

Saudi Arabia



Shi'a Muslims

Shi'a Muslims in Saudi Arabia face systematic barriers to economic opportunity and political representation because of their religion. Authorities continue to prosecute Shi'a Muslims who peacefully protested for more rights, including minors. Several Shi'a clerics remain in prison for their religious expression and for condemning state-sanctioned discrimination on the basis of religion.



Mohammed Hassan al-Habib

RELIGION OR BELIEF:

Shi'a

ARRESTED:

July 8, 2016

SENTENCE:

12 Years' Imprisonment

RELIGIOUS LEADER:

Yes

REASON FOR PERSECUTION:

Delivered religious sermons considered objectionable by the government

Sunni Muslim Dissident Scholars

Sunni religious scholars—reformers and conservatives alike—who criticize the government's religious policies have been held incommunicado, tortured, and imprisoned. Several members of the dissident "Sahwa" movement remain in prison for their religious views.



Hassan Farhan al-Maliki

RELIGION OR BELIEF:

Sunni

ARRESTED:

September 11, 2017

SENTENCE:

Still on trial, facing death penalty

REASON FOR PERSECUTION:

Expressed religious opinions and criticized historic figures in Islam

Women Protesting Male Guardianship Laws

Women who peacefully protested male guardianship laws, which are rooted in religion, or who criticized such laws on social media have been arrested, imprisoned, threatened, harassed, and assaulted by prison officials in Saudi Arabia. Some of these women have been released but remain under a travel ban.



Salma al-Shehab

RELIGION OR BELIEF:

Shi'a

ARRESTED:

January 15, 2021

SENTENCE:

27 Years' Imprisonment

HEALTH CONCERNS:

Hunger Strike

REASON FOR PERSECUTION:

Tweeted in support of women protesting male guardianship laws

Atheists/Nonbelievers

Saudi law considers atheism a form of apostasy, a crime punishable by death. Saudi Arabia has actively prosecuted individuals who have expressed support for atheism or who have insulted Islam or religious figures within the religion.



Ali Aboluhom

RELIGION OR BELIEF:

Unspecified

ARRESTED:

August 23, 2021

SENTENCE:

15 Years' Imprisonment

REASON FOR PERSECUTION:

Accused of promoting "ideas of apostasy, atheism and blasphemy" on social media

FoRB Victims List Stats 46 out of 2,125

Religion or Belief	# of Victims
Shi'a	20
Sunni	13
Unspecified/Other Muslim	8
Unspecified	5
Total	46

Type of Abuse	# of Victims
Imprisoned	29
Detained	16
Disappeared	1
Total	46

Average Prison Sentence 13 Years

Reports of	# of Victims
Torture	18
Medical Neglect	6
Total	24

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Frank R. Wolf FoRB Victims List Background

The International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (IRFA), as amended by the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act of 2016, requires USCIRF to:

make publicly available, to the extent practicable...lists of persons it determines are imprisoned or detained, have disappeared, been placed under house arrest, been tortured, or subjected to forced renunciation of faith for their religious activity or religious freedom advocacy by the government of a foreign country that the Commission recommends for designation as a country of particular concern [CPC]...or by a nonstate actor that the Commission recommends for designation as an entity of particular concern [EPC].

USCIRF developed the Frank R. Wolf Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) Victims List—an online public database—to implement this provision for countries USCIRF recommends for Country of Particular Concern (CPC) or Special Watch List (SWL) status. The list also includes such victims located in the de facto territories of nonstate actors that USCIRF recommends for Entity of Particular Concern (EPC) status, according to the same criteria.

Due to limited resources, USCIRF is unable to identify and document all victims that meet the statutory requirement to be included on the FoRB Victims List and generally relies on receiving submissions from outside individuals and organizations. As such, the information contained in the database does not reflect country, regional, or global trends. Furthermore, percentages highlighted in this section should not be used for extrapolation purposes nor interpreted as a particular group experiencing greater violations than another or a particular country committing violations at a greater rate than others. To support this project, USCIRF invites those with credible information on victims to submit information using the Victims List Intake Form at www.uscirtf.gov/form/uscirtf-victims-list-intake-form.

FoRB Victims List Stats Overall

Perpetrator	Victims Documented
Algeria	5
Azerbaijan	11
Burma	5
China	770
Cuba	11
Egypt	18
Eritrea	50
Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)	2
Houthis	3
India	55
Indonesia	8
Iran	339
Iraq	2
Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP)	1
Kazakhstan	15
Malaysia	4
Nicaragua	15
Nigeria	9
North Korea	9
Pakistan	90
Russia	449
Saudi Arabia	46
Sri Lanka	1
Tajikistan	13
Turkmenistan	30
Uzbekistan	87
Vietnam	77
Total	2,125

Religion or Belief	Victims Documented
Adivasi	1
Baha'i	163
Bon	1
Buddhist – Hoa Hao	6
Buddhist – Theravada	3
Buddhist – Tibetan	76
Buddhist – Unspecified/Other	28
Christian – Catholic	46
Christian – Church of Almighty God	236
Christian – Jehovah's Witness	258
Christian – Orthodox	17
Christian – Protestant	130
Christian – Unspecified/Other	66
Duong Van Minh	4
ECKist (Eckankar)	1
Erfan-e Halgheh Practitioner	2
Falun Gong	213
Hindu	10
Humanist	1
Jewish	1
Muslim – Ahmadiyya	23
Muslim – Qur'anist	1
Muslim – Shi'a	39
Muslim – Sufi	63
Muslim – Sunni	385
Muslim – Unspecified/Other	237
Santeria	5
Scientologist	1
Shaman	1
Sikh	1
Yarsani	37
Unknown/Unspecified	69
Total	2,125

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Not Released

Ahmed Abdul Wahid al-Faraj
Aimidoula Waili
Aisha al-Muhajiri
Ali al-Omari
Ali Hassan al-Faraj
Ali Mohammed Al Bati
Asmaa al-Subaie
Badr Nader Al-Mashari
Buheliqiemu Abula
Hassan Farhan al-Maliki
Lina Alsharif
Manahel al-Otaibi
Mohammed Hussein Al Nimr
Nuermaimaiti Ruze
Omar Abdullah al-Saadoun
Salman al-Ouda
Sulaiman al-Dowaish
Abdul Majeed Al-Arkani
Abdullah al-Derazi
Abdullah Basfar
Abdulrahman Al-Sadhan
Ahmad Al-Shamri
Ahmed al-Matrood
Ali Aboluhom
Ali al-Ouwaisher
Ali Badahdah
Israa al-Ghomgham
Jalal Labbad
Khaled al-Ghanim
Khaled Al-Rashed
Mohammad bin Hassan al-Habib
Mohammed al-Rabiah
Mohammed Issam al-Faraj
Mousa al-Hashim
Mujtaba al-Muzain
Omar al-Muqbil
Saleh al Talib
Salma al-Shehab
Waleed abu al-Khair
Youssef al-Manasif

Released

Abdullah al-Zaher
Ali al-Nimr
Ashraf Fayadh
Dawood al-Marhoun
Murtaja Qureiris
Raif Badawi