

India

Focalness: Lowest 

FoRB Situation: PROBLEMATIC ISSUES – 7

EU-India cooperation is framed by a joint action plan (adopted in 2005) and the EU-India Agenda for Action 2020 (adopted in 2016). Under these respective plans, a number of priorities are outlined, including political dialogue and cooperation, which takes into account the promotion of pluralism and diversity. The EU is India's biggest trading partner; it accounted for 13,5% of India's

overall, world-wide trade in the period 2015-2016⁹⁰. Since Brexit, there has been increased talk of the revival of the EU India free trade agreement. During the 14th annual EU India Summit, leaders considered the next steps towards re-launching FTA negotiations⁹¹.

Recommendations

The EU should request the development of best practice sharing forums to facilitate good governance training for regional governments and police forces. This could include best practice sharing, or training of local police by lawyers from the federal level, to foster a practical understanding of the rights of minorities from the perspective of the Indian government.

Openly condemn the anti-conversion laws in Arunachal Pradesh, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, and Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand and encourage central government to push for their repeal. The EU guidelines on FoRB state that the EU will condemn discriminatory legislation such as the anti-conversion laws⁹². The EU should also insist on the protection of the rights of non-hindu communities to maintain their own dietary practices and call for action on the impunity enjoyed by self-proclaimed "cow-protection mobs" who are in fact vigilantes who lynch people, and demand their immediate accountability, as per the guidelines⁹³

Use cultural programmes to encourage inter-religious dialogues, especially in states where anti conversion laws exist, in order to foster an understanding of "the other". Taking cues from successful programmes already implemented by the EEAS in Turkey, and using media as a vehicle for change. This could be especially useful in India, as television is very popular; 780 million people in the country watch it⁹⁴.

Encourage the Indian Government to participate in Human Rights Dialogues. The last Human rights dialogue between India and the EU took place in November 2013. The EU should seek the re-establishment of the dialogue, so as to relaunch an official human rights dialogue between the two actors.

The EU must ensure that any FTA negotiations with India include the provision of a chapter on Human rights and the rule of law. A well-functioning legal system is imperative to the positive development of a healthy business environment. This requires respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The EU should use its trade policy as a vehicle to promote the protection of not only FoRB but of all human rights. As India and the

87 Human Rights Watch World Report 2016
<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/guinea>

88 ibid

89 AU Summit 31: Reconfiguring the African Peace Facility post-Cotonou, June 26, 2018
<https://allafrica.com/stories/201806260753.html>

90 EU-India relations factsheet, June 20, 2018

https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/4010/eu-india-relations-fact-sheet_en

91 EU-India Summit: strengthening our strategic partnership and moving forward with our common agenda, October 6, 2017
http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-3728_en.htm

92 EU guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief, June 24, 2013
<https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/137585.pdf>

93 ibid

94 TV viewers in India now much more than all of Europe's, March 3, 2017
<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/media/entertainment/media/tv-viewers-in-india-now-much-more-than-all-of-europes/article-show/57438521.cms>

EU are important trading partners, the EU should use its advantage to ensure a better human rights environment for the citizens of India.

Signs of hope

In March 2018, a fast track court created under the auspices of the Jharkhand high court convicted 11 men for the murder of a Muslim man accused of consuming beef. The judgement was a step towards tackling the impunity often enjoyed by those who commit hate crimes and was the first conviction of its kind⁹⁵.

Iran

Focalness: Low 

ForB Situation: **SEVERE VIOLATIONS – 10**

EU-Iran cooperation is implemented through the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)⁹⁶ concluded on July 14, 2015 and implemented on January 16, 2016. Both sides agreed that amongst other objectives, developing cooperation in the areas of human rights and well-being of the people of Iran and the EU⁹⁷ are of prime importance for the furthering of mutual relations. Following the lifting of sanctions in 2016, trade between the EU and Iran increased significantly; In the fiscal year of 2016, EU imports from Iran were 5.5 billion – a 344.8% increase and exports from the EU to Iran were valued at €8.2 billion, an increase of 27.8%. In 2017, imports from Iran doubled once again to €10.1 billion and exports increased to €10.8 billion⁹⁸. However, following the recent withdrawal of the USA from the JCPOA and the US government's decision to implement fresh sanctions, the JCPOA is now under threat.

Recommendations

The EU should call for the immediate release of all prisoners of conscience in Iran and continue to advocate for the abolition of the death penalty, especially in relation to blasphemy and dissent. Within the guidelines the EU undertakes to condemn violence on the grounds of religion or belief, including through implementing sanctions. Given that sanctions relating to human rights concerns remain in place, the EU should continue to issue statements condemning acts of structural violence.

The EU must continue to push for the maintenance of the JCPOA to maintain positive relations within Iran. The

EU should do all in its power to protect the agreement, as its failure would result in an economic crisis within Iran, which would only lead to a deterioration in the already dire circumstances facing (non-religious minorities in the country.

The EU should provide additional incentives for Iranian students to study topics related to human rights, religious tolerance and inter-cultural dialogue as part of the Erasmus+ programme. In 2017 Iran came third in the list of sending countries whose students received an ERASMUS Mundus scholarship to study in Europe⁹⁹. The EU should use the programme to foster exchanges on inter-cultural and inter-religious issues between EU and Iranian students.

Signs of hope

In November 2017, the EU and Iran held their first dialogue on human rights since the suspension of such discussions in 2004 and EUSR for Human Rights Stavros Lambrinidis was present¹⁰⁰.

Iraq

Focalness: Medium 

ForB Situation: **SEVERE VIOLATIONS – 10**

The EU has been a long-term partner of Iraq, cooperating in the field of humanitarian aid, stabilisation, security, and the political reform agenda. Iraq is sensitive to the EU's influence given that the EU is Iraq's second-biggest trade partner behind China, with the EU representing 18.5% of Iraq's total international trade, valued at €16 billion in 2017. The EU is also Iraq's number one recipient of exported goods, receiving 21.8% of all of Iraq's exported goods in 2017.¹⁰¹

Recommendations

The EU Delegation could facilitate peace-building discussions by involving religious leaders and civil society: bring religious leaders and NGOs active on FORB together with political decision-makers to advance peace building activities/discussions/workshops through the EU's strategy for Iraq framework and present the results in the form of a joint EU-Iraq White paper¹⁰².

The EEAS could build an EU-Iraq platform on the intersection between ForB, Women and Youth: Promote local initiatives and projects through the UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilisation (FFS) that showcase ForB diversity, promote mutual respect, understanding and encourage an empowered role for women and youth in the decision-making process at all levels. The

95 Jharkhand Alimuddin lynching case: 11 cow vigilantes awarded life imprisonment, March 21, 2018
<https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2018/mar/21/jharkhand-alimuddin-lynching-case-11-cow-vigilantes-awarded-life-imprisonment-1790479.html>

96 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, July 14, 2015
http://www.eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/statements-eeas/docs/iran_agreement/iran_joint-comprehensive-plan-of-action_en.pdf

97 Joint statement by the High Representative/Vice-President of the European Union, Federica Mogherini and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Javad Zarif, April 16 2016
http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-16-1441_en.htm

98 Iran and the EU, 08 May 2018
https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/2281/Iran%20and%20the%20EU

99 Cooperation between the EU and Iran, May 8, 2018
https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/iran/44232/cooperation-between-eu-and-iran_en

100 ibidu

101 European Commission report on Trade with Iraq, April 16, 2018
http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_113405.pdf

102 European Commission Press Release, January 8, 2018
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/news/eu-strategy-iraq-2018-jan-08_en

EU contributed an additional €50 million to this budget which brings the total EU contribution to €64 million since 2015¹⁰³

The EU could partner with the UN on implementing a capacity building programme to support projects by which citizens help each other, irrespective of their religion or belief. In the past year and a half, the EU has played a key role in coordination with UNMAS, conducting the survey and clearance from mines of more than 18 000 000 m² of land in and around Fallujah and around 160 000 m² in Anbar Province. In partnership with these provinces, the EU could fund mine clearance, mine risk education and victim assistance actions for local actors putting their 'identity' differences aside to create a better future for all. The EU could engage with the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the Mine Advisory Group (MAG) and Handicap International on such a project¹⁰⁴.

The EEAS could partner with the European Commission Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) to provide small and medium sized grants for religion and belief CSOs working on humanitarian aid projects helping those of other belief or non-belief groups. The EU has provided €650 million in humanitarian and development efforts in the period from 2014-2017¹⁰⁵.

Recommend financial support for projects aimed at the elimination of discrimination based on religion or belief at the workplace. Encourage in this respect dialogue and partnerships between religious and belief communities and businesses. These could include business grants for prospective employers to build capacities in human rights with FoRB as one of the thematic sections to cover.

The EEAS could facilitate an initiative focusing on interfaith and FoRB dialogue as part of the renewed EU-Iraq strategy aimed at reconciliation and respect of the rights of all religious and belief communities. This could be supported by the Creative Europe Programme as part of a media campaign.

Signs of Hope

Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi of Iraq announced that Daesh had been cleared from Iraq and that the government forces had full control over the Iraqi-Syrian border¹⁰⁶. Since then, millions of refugees and displaced people have returned home. In Mosul, students are now

back in school, coffeehouses are opening, and shopping malls are running again¹⁰⁷

Providing strategic advice on Gender and Human Rights in Iraq¹⁰⁸. EUAM Iraq experts met recently with the Director of Human Rights, General Mohammed S. Salman, in the Iraqi Ministry of Interior, Office of the Inspector General. It was agreed that EUAM Iraq will provide strategic advice on Gender and Human Rights to the Office of the Inspector General.

Libya

Focalness: Highest 

FoRB Situation: SEVERE VIOLATIONS – 10

Through diplomatic action and concrete support, the EU provides assistance to the Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA). The UN-backed GNA has been internationally recognised as the sole legitimate government of Libya, and endorsed by the UN Security Council Resolutions 2259 and 2278. Assistance is offered through a comprehensive cooperation package in the process of institution building and in improving socio-economic conditions for all Libyans. Through the Stabilisation Facility the EU works towards restoring public infrastructure and advance inter-governmental coordination. All of the support is managed by partners on the ground including the International Organisation on Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The EU further supports the GNA through its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations, EUNAVFOR MED Operation Sophia and EUBAM Libya¹⁰⁹.

