OBSERVATORY OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN LATIN AMERICA

Incident Reporting and Search Guide

Violations of the Right to Religious Freedom

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www.olire.org

1. Purpose

This document contains the criteria and guidelines for reporting incidents of violation of religious freedom and to search for incidents in our database.

OLIRE collects information on incidents of physical and non-physical violence. Information regarding physical violence can be found in our Violent Incidents Database-VID. Regarding non-physical violence incidents, we have a news monitoring system that can be consulted on our website. The reporting of both types of incidents can be done through our online form.

This is a service designed to collect information about restrictions of the right to religious freedom, which gives greater visibility to the phenomenon and is intended to be used by our collaborators and by anyone interested in religious freedom in Latin America.

It is put together as a source of information that, avoiding making value judgments, only presented details and/or characteristics of incidents related to violations of religious freedom, according to the reference criteria developed in this document. We hope that this data may be used as empirical support for studies on the state of religious freedom in the countries of the region.

2. Who reports the incidents?

The Observatory directs an express invitation to key collaborators in the different countries of the region. These collaborators are usually people who, due to their professional or social environment, have a greater opportunity to know about this type of incidents. The invitation to

report incidents is also extended to anyone who has knowledge of actions or omissions involving a violation of religious freedom.

We encourage our collaborators to provide all the details they consider relevant, as well as the respective sources, if any (reports, news, interviews, etc.).

It is important to note that the Observatory team does not have the resources to validate each reported incident. If users or our collaborators detect that the information provided is not entirely correct or incomplete after an incident is uploaded, it may be deleted and/or modified.

3. Reference criteria

The following conceptual framework inspires the incident reporting:

(a) Definitions

- *Religious identity*
  Condition of belonging to a religious group that follows a particular belief system (self-identification criterion).

- *Active religious behavior*
  Notion under which a belief system (or religious convictions) leads its followers to behave in a particular way. This includes participation in religious events, but also any form of behavior inspired by religious convictions, such as participation in civil society or politics.

- *Religious freedom*
  Inherently pluralistic, interdependent and multidimensional, this right implies the possibility of having, maintaining and expressing any religious belief, to disagree with the religion or majority position in society or, simply, not to belief.[1] It is a right that can be exercised individually or collectively, both in public and in private. In practical terms, religious freedom encompasses freedom of religious expression in all spheres of society, and can be restricted by both state and non-state actors.

- Spheres
  Religious freedom can be violated in different spheres of society. Believers and/or religious groups, regardless of their religious denomination, can live or express their faith **personally**, that is, considering their interior life, the *forum internum*, freedom of opinion and conscience, or their religious life within his family. **Socially,** understood as the interaction between them and the community in which they carry out their activities, beyond the personal and/or family life of its members. And **publicly**, either for their

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[1] Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 12 of the American Convention on Human Rights.

participation in the public/political life of the country or for their interaction with state authorities in general.

- *Violations of religious freedom*:
  We can understand this category as any omission or action directed towards those who identify with a religious denomination and/or follow active religious behavior, both in the context of personal religious worship and in the manifestation of expressions of religious freedom in the different areas of experience of faith.

  Restrictions or violations of the right to religious freedom can be identified in two ways:

  - *Non-physical violence*: Understood as all actions or omissions, in the form of pressure, discrimination, social or other forms of exclusion, that in any way restrict or limit the free exercise of religious freedom.

  - *Physical violence:* Understood as violent actions that directly seek to cause physical damage, whether through physical abuse, kidnapping, murder, robbery, etc. or damage to properties (temples, businesses, residences, etc.), through vandalism or any other way.

(b) Nature of the incidents: possible scenarios of violations of religious freedom

Considering the concepts described, in order to identify possible violations of religious freedom, we can take into account the following contexts. It is important to note that this is an illustrative list, but not limiting. If other contexts with limitations to religious freedom are identified, they can be added.

