

## **Methodology**

This Report is published by Aid to the Church in Need (ACN), an international Catholic charity that has the status of a Pontifical Foundation, every two years. The period under review is October 2012 to June 2014. It describes the degree to which religious freedom is permitted in 196 countries of the world and covers all faith groups, not only Christians.

As a companion to the full Report, a much shorter ‘Executive Summary’ has been written and compiled by ACN’s own staff.

The individual country reports have been written by around 20 independent journalists, academics and authors based mainly in Europe but including some from South America and Asia. The sources from which these texts are derived are given in the Report as footnotes, but they are drawn from a wide-range of reputable published materials.

The authors of these reports were asked to conform to standard editorial guidelines, stressing objectivity, lack of editorial bias and emphasising the requirement to describe the position of all religious minorities equally. The editorial guidelines also required the authors to describe the legal and constitutional position affecting religious freedom in a given country and then to describe how far, in reality, the law is respected. The authors were finally asked to judge whether religious freedom had, in the period under review, improved, deteriorated or remained the same. Aid to the Church in Need acknowledges an inevitable subjective element to this judgement.

Additionally, Aid to the Church staff members have placed each country, based on the facts in the text, in the category “High”, “Medium”, “Of Concern” and “Low” regarding the degree of religious freedom.

The texts have been subject to extensive cross-checking. Three international editors have reviewed each text with the individual authors. They have also been checked, in most cases, by the relevant project specialist employed by Aid to the Church in Need at its headquarters in Königstein, Germany.

The texts have finally been reviewed by the eight-member ‘Editorial Committee’ made up of ACN staff members from six different countries.

Additionally eight specialists were commissioned to write about recent developments in Asia, the Middle East, Russia and Central Asia, Western Europe, North America and Latin America to add breadth of analysis.

Some 11 translators were commissioned to translate the basic texts, - which were written in English - into five other languages; namely French, German, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese.

### **Data Sources**

*For a specific list of statistical data sources for each country please refer to the Excel spreadsheets: available for download from the ACN Religious Freedom in the World report website ([www.religion-freedom-report.org](http://www.religion-freedom-report.org)).*

#### Population:

The most common sources for data for population figures are the World Bank and the UN. However several countries have population data taken from sources other than these two institutions. Please refer to the Excel spreadsheet for specific country sources.

#### Religious affiliation:

In the vast majority of cases religious affiliation data is taken from the PEW Religious Futures statistics, 2010 ([www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries](http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/countries)).

In a number of cases this data has been sourced from The Arda ([www.thearda.com](http://www.thearda.com)).

Only a few countries have religious affiliation statistics taken from somewhere other than these two sources.

However, note should be taken as to some important changes that ACN has made to the PEW statistics:

- (i) The PEW category of 'Folk religion' has been renamed as 'Traditional religion' for this report. This change was primarily made to assist with the ease of translating this name into languages other than English.

- (ii) PEW originally had a fourth category for Christian denomination named 'other Christian'. For the purposes of this report this category has been incorporated into the 'Protestant' category (i.e. the two groups have been added together).

Refugees and internally displaced:

All refugee and internally displaced person data has been taken from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees ([www.unhcr.org.uk/](http://www.unhcr.org.uk/)), mid-2013 estimates.

Several of these datasets have associated notes. To read these notes please see the Excel spreadsheet available for download from the ACN Religious Freedom in the World report website ([www.religion-freedom-report.org](http://www.religion-freedom-report.org)).

Final Note:

These notes refer to the Methodology and Data Sources used for the **Religious Freedom in the World Report – 2014**, published by Aid to the Church in Need.

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