EU imports from Libya are dominated by mineral fuels (€11,4 billion, 98,7%), in particular petroleum and petroleum products. Total EU imports from Libya amounted to €11,6 billion in 2017. Between 2012 and 2016 EU imports from Libya decreased by 85% (€32,8 billion in 2012, € 11,6 billion in 2017). Despite this decrease Libya continues to be a fundamental energy exporter to the EU, and the EU continues to be the first trading partner of Libya, accounting for 54,8% of the country's global trade in 2017¹¹⁰.

Recommendations

Train EEAS/DG DEVCO staff on the FoRB Guidelines to secure a better understanding of FoRB as part of the project selection process funded by EU bi-lateral funds that are allocated to Libya. The EU has provided around €120 Million in bilateral support to the Libyan GNA

¹⁰³ United Nations Development Program communications, February 12, 2018 <http://www.undp.org/content/brussels/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2018/02/12/the-european-union-contributes-58-96-million-for-iraq-stabilization.html>

¹⁰⁴ EU leads action to end the scourge of landmines – the example of Iraq, April 4, 2018 https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/iraq/42447/eu-leads-action-end-scurge-landmines-%E2%80%93-example-iraq_en

¹⁰⁵ The EU and Iraq, February 9, 2018 https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/32427/The%20EU%20and%20Iraq

¹⁰⁶ Iraq PM Declares Victory Over ISIS, December 9, 2017 <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/09/world/middleeast/iraq-isis-haider-al-abadi.html>

¹⁰⁷ New Hope For Iraq?, April 5, 2018 <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2018-04-05/new-hope-iraq>

¹⁰⁸ EUAM: Providing Strategic advice on gender and Human Rights in Iraq, March 27, 2018 https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/iraq/42109/euam-providing-strategic-advice-gender-and-human-rights-iraq_en

¹⁰⁹ EU-Libya relations, January 22, 2018 https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/19163/EU-Libya%20relations

¹¹⁰ Libya <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/libya/>

via 37 projects, within six areas including; civil society; governance; health; youth and education; migration and protection; and support to the political process¹¹¹. The projects are funded through the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) and the Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP). Through ENI projects the EU contributes to the capacity building of Libyan Institutions at the national and the local level in the areas of public administration, socio-economic development and the health sector.

Through the EU-UN partnership, we could increase support for the International Organisation for Migration projects that secure effective cultural orientation of migrants and refugees and include FoRB within those sessions. In November 2017, the EU and African Union with the UN set up a joint task force to accelerate the programme of International Organisation for Migration¹¹². These funds could also call for projects and reporting with FoRB as an indicator.

Host a human rights and rule of law round-table and determine a roadmap towards the ratification of international human rights conventions which also include protection of FoRB as enshrined in the UDHR Article 18. This could help to advance the political process and assist the Libyan GNA in its democratic transition¹¹³. The event could be held in the framework of the Libya Quartet, calling upon the League of Arab States (LAS), the African Union (AU), and the United Nations (UN) to cooperate and develop a plan of action which would also stipulate what role local religious leaders could play.

Signs of Hope

Whilst there has been some progress made to regain the territory from the hands of Daesh¹¹⁴, widespread torture, killings and general disregard for basic human rights plague Libya¹¹⁵.

Libyan rival Governments agree on Ceasefire¹¹⁷. Libya's opposing governments have committed to a conditional ceasefire following talks in France. UN-backed Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj and Khalifa Haftar, the rival military commander who controls the east, met in Paris on Tuesday. They are aiming to end the conflict which has engulfed the country since Col Muammar Gaddafi was ousted in 2011. French President Emmanuel Macron

said the rivals could soon be seen as symbols of Libya's reconciliation.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)

Focalness: High 

FoRB Situation: **PROBLEMATIC ISSUES – 4**

EU-Macedonia cooperation is governed by the framework of the Accession Partnership (adopted in 2008). As a candidate country to the EU, FYROM is particularly sensitive to its influence. Human rights and the protection of minorities is identified as a priority with access to education, justice and social welfare for members of minority groups¹¹⁸ identified as a focus. The EU is Macedonia's main trading partner, accounting for 60% of its exports and 48% of the country's imports¹¹⁹.

Recommendations

The EU should encourage the government of FYROM to implement the November 2017 decision of the ECtHR concerning the registration of the Orthodox Ohrid Archbishopric and the violation of articles 9 and 11 of the ECHR¹²⁰. In April 2018, the government's appeal to have the hearing heard by the Grand Chamber was rejected, thus making the decision of the court final. The government of FYROM should register the Orthodox Ohrid Archbishopric as soon as possible, to allow its members to enjoy their rights to FoRB and freedom of assembly and association.

The EU should work with Macedonia to create a roadmap towards the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive legal framework protecting fundamental rights including FoRB. The EU could offer training in tandem with the financial assistance provided under the Rule of law & fundamental rights priority sector of the IPA II to assist the Macedonian government in the creation of a comprehensive fundamental rights framework. Key areas of focus should be protection of minorities and the rights of disabled people as well as the protection of freedom of expression and the encouragement and promotion of a free press.

The EU should support capacity building of the Ombudsman's Office. The Commission's 2018 progress reports commend the Ombudsman's office on its efforts to achieve its mandate as the main protection

111 EU-Libya relations, January 22, 2018
https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/19163/EU-Libya%20relations

112 Joint statement on the migrant situation in Libya, November 30, 2017
<https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20171130/joint%20state-ment-%20A0migrant%20A0situation-libya>

113 ibid.

114 When the Islamic State came to Libya, February, 10 2018
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security/bombing-at-mosque-in-libyas-benghazi-kills-two-wounds-75-medics-idUSKBN1FT1NX>

115 Libya: Freedom of religion in the land of anarchy, May 15, 2016
<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/old-site/imgs-pdfs/4585729.pdf>

116 Continued abuse of African refugees in Libya feared, January 23, 2018
<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/01/videos-expose-torture-african-refugees-libya-180123140527920.html>

117 Libya crisis: rival governments commit to ceasefire, 25 July 2017
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-40718476>

118 Accession Partnership with FYROM, February 18, 2008
https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/apojeu190308_en.pdf

119 FYROM and the EU, May 12, 2016
https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/former-yugoslav-republic-macedonia_en/1457/The%20Former%20Yugoslav%20Republic%20of%20Macedonia%20and%20the%20EU

120 Case of the Orthodox Ohrid Archdiocese v. the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (no.3532/07)

for human rights, despite its lack of staff¹²¹. The EU should ensure that funding under the democracy & governance priority sector of the IPA II¹²² is allocated to the development of the Ombudsman Office.

Signs of hope

According to the Commission's latest progress report, there is a renewed spirit of hope and openness thanks to the recent election of a new government in Macedonia. The new government is making every effort to implement reform and to ready Macedonia for accession talks. These efforts have included consulting civil society, consolidation of democracy and the restoration of the rule of law¹²³.

Maldives

Focalness: Lowest 

FoRB Situation: SEVERE VIOLATIONS – 9

The EU is the Maldives 4th largest trading partner, making up 10.5% of the Maldives total trade with the world, valuing €240 million, whereas the Maldives ranks 151st for the EU¹²⁴. The Maldives has moved from being one of the least developed countries¹²⁵ to having an economy driven by the rapid growth of its tourism and fisheries sector¹²⁶. Recently, as calls for sanctions from western countries have intensified, the country has turned increasingly to Chinese and Saudi Arabian investment¹²⁷.

Recommendations

EU development funds should be allocated primarily to local/national/international projects working towards electoral reform and furthering the core democratic principles as indicated in the council conclusions adopted February 26th, 2018¹²⁸. Especially projects focusing on breaking down current regulation that prohibits Shia Muslims from standing for election and only allows for Muslims to vote in general.¹²⁹

Launch an ad-hoc EU-Maldives task-force working on combatting the rise of violent extremism. Over the past

four years, hundreds of Maldivians have made their way to Syria to fight alongside Daesh¹³⁰. Such trends lead to greater persecution of religious and belief groups in their home communities who do not follow these violent ideologies. The EU-Maldives share a common interest in reducing this threat.

Signs of Hope

No signs of hope can be determined. The EU recently said in a joint statement (with the ambassadors of France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States) that they had followed the deterioration of the situation with increasing concern and that "Legitimate opposition is a vital part of any healthy democracy, and it is critical that authorities respect fundamental freedoms, including freedom of assembly and speech". FoRB is directly linked to this right and many others of which local citizens do not have the freedom to access¹³¹.

Mali

Focalness: High 

FoRB Situation : MINOR CONCERNS – 3

The EU is Mali's second largest trading partner, behind Senegal, accounting for 17.2% of total trade. The EU receives 4% of its exports and Mali imports 21.2% of its imports from the EU¹³²¹³³.