- *Non-physical violence*

Personal Sphere

1. Have people with a religious identity or active religious behavior been forced to carry out actions that threaten their conscience or beliefs?

2. Have people suffered any type of discrimination in their study centers, work or other spaces (public or private) due to their religious identity or their active religious behavior?

3. Has the conscientious objection of people with a religious identity or active religious behavior been violated or ignored in any way or circumstance?

4. Have parents with a religious identity or active religious behavior been free to ensure that their children receive an education that is in accordance with their own convictions?

5. Other:

Social Sphere

1. Have opinions or points of view been restricted, prevented or sanctioned when they have been made known in the social sphere, due to the religious identity or active religious behavior of those who have expressed them?

2. In any social event / activity, have those with a religious identity or active religious behavior been prevented from participating?

3. Has the registration, financing or activities of organizations whose distinctive character is related to a religious identity been impeded?

4. Other:

Public sphere

1. Have opinions or points of view been restricted, prevented or sanctioned when they have been made public, due to the religious identity or active religious behavior of those who have expressed them?

2. In any public or political event/activity, have those with a religious identity or active religious behavior been prevented from participate?

3. Has the registration or participation in public or political activities / debates prevented any political party or organization whose distinctive character is related to a religious identity?

4. Has the media disseminated defamatory or biased information regarding persons, organizations or parties related to a religious identity or active religious behavior?

5. People with an active religious identity or behavior, have they made use of discourses with any religious foundation or motivated by religious beliefs, with any discriminatory nuance?

6. Other:

- *Physical violence*

1. How many people have been killed (including executions sanctioned by the State) for their religious identity or their active religious behavior?

2. How many places of worship or religious buildings (schools, hospitals, cemeteries, etc.) have suffered (attempts at) attacks, damage, bombing, looting, destruction, fire or desecration?

3. How many places of worship or religious buildings (schools, hospitals, cemeteries, etc.) have been closed or confiscated?

4. How many people have been arrest or detained without trial for their religious identity or their active religious behavior?

5. How many people have been sentenced to prison, to a forced labor camp, sent to psychiatric hospitals as punishment or similar things for their religious identity or their active religious behavior?

6. How many people have been abducted for their religious identity or their active religious behavior?

7. How many people have been sexually assaulted or harassed because of their religious identity or their active religious behavior?

8. How many young women with a religious identity or active religious behavior have been forced to marry non-believing men or of a different faith?

9. How many people have been otherwise physically or mentally abused (including torture, abuse and death threats) because of their religious identity or their active religious behavior?

10. How many people's houses or property have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed or burned harassed by their religious identity or active religious behavior?

11. How many stores/shops, businesses or institutions of faith adherents have been attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed or burned harassed by their religious identity or their active religious behavior?

12. How many people have been forced to flee their homes or hide in their country because of threats or risks due to their religious identity or their active religious behavior?

13. How many people have been forced to flee their country because of threats or risks because of their religious identity or their active religious behavior?

(c) Category of actors responsible for violations of religious freedom

The responsible actors for violations of religious freedom may be individuals and/or groups that carry out actions or omissions that in some way restrict the free exercise of the right to religious freedom or, in other words, the free experience of the faith, whatever the context. We can distinguish:

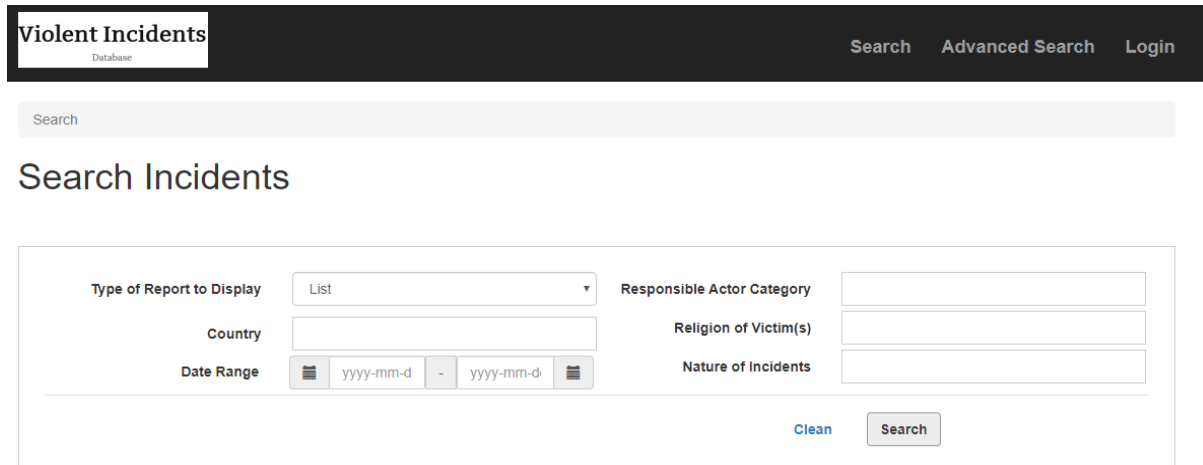|	*Actors*		
Government	Government officials at any level from local to national E.g. teachers, police officers, local officials, presidents		
Society	Ethnic group leaders E.g. tribal chiefs		
	Non-Christian religious leaders at any level from local to national E.g. imams, rabbis, senior Buddhist monks		
	Christian religious leaders at any level from local to national E.g. popes, patriarchs, bishops, priests, pastors		
	Violent religious groups E.g. Boko Haram, Islamic State, Al Qaeda		
	Ideological pressure groups E.g. radical secular groups		
	Normal citizens (people from the general public), including mobs E.g. students, neighbors, shopkeepers		
	Extended family E.g. one's direct family members or the wider circle of kinsmen		
	Political parties at any level from local to national E.g. Independent Democratic Union (Chile), Justicialist Party (Argentina), National Concertation Party (El Salvador)		
	Revolutionary or paramilitary groups E.g. FARC, ELN		
	Organized crime cartels or networks E.g. The Gulf Cartel, Los Zetas, Las Maras		
	Multilateral organizations (e.g. UN/OIC) and embassies E.g. UN, OAS		

(d) Religion of the victim

This section specifies the religion professed by the victims of religious freedom violations.

Religion of the victim
Christian (Not specified)
Christian (Catholic)
Christian (Protestant)
Christian (Orthodox)
Muslim
Hindu
Agnostic
Buddhist
Ethnoreligious (Indigenous, Afro-Brazilian, etc.)
Atheist
Jews
Unknown

4. Violent Incidents Database- VID: How to search for incidents

This section provides a step-by-step explanation of how to search for incidents of physical violence on our VID platform.

1. Go to https://olire.org/monitor/violent-incidents-database/. To access the VID search function, you must click on the first menu option at the bottom of the page: "Basic search."

2. Specify the criteria of your search query:

- Select the type of report to display (List or Table). If you select 'List', you will get an enumeration of all the incidents that match the filters of your search query. If you select 'Table', you will get a matrix displaying the number of incidents by country and nature of incident.
- Select one or more countries by clicking on them. To select all countries, leave blank.
- Select the date range. Leave blank if you do not want to specify a date range.
- Select the nature of the incident and the responsible actor. Leave blank if you wish to select all.
- Select the nature of the incidents you are searching for. Leave blank if you wish to select all.
- Select the religion of the victims. Leave blank if you wish to select all.

3. Click 'Submit.' You will be taken to a new page with the results of your query. This will be a List or a Table depending on the type of report to display.

List display:

Show Incidents Result

« 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 »

Showing **1-20** of **860** items.

