



## UNITED STATES COMMISSION *on* INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

# SPECIAL REPORT

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### USCIRF's Mission

*To elevate and promote  
international religious  
freedom as a norm  
and practice.*

## Study Revealed Numerous Passages in Saudi Textbooks Advocating Intolerance and Violence

### Summary

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) had an independent contractor review 12 Saudi high school textbooks for the current 2017-2018 academic school year. The books, numbering more than 2,000 pages and focusing only on religious subjects, are much more intolerant than the six religious books from 2012-2014 that were reviewed by USCIRF. Based on the books reviewed, it appears that they are even more intolerant than the 2011-2012 textbooks studied by the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD), which identified many intolerant passages. The 2017-2018 books are more akin to Saudi textbooks from the early years of the previous decade before the Saudi government promised to reform its curricula. The issues found in the books implicated religious freedom and other human rights.

### Method

Twelve books were reviewed. All of them have to do with religious studies, which is where most of the troublesome content had been found in previous years. The books are as follows:

#### Standard High School Curriculum (2017-2018)

- Shared Program
  - *Hadith* 1
  - *Interpretation (Tafsir)* 1
  - *Monotheism (Tawhid)* 1
  - *Jurisprudence (Fiqh)* 1
- Specialized Program
  - *Hadith* 2
  - *Interpretation (Tafsir)* 2
  - *Monotheism (Tawhid)* 2
  - *Jurisprudence (Fiqh)* 2

- Optional Program
  - *Jurisprudence (Fiqh)* 3

#### Quarterly High School Curriculum (2017-2018)

- *Monotheism (Tawhid)* 1 – Quarterly
- *Qur'an Sciences (Ulum al-Qur'an)* 1 – Quarterly
- *Jurisprudence (Fiqh)* 1 – Quarterly

The most problematic material is organized by theme for ease of reference. Below are translations of select, representative passages from the textbooks.

## Infidels and Jihad

Like the 2011-2012 books (ICRD study pp. 79-80), the 2018 books extol jihad and violence against infidels. The worst passages are those that urge violence against nonbelievers for their unbelief or for insulting Islam in some manner.

<p>الجهاد في سبيل الله تعالى هو ذروة سنام الاسلام والغاية منه: الدعوة الى الله تعالى ونشر دين الاسلام ولذلك كانت الدعوة الى الاسلام مقدمة على القتال خلافا لما يشيعه اعداء الاسلام من ان هدف الجهاد هو القتل والتدمير او الاستيلاء على الاموال والبلاد.</p>	<p>“Jihad for the sake of God is the pinnacle of Islam, and its purpose is calling to God and spreading the religion of Islam, which is why calling to God is preferred over fighting, in contradiction to what the enemies of Islam say is the purpose of jihad, that it is to kill, to destroy, and to take forcefully money and land.” (Hadith (2): 48)</p>
<p>مجاهدة الكفار بدعوتهم وقتالهم</p>	<p>“[Among the types of Jihad is] striving with the infidels by proselytizing them and fighting them.” (Hadith (2): 197)</p>
<p>الجهاد في سبيل الله ذروة سنام الاسلام</p>	<p>“Jihad in the path of God is the pinnacle of Islam.” (Hadith (2): 197; Interpretation (1): 97)</p>
<p>3 – الغلظة على الكفار المعاندين 4 – الحث على الجهاد في سبيل الله والتحذير من التفريط في ذلك 5 – بيان ان الغاية من الجهاد في سبيل الله اعلاء كلمة الله ونشر دينه 6 – فضح اهل الكتاب و بيان زيف عقائدهم والحث على قتالهم حتى يعطوا الجزية</p>	<p>“3 – Being severe against enemy nonbelievers 4 – Encouraging jihad in the path of God and warning against neglecting that 5 - Explaining that the aim of the jihad in the path of God is to make the word of God supreme and spread His religion 6 – Exposing the people of the Book, explaining the falsity of their doctrines, and encouraging fighting of them until they give the jizya” (Interpretation (1): 94, explaining Surat al-Tawba, the Qur’an’s ninth sura)</p>
<p>لا تقوم الساعة حتى يقاتل المسلمون اليهود فيقتلهم المسلمون حتى يختبئ اليهود من وراء الحجر والشجر فيقول الحجر او الشجر: يا مسلم يا عبد الله هذا يهودي خلفي فاقتله الا الغرق فانه من شجر اليهود.</p>	<p>“The Hour will not come until the Muslims fight the Jews, and the Muslims will kill them until the Jews will hide behind the rocks and the trees. The rocks and the trees will say: O Muslim, O servant of God, there is a Jew behind me, come and kill him – except for the gharqad tree which is a tree of the Jews.” (Monotheism (2): 102)</p>
<p>المستهزئ بالله واياته ورسوله مرتد لا يقبل له اي عذر فاما ان يتوب و اما ان يقتل كفرا</p>	<p>“Anyone who makes fun of God, His verses, or His Prophet is an apostate. No excuse is acceptable from him, so either he repents or is killed for infidelity.” (Interpretation (1): 109)</p>

Other passages urge believers to avoid befriending nonbelievers, in keeping with the Saudi doctrine of *al-wala'* (only befriending Muslims):