Recommendations

Integrate FoRB training and capacity building for EU and ECOWAS members leading the counter-terrorism task force. Include FoRB training, workshops and courses when EU funds are made available for projects combatting the rise of violent religious extremism through the 11th European Development Fund or initiatives supporting local/regional police officials.¹³⁴

The EU should continue to increase its support for the peacekeeping missions and humanitarian services including Human Rights and FoRB training. The Council recently extended the mandate of the EU training mission in Mali (EUTM Mali) for two years, until 18 May 2020, and also allocated a significantly larger budget of €59.7 million to the mission for the period from 19 May

¹²¹ The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2018 Report, April 17, 2018 <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-the-former-yugoslav-republic-of-macedonia-report.pdf>

¹²² The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia – financial assistance under IPA II, December 6, 2016 https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/instruments/funding-by-country/former-yugoslav-republic-of-macedonia_en

¹²³ The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2018 Report, April 17, 2018 <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20180417-the-former-yugoslav-republic-of-macedonia-report.pdf>

¹²⁴ EC 'The European Union, Trade in goods with Maldives', 16 April 2018 http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_115812.pdf

¹²⁵ UN LDC Country Profile Maldives, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/least-developed-country-category-maldives.html>

¹²⁶ 2018 Heritage country index Maldives <https://www.heritage.org/index/country/maldives>

¹²⁷ ibid

¹²⁸ The Maldives – Council conclusions, February 26, 2018 <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6420-2018-INIT/en/pdf>

¹²⁹ EAS 'Statement by the Spokesperson on the situation in the Maldives', February 6, 2018 https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/39413/statement-spokesperson-situation-maldives_en

¹³⁰ Paradise jihadis: Maldives sees surge in young Muslims leaving for Syria, February 26, 2015 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/26/paradise-jihadis-maldives-islamic-extremism-syria>

¹³¹ EU, West urge Maldives to hold credible, transparent presidential poll <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-maldives-politics/eu-west-urge-maldives-to-hold-credible-transparent-presidential-poll-idUSKCN1IX4PI>

¹³² Mali, Trade with EU, April 16, 2018 http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2011/january/tradoc_147319.pdf

¹³³ EPA Facts and Figures, November 29, 2017 http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2014/july/tradoc_152694.pdf

¹³⁴ The European Union maintains its commitment to security and resilience in West Africa, June 15, 2017 http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1622_en.htm

2018 to 18 May 2020, compared to €33.4 for the current two-year period.¹³⁵

*The EU should work closely with the UN in supporting the implementation of the Mali Peace Agreement signed in 2015 to secure the protection and promotion of minority and FoRB groups.*¹³⁶

Host an EU-ACP States high-level political summit ahead of the renegotiations of the Cotonou Agreement termination in 2020. The agreement which is funded through the EU-ACP partnership will imminently be under review¹³⁷, any signatories to the renegotiated agreement should stipulate commitment to the ratification of human rights treaties, commitment to the 2030 sustainable development goals and include FoRB provisions.

Signs of Hope

Mali adopts 'national consensus law'. Mali's government has adopted a "national consensus" law that could lead to amnesty for rebels who took part in a 2012 revolt, in a bid to move the country on from unrest that has repeatedly stalled elections.¹³⁸

Civil society and religious leaders met in Bamako, Mali, in June 2017, to promote religious tolerance in Sahelian states experiencing armed conflict¹³⁹. Civilians are also taking initiatives of their own to counter jihadist ideology. In Dori and Gorom-Gorom in Burkina Faso's far north, a Muslim-Christian civil association that regularly organises interfaith dialogues.

Moldova

Focalness: Highest 

FoRB Situation: MINOR CONCERNS – 1

The European Union is Moldova's biggest trade partner. Around 66% of its exports are sent to the EU, followed by Russia, 10%, and Belarus, 6%. EU trade with Moldova accounts for 0.1% of its overall trade. Moldova ranks 68th among the EU's trade partners, €3.34 billion in 2016. Total EU exports to Moldova amounted to €2.02 billion¹⁴⁰ in 2016.

Recommendations

*Recommend launching an EU-Moldova implementation plan according to the OSCE Guidelines on registration of religious organisations or communities*¹⁴¹. In a previous FoRB Intergroup event, recommendations were made by participants at the event, for a sign-up support mechanism assisting actors involved in drafting and applying legislation in this area. A support system which could extend to CSOs. The EEAS in partnership with the OSCE could provide this guidance.¹⁴²

Signs of Hope

There are no particular signs of hope but nothing to suggest cause for concern either. Since 2007, FoRB promotion and protection has been on the rise; the Moldovan Parliament passed a new law of freedom of thought and conscience that was more progressive than previous ones. The new law provided freedom of religious practice in any form, which allowed for anyone to create a religious denomination without interference from the Government. This was followed, in 2011, by a visit from the UN Special Rapporteur on FoRB, Heiner Bielefeldt which also culminated in the registration of the Islamic League of Moldova¹⁴³.

Morocco

Focalness: High 

FoRB Situation: PROBLEMATIC ISSUES – 5

EU-Morocco cooperation is governed by the ENP¹⁴⁴. The EU is Morocco's largest trading partner, accounting for 59,4% of its trade in 2017. 64,6 % of Morocco's exports went to the EU, and 56,5% of Morocco's imports came from the EU. Morocco was ranked the EU's 22nd trading partner (€37,4 billion¹⁴⁵) in 2017. Furthermore, the EU is part of the Rabat Process platform for political cooperation amongst the countries along the migration route between Central, Western, Northern Africa and Europe¹⁴⁶.

Recommendations

The EEAS delegation could partner with a European Parliament delegation to launch a task force on "FoRB & Foreign Policy under the Euro-Mediterranean

135 EU training mission in Mali: Council extends mission for two years with broadened mandate to include support for G5 Sahel Joint Force, May 14, 2018 <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/05/14/eu-training-mission-in-mali-council-extends-mission-for-two-years-with-broadened-mandate-to-include-support-for-g5-sahel-joint-force/>

136 Mali and the EU, May 12, 2016 https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/mali/11062/mali-and-eu_en

137 AU Summit 31: Reconfiguring the African Peace Facility post-Cotonou, June 26, 2018 <https://allafrica.com/stories/201806260753.html>

138 Mali adopts 'national consensus' law, January 6, 2018 <https://www.news24.com/Africa/News/mali-adopts-national-consensus-law-20180601>

139 West Africa: The new Face of the Sahel, August 25, 2017 <https://allafrica.com/stories/201708301054.html>

140 Moldova Trade Statistics, April 16, 2018 http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_113419.pdf

141 Guidelines on the legal personality of religious or belief communities, February 4, 2015 <https://www.osce.org/odihr/139046>

142 OSCE/ODIHR launches guidelines on registration and recognition of religious or belief communities, February 4, 2015 <https://www.osce.org/odihr/139051>

143 Muslim community thriving in Moldova <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/Muslimcommunitythrivingin-Moldova.aspx>

144 European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations: Morocco, December 6, 2016 https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/neighbourhood/countries/morocco_en

145 European Union, Trade in goods with Morocco, April 16, 2018 <http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/html/113421.htm>

146 The Rabat Process <https://www.rabat-process.org/en/about/rabat-process/67-the-rabat-process>

*Association Agreement*¹⁴⁷ and its secondary impact for EU-Moroccan initiatives. Such a delegation could raise the following intersectional FoRB questions with the Moroccan counterparts such as the role of media and freedom of expression and intra/inter-faith dialogue¹⁴⁸. The ultimate result would be a roadmap towards greater protection and promotion of human rights, including FoRB within this framework.

EEAS delegations to offer FoRB literacy training to the Rabat process partners. The delegations can use the EU FoRB Guidelines to frame clearly defined measures with local governing authorities and CSOs for the promotion and protection of human rights and prevention of discrimination against migrants.

*The EU Commission should integrate a 6th objective to the “European Instrument for Democracy & Human Rights” focused on promoting FoRB and determine how these resources could be used to promote interfaith conferences, events, and dialogues in Morocco and the region*¹⁴⁹.

Signs of Hope

The Marrakesh Declaration signing in January 2016: More than 300 Sunni and Shia leaders from all over the world gathered in Marrakesh to formulate a Muslim call for protection of religious minorities. It is the first time in modern history that Muslim leaders have formulated such a clear rejection of religiously legitimated persecution and discrimination within the framework of international human rights¹⁵⁰.

The Archbishop of Constantinople and Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew I, proclaimed Morocco a pioneer in interfaith dialogue. They both addressed the 10th World Policy Conference (WPC) whereby Bartholomew also lauded efforts made by Morocco in view of their counterterrorism strategy and the work in the fight against the use of religion for destructive ends¹⁵¹.

Myanmar

Focalness: Low 

FoRB Situation: SEVERE VIOLATIONS – 8

The EU has co-operated closely with Myanmar since reform began in 2011, however the Rohingya crisis and the general situation in Rakhine State has placed strain

upon the partnership. On April 26, 2018, the Council adopted a number of restrictive measures, targeting those considered responsible for severe human rights violations and obstructing investigations and passage of humanitarian assistance¹⁵². Myanmar is a beneficiary of the Everything But Arms scheme and the EU was the 4th largest foreign investor in 2017, accounting for 8.8% of cumulated existing investments¹⁵³. The EU engages in a Human Rights dialogue with Myanmar, the latest one took place in March 2018.

Recommendations

The EU should push the government to cooperate with the UNSR on Myanmar and with the fact-finding mission established by the UNHRC, to allow for a thorough investigation into the egregious human rights violations against the Rohingya community, other serious human rights violations in Rakhine, Kachin and Shan states, and an analysis of the general human rights situation in the country.

The EU should work with Myanmar to achieve the implementation of the recommendations provided for in the report of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, especially those under the section focusing on Inter-Communal cohesion. In September 2016, the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State was established at the behest of the Government of Myanmar. In August 2017, it presented a report containing numerous recommendations for the improvement of the situation in Rakhine State¹⁵⁴. Though the situation in Rakhine as substantially deteriorated since the publication of the report, the EU should still encourage the government to follow the recommendations contained in the report and address the root causes that led to the conflict.

The EU should work with Burmese officials to draft a new version of the ‘Anti-Hate Speech Law’ that takes in to consideration the rabat plan of action. In September 2017, a law aimed at combatting hate speech was presented to the Parliament. The first draft of the law was drawn up by the Myanmar Interfaith group. The objective of the legislation is to combat hate speech online. The EU should work with Myanmar to ensure that any final draft law focuses on the principle of non-discrimination, takes into account the outcomes of the Rabat plan of action, and does not in any way impede upon the right to freedom of opinion and or expression. There should also be the consideration of a specific clause aimed at protecting the rights of the Rohingya community, and ending impunity for anyone inciting hatred.

