

Religious Freedom Week 2024

Pray—Reflect—Act

June 23—Blasphemy and Apostasy Laws

Pray for all people of faith who live in fear of persecution under unjust blasphemy laws.

Reflect

All around the world, people accused of blasphemy and apostasy are suffering for their faith or lack thereof. In 2022, the Pew Research Center found that 79 countries out of 198 they studied have laws banning blasphemy. According to Pew, 90 percent of countries in the Middle East and North Africa have blasphemy laws as well as 34% of countries in the Asia/Pacific region, 31% of European countries, 34% of Latin American countries, and 38% of Sub-Saharan African countries. Penalties for blasphemy vary considerably, ranging from fines to prison sentences to executions. Seven countries have the death penalty for blasphemy - Nigeria, Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, Somalia, Mauritania, and Saudi Arabia. In Nigeria, in March 2020, a Sufi Muslim singer, Yahaya Sharif-Aminu, was charged with blasphemy and his house burned by a mob because a song he wrote, that others viewed as insulting to the Prophet Muhammad, circulated on social media. Without legal representation, he was convicted, and sentenced to death by hanging by a local Sharia judge—he remains in prison.

Act

Under the guidance of the Holy Father, Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) provides pastoral and humanitarian assistance to the persecuted Church around the world. For more than 74 years, our donors have reached out to the suffering, the distressed and the poorest of the poor in over 145 countries. Today, ACN continues working to counter the persecution of Catholics. Connect with ACN and support their work today at www.churchinneed.org/.



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