موالاة المؤمنين ومعاداة الكافرين اوثق عرى الايمان	"Being loyal to Muslims and being the enemy of the infidels is the firmest handle of faith." (Monotheism (1): 163)
خطورة موالاة الكافرين المحاربين للمؤمنين	"...danger of befriending infidels who are fighting the believers." (Interpretation (2): 69)
Muslims are urged to avoid befriending Jews and Christians because they are presumed to be hostile to Islam:	
ان اليهود والنصارى لا يرضيهم الا الكفر بالاسلام واتباع ملتهم.	"There is no satisfying the Jews and Christians except by disbelieving in Islam and following their faiths." (Interpretation (2): 78)
بيان كيد اليهود وحرصهم على تفتيت الصف الاسلامي وزعزعة عقيدة المسلمين ونشر الشبهات والشهوات بينهم	"Explanation of the plotting of the Jews, and their effort to divide the ranks of Islam, unsettle the dogma of Muslims, and sow doubts and base desires among them." (Interpretation (2): 116)

Similar passages discouraging inter-religious fellowship are found in the 2011-2012 textbooks studied by ICRD, as well as those in the USCIRF review of the 2012-2014 textbooks.

## Apostasy

As in the 2011-2012 Jurisprudence textbooks (ICRD report, p. 69), the current books state that Muslims who convert to another religion should be killed:

حد الردة هو القتل لا فرق ذلك بين الرجل والمرأة	"The punishment for apostasy is death. There is no distinction in that between a man and a woman." (Jurisprudence (1): 277)
قتل المرتد حيث إن درء مفسدة وجوده كإفساد غيره من اهله وولده وفتنة الناس به وتجريتهم على الدين اولى من مصلحة بقائه التي فيها من المصالح	"Killing the apostate since fending off the corruption of his existence—like corrupting others among his people and children, causing dissension among the people, and making them risk religion—is better than the benefit of him remaining..." (Jurisprudence (3), 46)
القتل إن لم يتب	"Death [for the apostate] if he does not repent." (Jurisprudence (1) - Quarterly: 137)

The two Jurisprudence textbooks for 2013, by contrast, do not call for the execution of apostates or sorcerers. Instead, the textbooks stress that the apostate should be treated like any other nonbeliever.

## Women, Homosexuals, and Illicit Sex

The textbooks advocate beating women when they disobey and stoning them to death if they have an affair:

وانما يجوز الضرب عند الضرورة	“Hitting [your wife] is only permitted when necessary.” (Interpretation (2): 174)
واغد يا أنيس الى امرأة هذا فإن اعترفت فارجمها	“...go and check on [that man’s] wife, if she admits adultery, then stone her.” (Jurisprudence (3): 83)
وحده اذا زنى الرجم بالحجارة حتى يموت	“The punishment of adultery is stoning to death.” (Jurisprudence (1) – Quarterly: 154)

Similarly, homosexuals are to be stoned to death regardless of whether they are married:

وقال بعض العلماء: عقوبة اللواط القتل فيقتل الفاعل والمفعول به سواء أكانا محصنين أم غير محصنين.	“Some of the ulama say the punishment for sodomy is death, so the giver and the receiver should be killed regardless of whether they are married or not.” (Jurisprudence (1): 256)
ذهب جمهور الفقهاء الى أن حد اللواط كحد الزنى.	“The majority of jurists say the punishment of sodomy is the same as the punishment of adultery [i.e., stoning to death].” (Fiqh (1) - Quarterly: 161)

ICRD's study did not focus on homosexuality and the USCIRF review of the 2012-2014 books only turned up one passage that condemned homosexuality. The passage did not call for the death of homosexuals.

Finally, women are to be isolated socially from strangers:

يحرم على الرجل مصافحة المرأة الاجنبية	"It is forbidden to shake hands with a woman who is not a close relative." (Jurisprudence (1) – Quarterly: 148)
يحرم اختلاط الرجال بالنساء في الوظائف و على مقاعد الدراسة وفي الحفلات وما اشبه ذلك.	"It is forbidden to be close to women at work, in schools, in parties, and in similar places." (Jurisprudence (1) - Quarterly: 149)
يحرم سفر المرأة بغير محرم	"It is forbidden for women to travel without a <i>mahram</i> ." (Jurisprudence (1) - Quarterly: 149)
إذا لم تجد المرأة المريضة إلا طبيباً رجلاً واحتاج العلاج إلى كشف شيء من بدنّها كاذنّها مثلاً فلا يجوز كشف ما زاد على الاذن.	"If a sick woman can only find a male doctor and treatment requires revealing part of her body, like her ear for example, she can only reveal the ear." (Jurisprudence (3): 42)

## Conclusion

These passages are more intolerant than what USCIRF found in similar books from 2012-2014; they resemble passages in the Saudi school textbooks written before curriculum reform was initiated in the years after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States. They also reflect Wahhabi doctrines and not other trends of Islamic scholarship that are more accepting, some of which were represented in the 2012-2014 textbooks. In addition, this review did not turn up any expressions of tolerance in the textbooks for the current 2017-2018 school year.



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