147 Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements, March 10, 2011

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM:r14104>

148 Morocco offers to train imams to preach in for European mosques-Counter-terror chief keen to spread moderate Malki doctrine and pre-empt radicalisation, October 16, 2017

149 European Instrument for Democracy & Human Rights, July 19, 2018 https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/finance/eidhr_en.htm_en

150 The Marrakesh Declaration: A Muslim call for protection of religious minorities or freedom of religion? May 26th, 2017 <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/religionglobalsociety/2017/05/the-marrakesh-declaration-a-muslim-call-for-protection-of-religious-minorities-or-freedom-of-religion/>

151 Business Standard. Morocco pioneer in interfaith dialogue: Archbishop of Constantinople, November, 4, 2017 https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/morocco-pioneer-in-interfaith-dialogue-archbishop-of-constantinople-117110400983_1.html

152 EU extends and strengthens its arms embargo, April 26, 2018

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/04/26-myanmar-burma-eu-extends-and-strengthens-its-arms-embargo-and-adopts-a-framework-for-targeted-measures-against-officials-responsible-for-serious-human-rights-violations/pdf>


153 ibid

154 Final Report of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, August 2017 http://www.rakhinecommission.org/app/uploads/2017/08/FinalReport_Eng.pdf

Signs of hope

The Myanmar Interfaith Friendship and Unity group, a collective of religious leaders from various backgrounds, said that it would come together to assist in the rebuilding of Rakhine State¹⁵⁵.

Nigeria

Focalness: Low  

ForB Situation: **SEVERE VIOLATIONS – 8**

EU-Nigeria cooperation is governed by the Cotonou Agreement. Dialogues between the EU and Nigeria are held annually. The EU also undertakes an annual consultation with human rights organisations in the country¹⁵⁶. Nigeria is a member of ECOWAS, for whom the EU is the largest trading partner. In terms of Nigeria, the EU is its largest trading partner accounting for 24.3% of total trade¹⁵⁷. Negotiations for an Economic Partnership Agreement between the EU and ECOWAS are in progress.

Recommendations

The EU should prioritise applications in response to its recent call for proposals under the CBSS of the EIDHR¹⁵⁸, that include elements of the inter-religious dialogue and the protection and promotion of FoRB as cross-cutting issues in dealing with the promotion of respect for human rights and rule of law by state security services. Accusations against the security services in Nigeria include extrajudicial killings, torture and arbitrary arrests¹⁵⁹. Fostering of an understanding of cultural and religious difference, as well as general human rights norms by state security services would help to end impunity for crimes and to foster trust between citizens and security forces.

Work with the Nigerian government to provide training for FoRB literacy to government officials, and to work with nine northern states in which shariah law is observed, to ensure that the application of the law does not conflict with international human rights standards. Understanding the importance of FoRB is key to its protection. The EU could offer a programme similar to that which the EEAS provides for heads of delegation in order to sensitise Nigerian government officials to the importance of FoRB.

Encourage the Nigerian government to establish youth centres in states where religious tension exists, to

facilitate inter-religious dialogue through young people by means of participation in neutral activities, such as sports, drama or arts. Dialogues between young people could contribute to the breakdown of future tensions and the fostering of better understanding of different religions and belief systems.

Host an EU-ACP States high-level political summit ahead of the renegotiations of the Cotonou Agreement termination in 2020. The agreement which is funded through the EU-ACP partnership will imminently be under review¹⁶⁰, any signatories to the renegotiated agreement should stipulate commitment to the ratification of human rights treaties, commitment to the 2030 sustainable development goals and include FoRB provisions.

Signs of hope

Sadly, the human rights situation in Nigeria has deteriorated in the past year, and there have been no positive developments in terms of the protection and promotion of FoRB on the part of the government. Members of the country's minority Muslim Shia community continue to face harassment and discrimination and Boko Haram continues to terrorise citizens. Sectarian violence persists, and space for civil society is tightening. However, one positive note to mention is that *On Christmas in 2017, Shia Muslims visited 3 major churches in Kaduna state to celebrate Christmas with Christians¹⁶¹* – Members of the IMN visited the churches in order to show their solidarity with their Christian neighbours. Both the Shia Muslim Community and the Christian community have suffered from violence at the hands of Boko Haram in the past. In attending the services together, the leaders of the respective communities aimed to “champion unity among all religious people.”

Pakistan

Focalness: Low  

ForB Situation: **SEVERE VIOLATIONS – 10**

Pakistan and the EU cooperate closely in a number of areas, one of the most significant ones being trade. Pakistan is a beneficiary of the GSP+ programme and since its implementation imports from Pakistan to the EU increased by 20% between 2014 and 2016¹⁶². Despite the fact that in its most recent evaluation of Pakistan's adherence to its obligations under GSP+, the Commission noted that there were “worrying

¹⁵⁵ Interfaith group to contribute to Rakhine rebuilding, January 19, 2018 <https://www.mmmtimes.com/news/interfaith-group-contribute-rakhine-rebuilding.html>

¹⁵⁶ Nigeria and the EU, May 12, 2015 https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/1621/nigeria-and-eu_hr

¹⁵⁷ European Union, Trade in goods with Nigeria, April 15, 2018 http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_113427.pdf

¹⁵⁸ EIDHR CBSS – Nigeria, July 2, 2018 https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/nigeria/47730/call-proposals-%E2%80%93-nigeria-publication-reference-europeaid160440ddactng-european-instrument_en

¹⁵⁹ HRW World Report 2018, Nigeria <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/nigeria>

¹⁶⁰ AU Summit 31: Reconfiguring the African Peace Facility post-Cotonou, June 26, 2018 <https://allafrica.com/stories/201806260753.html>

¹⁶¹ Shia Muslims visit Nigerian churches to celebrate Christmas with Christians, December 28, 2017 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/muslims-nigeria-church-visit-christmas-celebrate-christians-islam-shiite-shia-kaduna-a8131686.html>

¹⁶² EU Special Incentive Arrangement for Sustainable Development and Good Governance (GSP+) assessment of Pakistan covering the period 2016-2017, January, 19, 2018 https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2018/january/tradoc_156544.pdf

developments” in a number of areas and that “effective implementation continued to be a concern,¹⁶³” there have been no moves by the EU to suspend or limit Pakistan’s benefits under GSP+. Wider cooperation between the EU and Pakistan was governed under the framework of the EU-Pakistan five year engagement plan until its expiry in 2017. During the most recent meeting of the EU-Pakistan Joint Commission, in October 2017, ideas for a new strategic engagement plan were discussed though no agreement was made¹⁶⁴.

Recommendations

Support the implementation of the National Action Plan for Human Rights and training of officials across the country and Co-ordinate best practice sharing between Pakistan and Member States with regards to training for police forces and judiciaries in provincial areas. The Pakistani government introduced the National Action Plan for Human Rights in early 2016, in response to the conferral of GSP+ status by the EU. The aim of the plan is to safeguard human rights and provide national, and provincial level policy strategies to ensure the implementation and subsequent protection of human rights, especially amongst the most vulnerable communities. However, the reality of the situation is that the Action Plan is not being implemented, due to widespread corruption in the country and the ambivalence of the army. Following the elections in Pakistan, the EU should work with the new government to push for the true implementation of the action plan. If there is no improvement, the EU should consider how the leverage of GSP+ status could be used to encourage positive developments with regards to the action plan.

Include FoRB as a priority in the next EU Pakistan Strategic engagement plan. As the Commission has noted that the situation facing religious and belief minorities in Pakistan continues to be problematic¹⁶⁵, the EU should ensure that protecting the rights of the citizens of Pakistan, especially minorities, is a priority for both parties. Inclusion of FoRB in the upcoming strategic action plan will provide an avenue in addition to the GSP+ to hold Pakistan accountable for its actions concerning Human rights.

Work together with Pakistan to develop a roadmap towards the removal of blasphemy laws in place both in Pakistan and EU member states. The blasphemy laws continue to be the source of serious discrimination based on religion or belief within Pakistan. At least 19 people on death row as a result of sentences passed under Section 295c¹⁶⁶ of the penal code and many more

are serving prison sentences. A reported 71 people have been killed by mobs due to blasphemy accusations since 1990¹⁶⁷. Steps must be taken, first to remove the death penalty as a punishment for blasphemy, and then to gradually move towards the removal of the blasphemy laws in Pakistan.

Signs of hope

Following its UPR in 2017, the Pakistani government accepted a number of recommendations concerning freedom of religion or belief.

In March 2017, the government passed the Hindu Marriage Act that recognised Hindu marriages by allowing them to be officially registered¹⁶⁸.

Saudi Arabia

Focalness: Lowest 

FoRB Situation: SEVERE VIOLATIONS – 10

EU-Saudi Arabia cooperation is governed by a Cooperation Agreement with the Cooperation Council for Arab States of the Gulf (GCC). EU-GCC total trade in goods in 2017 amounted to €143.7 billion. In 2017, EU exports to the GCC amounted to €99.8 billion. In the meantime, EU imports from the GCC accounted for €43.8 billion, generating a significant trade surplus for the EU¹⁶⁹.

Recommendations

Launch an Inter-religious dialogue and FoRB Tolerance programme via the Gulf Research Centre project on “Public Diplomacy and Outreach devoted to the European Union and EU-GCC Relations.” This programme can provide a platform for joint research, fact finding and policy exchange on common values, human rights and FoRB within human rights¹⁷⁰. Furthermore, the research centre could dedicate funds to monitoring financial donations (often personal) awarded to foreign (outside of KSA) entities related directly to violent radical movements/groups.

The EEAS, in view of increased entertainment options for families and young people in KSA, could develop a new framework to reduce censorship. A possible avenue to explore, on the basis of the success of such a reduced censorship policy, would be to launch the first EU-KSA film, education and entertainment funds promoting human rights narratives in the region. This could be a window for exchange between EU and Saudi creatives

¹⁶³ ibid

¹⁶⁴ Joint press release: European Union Pakistan Joint Commission and its sub groups meet, October 12, 2017 https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/33778/joint-press-release-european-union-pakistan-joint-commission-and-its-sub-groups-meet_en

¹⁶⁵ EU Special Incentive Arrangement for Sustainable Development and Good Governance (GSP+) assessment of Pakistan covering the period 2016-2017, January, 19, 2018 https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2018/january/tradoc_156544.pdf

¹⁶⁶ HRW World Report 2018, Pakistan <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/pakistan>

¹⁶⁷ Death penalty for blasphemy on Facebook, June 12, 2017 <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/06/pakistan-death-penalty-blasphemy-facebook-170612052000251.html>

¹⁶⁸ HRW World Report 2018, Pakistan <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/pakistan>

¹⁶⁹ Trade policy, Gulf region, May 25, 2018 https://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/regions/gulf-region/index_en.htm

¹⁷⁰ EU-GCC Al Jisr Project <https://www.ceps.eu/projects/eu-gcc-al-jisr-project>

fostering dialogue for cross-cultural and inter-religious collaboration.