Title	Country	State/Province	City	Other Address	Security Level	Incident Date	Summary	Responsible Actor Name	Responsible Actor Category	Religion of Victim(s)	Actions
Community kitchen volunteer brutally beaten	Venezuela	Miranda	Los Teques		Public	2020-02-13	Pro-government elements brutally beaten to the coo...	Criminal groups	Organized crime	Christian (Catholic)	👁
Pastor Eliseo Erroa killed during gang attack	El Salvador	San Salvador	*Other Address	Ayutuxtequepe	Public	2020-02-06	Eliseo Salomon Erroa Hernández, Pastor of the Ebe...	Gangs	Organized crime	Christian (Protestant)	👁
Temple of the Presbyterian College of Antofagasta, vandalized	Chile	Antofagasta	Antofagasta		Public	2020-02-04	A group of hooded men broke the entrance of the te...	Mobs	Normal citizens	Christian (Catholic)	👁
Woman threatened at gunpoint in a church	Brazil	Amazonas	Manaus		Public	2020-02-04	An armed man broke into the temple to commit a rob...	Criminal groups	Organized crime	Christian (Protestant)	👁
Priest Mauro Verzeletti threatened for assist migrants	Guatemala	*Other Address	*Other Address	Non-specified	Public	2020-01-27	Father Mauro Verzeletti, a member of the Scalabrin...	Criminal groups	Organized crime	Christian (Catholic)	👁

You can click 'View Details' (the 👁 icon) next to each incident to view the complete information that has been registered with this incident.

Incident: Community kitchen volunteer brutally beaten

General Information	
Title:	Community kitchen volunteer brutally beaten
Country:	Venezuela
State/Province:	Miranda
City:	Los Teques
Other Address:	
Date of Incident:	2020-02-13
Security Level:	Public
Summary:	
Pro-government elements brutally beaten to the coordinator of the community kitchen from Casa Padre Torres in the diocese of Los Teques. The hooded men entered the premises, threatened the assistants with a weapon and one of them approached to hit the 68-year-old volunteer. Due to serious aggression, the service was suspended.	

Nature of Incidents	
Killings:	0
(Attempts) to destroy, vandalize or desecrate places of worship or religious buildings:	0
Closed places of worship or religious buildings:	1
Arrests/detentions:	0
Sentences:	0
Abductions:	0
Sexual assaults/harassment:	0
Forced marriages:	0
Other forms of attack (physical or mental abuse)	1
Attacked houses/property of faith adherents:	0
Attacked shops, businesses or institutions of faith adherents:	0
Forced to leave home:	0
Forced to leave country:	0

Responsible Actor Category	
Responsible Actor Name:	Criminal groups
Responsible actor category:	Organized crime

Religion of Victim(s)	
Religion of victim(s):	Christian (Catholic)

Additional Information	
Created By:	
Comments:	

Web Sources	
Name:	Venezuela: The shocking assault on church canteen volunteer
Url:	https://es.aleteia.org/2020/02/13/venezuela-la-impactante-agresion-a-voluntaria-de-comedor-de-iglesia/
Image:	📄

Table display:

4. Optional: If you wish, you can download the result of your search query as an Excel document by clicking on the ![excel icon] icon at the top of the List or Table.

5. How to report incidents

Incidents of both physical and non-physical violence can be reported through our online form (in Spanish) or by completing the form attached to this document.

When filling out the form, please carefully review the criteria explained above and provide the most complete information possible. You can consider the following:

Incident report

Name:	
Last name:	
E-mail:	

General information

You answer this form as	Victim	
	Witness / third party	
	Other	
Country about which the case is reported		

Incident to report

Place where the event occurred		
Incidence date		
Religious denomination of the victim (s)		
Other		
Other information about the victim (s)		
The event was carried out by	State actors	
	Non-state actors	
Specify		
Description of the event		
Continuity of the situation (In your opinion, this situation occurs in your country/city or community)	Frequently	
	Sporadically	
	Occasionally	

Backup Sources
(If the information or other data related to the incident is online (media or others), add the corresponding links)

Additional Information

If you have any additional questions, please contact info@olire.org.