Signs of Hope

Since the crown was handed over to Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, he has publicly called for a return to moderate Islam. MbS insists he wishes to bring a new face to the country¹⁷¹. It is said that the Crown Prince wants to reanimate the country, to bring it back to a time where the Saudi Arabia was a more open, tolerant and liberal society. An era when women especially enjoyed more rights and freedoms^{172,173}. Sadly, recent actions seeking the death penalty for a 29-year-old female activist accused of encouraging demonstrations for greater rights for the Shiite Muslim minority, do not resemble these promises.¹⁷⁴

Serbia

Focalness: High 

ForB Situation : **MINOR CONCERNS – 3**

The EU is the Western Balkans' largest trading partner, accounting for over 76% of the region's total trade. As a whole the region's share of overall EU trade was 1.3% in 2016. However individual countries' shares were very low – Serbia (0.59%)¹⁷⁵.

Recommendations

Ensure that eliminating remaining concerns in regard to freedom of religion or belief are monitored. Ensure that the current ForB rights are maintained; this could be done through specific analysis in reporting. An EU-Serbia early warning mechanisms could be introduced in order to act as a preventative measure¹⁷⁶. Furthermore the EU should encourage Serbian authorities to inform and train religious and belief leaders to detect early signs of FORB violations. The “Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors” by the UN could function as a guide¹⁷⁷.

Youth Engagement and education is fundamental and could be administered through a teachers exchange and ForB capacity building programme which would serve to promote a more inclusive educational curricula. Furthermore, a comprehensive understanding of

diversity can secure non-discrimination in educational settings. Therefore the EU should consider expanding the mandate of the Erasmus Mundus financed programme “Penta-JoinEU-SEE” by encouraging more universities in Serbia and Europe to join, but also by including a teacher workshop exchange based on religious diversity and tolerance¹⁷⁸.

Signs of Hope

The OSCE has played a pivotal and effective role in promoting youth dialogue and engagement between Serbs and Albanians by launching the “Humans of Albania and Serbia” initiative that aims to “enhance regional connectivity of Serbian and Albanian youth actors”. Several activities also revolve around inter-faith dialogue and acceptance, for example by accompanying groups of students to visits various places of worship in order to improve sensitivity and awareness¹⁷⁹.

Somalia

Focalness: High 

FORB violations: **SEVERE VIOLATIONS – 10**

Somalia is a fragile state; the transitional federal government that is in place exercises limited control over the country, given a lack of resources and the presence of Al-Shabaab. However, there is still a relationship between Somalia and the EU. Prior to their expiry in 2016, EU engagement with Somalia was governed by the New Deal principles for fragile states & The Somali Compact. The EU has limited formal trade with Somalia, though it assists with the development of the agricultural, livestock and fisheries sector through the NIP¹⁸⁰. In 2017, the EU allocated €119 million in humanitarian assistance to Somalia as a response to a severe drought in the Horn of Africa region¹⁸¹.

Recommendations

Lobby the Somalian government to amend the Provisional Constitution to establish a true right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief. The current constitution prohibits the propagation of any religion other than Islam¹⁸². This provision is contrary to the principle of ForB and allows for the curtailment of freedom of expression, assembly and association. The EU should train government officials to foster an understanding of the importance of ForB and its relationship to other human rights.

171 Ibid

172 Ibid

173 I will return Saudi Arabia to moderate Islam, says crown prince, October 24, 2017

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/24/i-will-return-saudi-arabia-moderate-islam-crown-prince>

174 <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/22/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-israel-al-ghomgham.html>

175 Trade policy, Western Balkans, May 25, 2018 http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/regions/western-balkans/index_en.htm

176 EU Guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief, June 24, 2013 <https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/137585.pdf>

177 Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that could lead to Atrocities Crimes, July 14, 2017 https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/Plan_of_Action_Religious_Prevent_Incitate.pdf

178 Penta-JoinEUSEE website

<https://www.joinuseepenta.eu/> also see: <https://erasmusplus.rs/mobility/erasmus-mundus/partner-institutions/joineu-see-penta/>

179 Humans of Albania and Serbia Website <https://youthhumans.net/about-us/hoas-beginings/>

180 Somalia and the EU https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/somalia/1764/somalia-and-eu_en

181 Somalia, ECHO factsheet https://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/africa/somalia_en

182 The Federal Republic of Somalia Provisional Constitution <http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/research/Somalia-Constitution2012.pdf>

Provide workshops on human rights standards and the importance of the recognition of FoRB as a right that protects people, not beliefs as a way to encourage respect for the human rights of all, in particular, women and girls. Such workshops should be used as peace-building tools, to bring together different actors from across the Somali society.

Support Somalia in the implementation of the Human Rights Commission Bill by assisting with the establishment of the national human rights commission through the provision of training for officials. The EU should encourage the Somali government to move forward with the establishment of the Commission through capacity building via funds from the Instrument for stability and peace.

Host an EU-ACP States high-level political summit ahead of the renegotiations of the Cotonou Agreement termination in 2020. The agreement which is funded through the EU-ACP partnership will imminently be under review¹⁸³, any signatories to the renegotiated agreement should stipulate commitment to the ratification of human rights treaties, commitment to the 2030 sustainable development goals and include FoRB provisions.

Signs of hope

Following the signature of the Human Rights Commission Bill in August 2016¹⁸⁴, the government has taken steps towards establishing a National Human Rights Commission in Somalia¹⁸⁵.

South Sudan

Focalness: High 

FoRB Situation: PROBLEMATIC ISSUES – 4

The EU was South Sudan's third largest trade partner in 2016 (no data yet for 2017), behind China and Pakistan, however it represented only 2.3% of total world trade. China makes up 88% of South Sudan's total trade, including 99% of its' exports and 21% of its' imports. South Sudan did not export anything to the EU in 2016¹⁸⁶.

Recommendations

The EU could provide financial support through project funding to empower the role of women in society through greater FoRB promotion. Between December 2013-December 2015 the European Commission supported a project committed to Eliminating Violence Against women in South Sudan through Women's

Empowerment, Access to Legal rights and Legal Literacy. This programme should be maintained and include training on human rights within the legal framework and highlight the intersection between women, gender and FoRB. The EEAS delegation can measure the impact by identifying the number of women who take leadership roles and are given space in the decision-making process. This could be done by amending any future project funding criteria to include 'encouraging increased female involvement and leadership within FoRB communities, CSO initiatives and local representative governance/training programmes'.

Civil Society/governance officials training programmes in Human Rights & Tolerance including a module on FoRB funded via the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa. Since 2015, €77.6 million have been dedicated to support the basic needs of people affected by the conflict in the areas of health, education, and local governance. In view of the Darfur cessation in hostilities, The EU and South Sudan could invite civil society and governance representatives to submit project ideas (like making short informative webinar videos, accessible on every smartphone) to demonstrate the importance and value of integrating human rights in a community setting.

Signs of Hope

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) on Friday suspended South Sudan peace talks for an undetermined time to give warring sides more time to reach conclusive agreement. However, the Ethiopian State Minister for Foreign Affairs Hirut Zemene said that there was a 'positive spirit' achieved during the talks, and that they should continue into the next session¹⁸⁷.

The IGAD Special Envoy for South Sudan, accompanied by representatives of the Office of the Chairperson of the IGAD Council of Ministers, held consultations with representatives of the South Sudanese Civil Society Stakeholders to the HLRF to discuss key outstanding issues at the Forum, including positions of the various parties and possible compromises.¹⁸⁸

Sudan

Focalness: Medium 

FoRB Situation: SEVERE VIOLATIONS – 9

The EU is Sudan's third largest trade partner, behind UAE and Egypt, accounting for 9.9% of Sudan's total trade in 2017 which valued €836 million.¹⁸⁹ Sudan also imported more from the EU than anywhere else in 2017,

¹⁸³ AU Summit 31: Reconfiguring the African Peace Facility post-Cotonou, June 26, 2018 <https://allafrica.com/stories/201806260753.html>

¹⁸⁴ Somalia: President signs Human Rights Commission Bill, August 14 2016, <https://allafrica.com/stories/201608150352.html>

¹⁸⁵ Somalia seeks to set up independent human rights commission, July 10, 2017 http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-07/10/c_136430450.htm

¹⁸⁶ South Sudan – EU Trade, November 16, 2017 http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2013/november/tradoc_151910.pdf

¹⁸⁷ IGAD suspends South Sudan peace talks, February 2, 2018

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-02/17/c_136980273.htm

¹⁸⁸ The IGAD special envoy commences consultations on the outstanding issues of the HLRF, April 10, 2018

<https://igad.int/programs/115-south-sudan-office/1794-the-igad-special-envoy-commences-consultations-on-the-outstanding-issues-at-the-hlrf>

¹⁸⁹ 'Sudan, Trade with World', April 16, 2018

http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2011/january/tradoc_147395.pdf

with imports from the EU representing 13% of Sudan's total imports.¹⁹⁰

Recommendations

Launch human rights training sessions (with FoRB components), facilitated by the EU through the AFRICA-EU dialogue on migration and mobility as part of the Khartoum process¹⁹¹, for: policy-makers, decision-makers, local/national governance officials and civil society. The training sessions would focus on improved processes and framework development for reporting on the reasoning behind some of the migration cases. Determine a set of indicators to evaluate cases directly related to human rights and FoRB violations. Sudan is eligible for the 'European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa' (EUTF for Africa). Funds from this programme could be used for training and data collection purposes.¹⁹²

Host an EU-ACP States high-level political summit ahead of the renegotiations of the Cotonou Agreement termination in 2020. The agreement which is funded through the EU-ACP partnership will imminently be under review¹⁹³, any signatories to the renegotiated agreement should stipulate commitment to the ratification of human rights treaties, commitment to the 2030 sustainable development goals and include FoRB provisions.

Launch a human rights (with a FoRB component) Darfur Internal Dialogue Task force. Given the success of the Consultation (DIDC) process whereby citizens of Darfur were provided with a platform to have their voices heard supported by the EU¹⁹⁴, as indicated by EU Ambassador Jean-Michel Dumond, provide resources and tools for the output to be realised.

The EU should host a series of trilateral meetings on thematic issues that have a direct impact on the protection and promotion of FoRB. Intersectional thematic issues to cover would include: counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism, human rights and development¹⁹⁵¹⁹⁶.

The EEAS could launch a media initiative calling for written submissions on the intersection between FoRB and Freedom of Expression/Press. This could alter

Sudan's legal interpretation of freedom of speech that is currently linked to blasphemy or treason as was seen in the case of Czech missionary and filmmaker Petr Jašek. He was arrested in December 2015 and charged with several crimes, including conspiring against the state and espionage against the country.¹⁹⁷

Signs of Hope

Jan Figel, Special Envoy for the Promotion of Freedom of Religion or Belief outside the European Union, visited Sudan. Figel said that the exchanges demonstrated readiness of Sudanese partners to engage in continuous and constructive dialogue on religious diversity in Sudan, Horn of Africa and globally¹⁹⁸. He also met with Sudanese Members of Parliament (MPs) at the National Assembly where he discussed issues related to FoRB.

The Sudanese authorities laxed their policies vis-à-vis religious minorities, as appears from the permission given to the Anglican Church to appoint its first Archbishop in the country. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, presented the first Archbishop of the new Anglican province of Sudan, Ezekiel Kondo, with a Primatial Cross during a service in All Saint's Cathedral in Khartoum.¹⁹⁹

Press Statement of the UN Independent Expert on the Situation of human rights in the Sudan, Mr. Aristide Nononsi. In which is stated, "In all my meetings with the Government, I have received assurances of cooperation, some commitments to take steps towards implementing the recommendations contained in my report of September 2017."²⁰⁰ Mr Nononsi also states "I welcome the appointment of the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Commissioners of the Sudan National Human Rights Commission, which I hope will enable the Commission to function effectively."

FoRB Prisoners released: Rev. Hassan Abdelrahim Tawor and Abdulmonem Abdumawla from Darfur who were both serving a 12-year sentence for "inciting hatred" among religious groups, espionage, disseminating false information about the government.²⁰¹

190 ibid

191 Africa-EU dialogue on migration and mobility, 2016 <https://www.khartoumprocess.net/about/africa-eu-dialogue-on-migration-and-mobility-mmd>

192 EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, July 19, 2018 https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/regions/africa/eu-emergency-trust-fund-africa_en

193 AU Summit 31: Reconfiguring the African Peace Facility post-Cotonou, June 26, 2018 <https://allafrica.com/stories/201806260753.html>

194 Ambassador Jean-Michel Dumond: EU is committed to sustainable development and peace in Darfur, October 30, 2017 https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/34795/ambassador-jean-michel-dumond-eu-committed-sustainable-development-and-peace-darfur_en

195 Khartoum Process, 2016 <https://www.khartoumprocess.net>

196 UK-Sudan Strategic Dialogue Communiqué, November 11, 2017 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-sudan-strategic-dialogue-communication>

197 Human Rights Without Frontiers Prisoners List 2017 – Sudan, January 3, 2018 <http://hrwf.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Sudan-FBL-2017.pdf>

198 European envoy on freedom of religion or belief: Sudanese partners open to dialogue on religious diversity, March 18, 2017 https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/24024/european-envoy-freedom-religion-or-belief-sudanese-partners-open-dialogue-religious-diversity_en

199 Celebrations as Sudan becomes Anglican Communion's 39th province, July 31, 2017 <http://www.anglicannews.org/features/2017/07/celebrations-as-sudan-becomes-anglican-communions-39th-province.aspx>

200 Press Statement of the UN Independent Expert on the Situation of Human Rights in the Sudan, Mr. Aristide Nononsi, April 24, 2018 <http://menafn.com/1096761650/Press-Statement-of-the-UN-Independent-Expert-on-the-Situation-of-Human-Rights-in-the-Sudan-Mr-Aristide-Nononsi>

201 After more than a year imprisonment in Sudan, two christians released, May 16, 2017 <http://www.christianitydaily.com/articles/9000/20170516/more-year-imprisonment-sudan-two-christians-released.htm>

Syria

Focalness: Medium 

ForRB Situation: **SEVERE VIOLATIONS – 10**

“Since March 2011, more than 400 000 Syrians have lost their lives and over one million have been injured. Around 6.1 million people have fled their homes inside Syria and over five million have been forced to take refuge in neighbouring countries. The EU and its Member States have mobilised more than €10.6 billion since the start of the conflict, including over €753 million in humanitarian aid alone until 2017²⁰²”. The EU is Syria’s 4th largest trading partner (€571 Million) after, Russia, Turkey, and China and ranks number two (€106 Million) as a destination for Syrian exports²⁰³

Recommendations

Draft joint EU Council and EEAS report on the future of Syria that emphasises the urgency to protect and promote human rights and FoRB. The report should; a) clearly define how the EU views its role in Syria and the future of Syria in general, b) demand observer status to conferences, summits, meetings pertaining to Syria that are led by Turkey, Iran, and Russia and c) calls for joint summits, d), and e) promote the notion of religious freedom, tolerance and human rights and emphasise the importance of FoRB regarding societal healing in Syria and g) find areas where the EU and the region share interests and goals and develops roadmaps on how to bring effective cooperation into fruition.

Help Syria restore and rebuild its historical heritage and sites of worship. The EU should invest more money to the re-building/restructuring of historical sites, buildings, and monuments that have been destroyed and/or damaged during the war. The EU should create a mutual fund with UNESCO and develop a roadmap on how and when to invest into rebuilding Syria’s cultural heritage. In order to propel societal cohesion, the fund should focus on rebuilding, repairing, restoring religious and holy sites.

Signs of Hope:

The near defeat of Daesh allows space for cooperation regarding the protection and rebuilding of FoRB and human rights, however, the conflict is still ongoing and the challenges are still immense. While terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda still have a strong foothold in Syria, one of the glimpses of hope within the Syrian conflict has been the near defeat of Daesh²⁰⁴; a goal shared by the overwhelming majority of parties involved in the conflict.

- 202 European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations: Syria, March 11, 2018
https://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/middle-east/syria_en
- 203 European Commission, European Union, Trade in goods with Syria, April 16, 2018
https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_113451.pdf
- 204 Islamic State: Defeated but still dangerous, February 10, 2018
<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/middle-east/islamic-state-defeated-but-still-dangerous-1.3383585>

This could open up further channels of communication between the EU and other parties. The EU could champion humanitarian and infrastructural projects in parts of Syria that were ravished by Daesh. Furthermore, the EU should create an inter-religious task force that supports groups that suffered under ISIS to rediscover their belief and faith in a safe environment.

Tunisia

Focalness: Highest 

ForRB Situation: **PROBLEMATIC ISSUES – 4**

EU-Tunisia cooperation is governed by the ENP. The EU is Tunisia’s largest trading partner, accounting for 64% of its trade in 2017: 78,5% of Tunisia’s exports went to the EU, and 54,3% of Tunisia’s imports came from the EU. Tunisia is the EU’s 34th trading partner representing 0.6% of the EU’s total trade with the world.²⁰⁵

Since the 2011 Revolution, the EU’s total assistance to Tunisia amounted to €3.5 billion, of which €1.2 billion in grants, €800 million in macro-financial assistance and the rest in blending facilities²⁰⁶.

Recommendations

The joint EU-Tunisia counter-terrorism programmes and cooperation should include FoRB training and awareness campaigns. The EU and Tunisia cooperate very closely and extensively on counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation, but should expand existing programmes by including FoRB training curricula for counter-terrorism/counter-radicalisation experts²⁰⁷

Signs of Hope

Jews and Muslims celebrate unusual coexistence in Tunisia’s Djerba²⁰⁸. Tunisian Muslims, carried candles and wrote their hopes for the future on an egg in a religious ceremony at a synagogue on the southern island of Djerba.

Tunisia: Pact for Equality, Individual Freedom: More than 90 organizations and civil society groups in Tunisia on July 24, 2018 issued a Pact for Equality and Individual Freedoms including FoRB, outlining the fundamental rights that all Tunisians should enjoy. This pact is being issued to confirm a commitment to a civilian and democratic Tunisian Republic in the wake of the publication of the report of the presidentially appointed

- 205 European Commission.Countries and Regions: Tunisia, May 24, 2018
https://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/tunisia/index_en.htm
- 206 ibid
- 207 Dworkin,A. The southern front line: EU counter-terrorism cooperation with Tunisia and Morocco, European Council on Foreign Relations, Policy Brief, February 15, 2018
https://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/the_southern_front_line_eu_counter_terrorism_cooperation
- 208 Jews and Muslims celebrate unusual coexistence in Tunisia's Djerba May 14, 2018
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-tunisia-religion/jews-and-muslims-celebrate-unusual-coexistence-in-tunisias-djerba-idUSKCN1IF1J2>


Russian and Ukrainian Orthodox Churches²¹⁸. However, given the role FoRB communities are playing within this very sensitive political situation, it is crucial that their individual human and FoRB rights are not forsaken.

Signs of Hope

The EUAM Ukraine mandate was extended until May 2019 to improve human rights and governance in Ukraine.

The EU-Ukraine Annual Human Rights Dialogue specifically addressed non-discrimination policy, including the rights of religious and national minorities. The EU encouraged Ukraine to ratify the Istanbul Convention.

Yemen

Focalness: low 

FoRB Situation: SEVERE VIOLATIONS – 10

The EU is Yemen's 5th largest trading partner (€416 million) in 2017 behind the UAE, China, Turkey and Brazil²¹⁹. Yemen's exports to the EU was the 7th globally (€18 million) in 2017²²⁰. Yemen is an impoverished, low-income country, which currently ranks 154 out of 187 in the UN Human Development Index²²¹. Yemen's economy is highly dependent on fossil fuels and most of the economy and employment are informal (ca. 90%). The EU, UK, Germany and the Netherlands are main donors. The EU has committed €300 million to Yemen post country unification²²².

Recommendations

The EEAS should co-host a summit with Oman and Kuwait revolving around Peace, human rights and FoRB. The small countries are viewed as neutral power brokers and the EU could assist them in intensifying

*their efforts in returning peace to Yemen*²²³. However, the Yemeni Civil War and conflict continues to threaten the lives of more than 250,000 people in the port city Hodeidah and 8 million more people across Yemen who are already at risk of starvation²²⁴. "Key member states such as Germany and the Netherlands are viewed as comparatively neutral actors by key factions in Yemen,"²²⁵ within this scope, the three parties should invite Houthi and Hadi religious leaders and provide them with the infrastructural support needed to sign a joint statement calling for peace, human rights and respect for FoRB in Yemen.

The EU Commission, EEAS and Council should ensure that funds made available to peace building and social cohesion in Yemen address FoRB and gender issues. Thus far, the EU has successfully awarded funds to projects for Enhancement of the Rule of Law, Human Rights and Gender Equality in the Republic of Yemen and Social protection mechanisms to increase communities' resilience in fragile environment²²⁶. The relevant EU bodies should emphasise the importance of FoRB for sustainable conflict resolution in Yemen and should a) continue to use funds from the "Peace and Dialogue" programme to finance initiatives and projects that aim to improve FoRB in Yemen and b) create a programme that focuses exclusively on FoRB, especially regarding women in the conflict zone²²⁷. Women are disproportionality affected by the war in Yemen, but still play a key role in peace building, community work, as well as paving the path for respecting and implementing FoRB.²²⁸

Signs of Hope

The unrest and military conflict in Yemen has not allowed for any signs of hope to prevail in our research. This is not a single conflict but a multifaceted regional, local, and international power struggle.

218 Ukrainian Parliament delayed hearings on draft laws about religious issues May 18, 2017 http://www.irf.in.ua/eng/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=453:1&catid=34:ua&Itemid=61

219 European Commission. Trade in the World: Yemen, April 16, 2018 https://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_113464.pdf

220 ibid

221 EU Commission. International Cooperation and Development, Yemen, July 19, 2018 https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/countries/yemen_en

222 ibid

223 Kirchschlager, M. Mediation in the Yemen Conflict: Strengthening Regional Actors, GIGA Focus, May 2017 <https://www.giga-hamburg.de/en/publication/mediation-in-the-yemen-conflict-strengthening-regional-actors>

224 Yemen: Understanding the conflict June 6, 2018 <http://theconversation.com/yemen-understanding-the-conflict-98296>

225 Yemen's Forgotten War: How Europe can lay the foundations for Peace, December 20, 2016 https://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/yemens_forgotten_war_how_europe_can_lay_the_foundations_for_peace

226 EU Projects with Yemen May 16, 2016 https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/yemen/1878/eu-projects-yemen_en

227 The Delegation of the European Union to Yemen, EU Projects with Yemen, May 16, 2018 https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/yemen_en/1878/EU%20Projects%20with%20Yemen

228 Heinze, M.C.; Stevens, S. Women as Peacebuilders in Yemen, Social Development Direct, June 2018 http://www.sddirect.org.uk/media/1571/sdd_yemenreport_full_v5.pdf

Regional Chapter

Regional Review of Severe FoRB Violators Central Asia

While the focalness scores indicate that EU leverage vis-a vis the five Central Asian States Kazakhstan (low), Kyrgyzstan (low), Tajikistan (lowest), Turkmenistan (lowest) and Uzbekistan (lowest) is not substantial, recent detrimental developments pertaining to FoRB and human rights abuses in the past few years call for a regional analysis and statistical depiction of negative trends and the number of incidents. Hugh Williamson, the Europe and Central Asia division director at Human Rights Watch highlighted this in the Human Rights World Report 2017²²⁹:

“Many aspects of human rights protection in Central Asia are in crisis,” “Rather than focusing on elite power politics or consolidating their personal positions, the leaders in the region should move away from repressive policies and take concrete steps to end torture in detention, allow free speech, and release critics from jail”

So, while the focalness might be “low” or “lowest” for each individual country, it could be argued that the focalness of the region as a whole is high enough to justify inclusion in our report. Furthermore, the five post-soviet states share a common past and current challenges, including FoRB and human rights violations. While initially the EU’s core interest revolved around

energy security, for example the Nabucco pipeline, current trends in international politics have increased the geopolitical importance of Central Asia to the EU. The EEAS is currently preparing a new Strategy for Central Asia that will be agreed and published in 2019. Consultations both in Central Asian capitals and Brussels are being held with NGOs to incorporate human rights aspects. Jos Boonstra, a senior researcher at the Centre for European Studies (CESS) and coordinator of the Europe-Central Asia Monitoring Programme (EUCAM) argues that:

“Central Asia is squashed between two major powers: Russia and China. Its central position has made it a popular object of geopolitical strategising. Although Chinese investment and Russian security cooperation are often welcomed in Central Asia, there is a high demand for alternatives (...), firstly the EU is seen as fairly neutral, (...), secondly, it has become clear to Central Asian states that the EU plans to remain engaged in the region for the long haul, thirdly, Central Asian countries are young states that seek to harness their independence and develop their identity (...) informally, the EU can offer this recognition through agreements it concludes with Central Asian states, as well as visits of high-level Central Asian officials to Brussels and other European capitals, and vice versa.”²³⁰

229 Human Rights Watch, Central Asia: Make Improving Rights a Priority, End Torture, Respect Basic Freedoms, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/01/12/central-asia-make-improving-rights-priority>, January 12, 2017.

230 Boonstra, J., The European Union (EU) can play a positive role in Central Asia by offering an alternative to Russia and China, Voices on Central Asia, <http://voicesoncentralasia.org/three-reasons-why-the-eu-matters-to-central-asia/>

It is also paramount to highlight the EU's continued efforts in Afghanistan and the importance of reliable partners in the region, i.e. Central Asian States to facilitate and sustain progress, peace and stability.²³¹

Leverage indicators as they currently stand, accurately show that relationships between the EU and the Central Asian States are relatively minuscule. However, we believe projected leverage given the geopolitical landscape is substantially higher. In late December of 2017, the U.S. State Department singled out Pakistan, Iran and three of the five Central Asian states (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) for policies violating religious freedom.²³²

The human rights Watch Report "World Report 2018" indicates that all five Central Asian Republics lack sufficient freedom of religion or belief and documents severe human rights violations in all of the countries.²³³ In November 2017, Reporters without Borders wrote a

letter to European Union's High Representative Federica Mogherini during her participation of the annual EU-Central Asia ministerial meeting, highlighting the need to foster greater respect for media freedom in four of the five Central Asian Republics (Kyrgyz Media was lauded for its pluralism, but was also viewed as a major exception the region).²³⁴

In Turkmenistan in April 2016, a new Religion Law included a ban on exercising freedom of religion or belief without state permission. In Kyrgyzstan the current President (from October 2017) Jeenbekov initiated defamation lawsuits and criminal investigations against human rights defenders and journalists. Forum 18, a Norwegian Human Rights and FoRB watchdog²³⁵ focuses predominantly on ex-Soviet States provides an elaborate overview on serious violations in all Central Asian Republics especially pertaining to FoRB, freedom of expression, association and assembly.²³⁶

231 EEAS, EU-Afghanistan relations, factsheet, https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/10740/EU-Afghanistan%20relations,%20factsheet

232 Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, U.S. Hits Pakistan, Iran Three Central Asian Nations for Religious Freedom Violations, <https://www.rferl.org/a/religious-freedom-violations-pakistan-iran-turkmenistan-tajikistan-uzbekistan-u-s-state-department/28955204.html>, January 4, 2018.

233 See Human Rights Watch, World Report 2018: Events of 2017, https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/world_report_download/201801world_report_web.pdf

234 Reporters without Borders, Human rights and media freedom must be priorities at EU-Central Asia meeting, <https://rsf.org/en/news/human-rights-and-media-freedom-must-be-priorities-eu-central-asia-meeting>, November 17 2017.

235 Forum 18 News Service is widely used by international organisations like Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and OSCE.

236 Forum 18 News Service (latest entries on Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan), last accessed June 25, 2018. <https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?country=29> <https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?country=32> <https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?country=30> <https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?country=33> <https://www.forum18.org/archive.php?country=31>

Annexes



Annex I

European Parliament on FoRB related issues

2017**Resolution**

14 Jun	Resolution on the Commission report on Kosovo (*wording used – interreligious tolerance, inter-religious dialogue, references to minorities)
15 Jun	Resolution on Pakistan, notably the situation of human rights defenders and the death penalty
15 Jun	Resolution on the human rights situation in Indonesia
04 Jul	Resolution on addressing human rights violations in the context of war crimes, and crimes against humanity including genocide (*wording used – inter-religious tolerance, inter-religious dialogue, references to minorities)
06 Jul	Resolution on the 2016 Commission report on Turkey
14 Sep	Resolution on Myanmar, in particular the situation of Rohingyas
03 Oct	Resolution on addressing shrinking civil society space in developing countries
05 Oct	Resolution on the situation in the Maldives
12 Dec	Resolution on the draft Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the Union, of the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Kazakhstan, of the other part
13 Dec	Resolution on the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2016 and the European Union's policy on the matter
13 Dec	Resolution on the Annual Report on the implementation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy Talks about EU promotion of co-existence between religious minorities in Iraq & Syria –
14 Dec	Resolution on the situation of the Rohingya people
14 Dec	Resolution of freedom of expression in Vietnam, notably in the case of Nguyen Van Hoa

2018**Resolution**

18 Jan	Resolution on Nigeria
18 Jan	Resolution on the cases of human rights activists Wu Gan, Xie Yang, Lee Ming-Che and Tashi Wangchuck, and the Tibetan Monk Choekyi
19 Jan	Resolution on Indonesia, notably the case of Hosea Yeimo and Ismael Alua and the Governor of Jakarta
08 Feb	Resolution on the current human rights situation in Turkey

2017**Parliamentary Questions**

19 Ma	Freedom of religion or belief: agenda for implementation
19 Jun	VP/HR – Persecution of Coptic Christians in Egypt and Libya
12 Jul	Treatment of religious minorities in Russia
19 Jul	VP/HR – Persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia
24 Jul	VP/HR – Ban on the activities of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia
28 Sep	VP/HR – China's revised regulations on religion and recently adopted security policies
12 Oct	VP/HR – Rights of religious minorities in Nepal
26 Oct	Position of Christians in Turkey and the construction of the Ilisu dam
12 Oct	VP/HR – UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief

2018	Parliamentary Questions
18 Jan	Religious intolerance in Egypt: terrorist attacks on Coptic Christians
10 Jan	Persecuted Christians: World Watch List 2018 report
2017	Hearings
22 Nov	DROI hearing on FoRB 22.11.2017 Video “Freedom of religion or belief is a litmus test for all human rights” Press release

Annex II

European Council on FoRB related issues

2017	Action
27 Feb	Council conclusions on EU priorities at UN Human Rights Fora in 2017
27 Jun	Joint staff working document (commission and Council) EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2015-2019): Mid-Term Review June 2017
10 Jul	Joint statement following the 12th EU-Jordan Association Council
17 Jul	Council conclusions on Pakistan
17 Jul	Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) report – Our priorities 2017
16 Oct	EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World in 2016
2018	Action
15 May	EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2017, adopted by the Council. FoRB specific reporting can be found in pages 29-32.

Annex III

European External Action Service on FoRB related issues

2017	Action
30 Mar	Statement by the EU at the 1139th meeting of the OSCE permanent council on banning Jehovah’s Witnesses in Russia
05 Apr	EU Local Statement on the Persecution of Jehovah’s Witnesses in Russia
21 Apr	Statement by the Spokesperson on the ban of the activities of Jehovah’s Witnesses in Russia
27 Apr	EU Statement on the ban of the activities of Jehovah’s Witnesses in Russia
09 May	EU Local statement on freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression
30 May	Statement by the Spokesperson on Sudanese human rights defender Dr Mudawi
23 Jun	Statement by the EU at the OSCE supplementary human dimension meeting on freedom of religion or belief: issues, opportunities, and the specific challenges of combating anti-semitism and intolerance and discrimination against Christians, Muslims, and members of other religions
18 Jul	Statement by the spokesperson on the upheld ban of Jehovah’s witnesses in Russia
19 Sep	36th Session of the HRC – EU statement on Item 4: Human rights situations that require the Council’s attention
10 Oct	Statement on the constitution of Georgia
08 Dec	Local statement by the Delegation of the European Union for China on International Human Rights day
2018	Action
07 Mar	Press release – EU puts spotlight on freedom of religion or belief at the Human Rights Council
07 Mar	EU delegation event on the Impact of Media on Freedom of Religion or Belief at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva
17-18 Apr	European External Action Service Seminar Religion and Foreign Policy

15 May	Consultation with civil society ahead of the EU-Bahrain human rights dialogue
25 May	Civil society consultation meeting ahead of EU-Sri-Lanka Working Group on Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights
June	Briefing by PEW on fresh study on Christian Identity and religious pluralism in Europe.
05 Jun	EU-Sri Lanka Working Group on Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights will take place on 5 June 2018 in Brussels.
07 Jun	EP FoRB Intergroup and EEAS desk officers' meetings regarding the Intergroup annual report
13 Jun	EEAS Roundtable with the UNSR Ahmed Shaheed
04-05 Jul	EU – UAE human rights dialogue

Annex IV

FoRB Intergroup Activity

2017

Action

20 Jun	Event: Annual report launch
12 July	Meeting with The Value foundation, David Skinner, on manifestations of religion at work
13 Jul	Call for the protection of the Aramean community and all religious minorities in Turkey
12 Sep	Statement calling for action on the crisis in Myanmar
5 Dec	Event: IHEU report launch

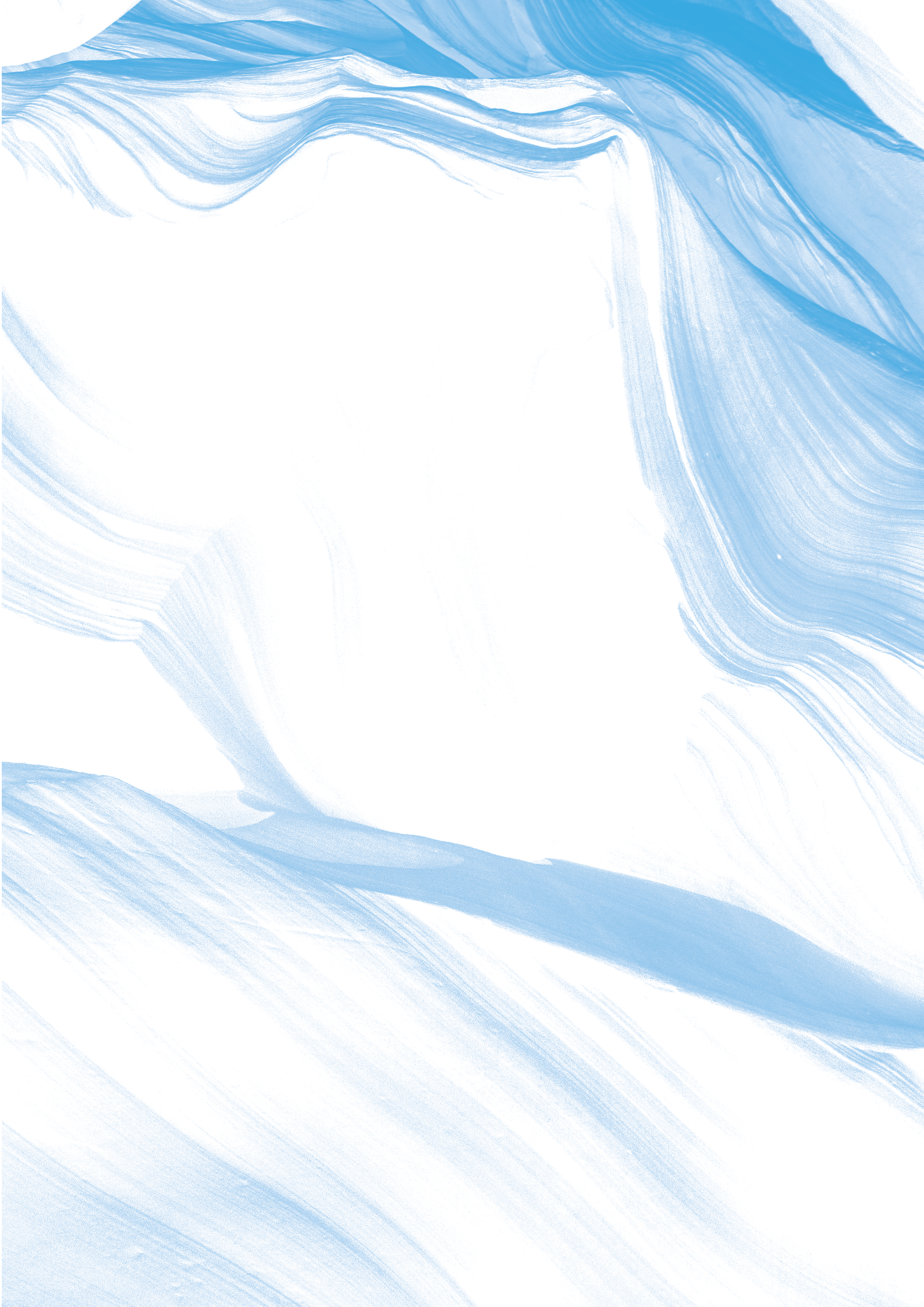
2018

Action

8 Jan	Co-chairs letter to President Juncker regarding the mandate of the Special Envoy
17 Jan	Event: Open Doors Annual report launch
18 Jan	Statement on Baha'i sentenced to death in Yemen
31 Jan	Statement on Turkish attacks on Afrin
07 Feb	Open Doors, Mr Guillaume McGuennec and Mr Varton, Signs of Hope
12 Feb	Statement in memory of Asma Jahangir
13 Feb	Human Rights Committee, meeting with Farooq Aftab, situation of Ahmadi
13 Feb	Baha'i, Rachel Bayani, Situation of Baha'i in Yemen, Written question + answer E-000978/2018
19 Feb	Meeting on the implementation of the EU Guidelines on FoRB. Event Integrating Religion in Diplomacy: Experience from the EU and The USA
6 Mar	Letter: Persecution of Dervishes in Iran
15 May	Middle East concern, situation of Christian churches in Algeria
May	EPRID, Meeting with Arie de Pater and Amy Shephard
23 May	Ramadan Iftar Dinner organised by the Islamic community in Bosnia Herzegovina
June	EPRID, Amy Shephard, EU day on FoRB

Abbreviations

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CAR	Central African Republic
CAT	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
CBSS	Country Based Support Scheme
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEPA	Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement
CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
CoE	Council of Europe
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DG DEVCO	Directorate General for International Development and Cooperation
EEAS	European External Action Service
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
ENI	European Neighbourhood INstrument
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EP	European Parliament
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EU	European Union
EUAM	European Advisory Mission
EUTF	European Union Trust Fund
FoRB	Freedom of Religion or Belief
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council for Arab States of the Gulf
GSP+	Generalised Scheme of Preferences
HR/VP	High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice President of the European Union Commission
IP	Interfaith Platform
ISP	Instrument for Peace and Stability
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
MAG	Mine Advisory Group
MEP	Member of European Parliament
MBS	Mohammad Bin Salman Al Saud
NIP	National Indicative Programme
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OSCE/OIDHR	Organization for the Security and Cooperation in Europe / Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
RT	Religious Tolerance
SCC	Special Criminal Court
UNDHR	United Nations Declaration of Human Rights
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNSR	United Nations Special Rapporteur
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
SVR	Expert Council of German Foundations on Integration and Migration



The European Parliament
Intergroup on Freedom of Religion
or Belief and Religious Tolerance
is a group of like-minded MEPs
dedicated to ensuring the EU, in
its external actions, promotes and
protects the right to freedom of
religion or belief.

To contact the Intergroup:
secretariat@religiousfreedom.eu
www.religiousfreedom.eu



FoRB&RT
European Parliament intergroup