

Humanist Approach to Islam Addendum

This addendum serves to supplement [A Humanist Approach to Islam](#) and demonstrate the rationale behind our approach with facts and figures.

I. Muslim Population Around the World

According to a [Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life report](#), the global population of Muslims was estimated to be 1.6 billion in 2010, or 23.4 percent of the world's population, and it is expected to rise to nearly 25 percent of the world's population by 2020 (1.9 billion). This prediction is based on the observation that Muslims have high fertility rates (average 3.1 children per woman) and are among those with the largest proportion of adherents under the age of 15 (34%).

By region, Muslims are:

- 5.8 percent of Europe
- 24.8 percent of Asia-Pacific (which accounts for 62.1 percent of the world Muslim population)
- 91.2 percent of Middle East-North Africa (MENA)
- 29.6 percent of Sub-Saharan Africa

Among nations France has the most proportionally—7.5 percent of population—followed by Germany with 5.8 percent, but Russia has the most in number in Europe, with a Muslim population of 14 million.

The Pew report estimates there are 2.6 million Muslims in the United States which is slightly less than 1 percent of the population.

II. Muslim Integration in the United States is more successful than in Western Europe

According to an [article by Leon Hadar](#), global affairs analyst and journalist, 65 percent of US Muslims feel “American first” while only 45 percent of European Muslims feel French or German first.

Additionally, a [Pew 2011 study reports a high intermarriage rate](#) – 17 percent of Muslims who are married or living with someone have a spouse of a different faith, which is higher than the rate for American Jews at a “comparable moment in their history” and above that of modern Mormons.

[Muslims in the US are also better off financially](#) – they are almost as likely to report a household income of \$100,000 or more as other Americans are.

Despite the typecast that Muslims are intolerant of other religions, there are indications that the opposite is more accurate among American Muslims. [The Gallup Religious Tolerance index places groups in one of three religious tolerance levels based on their level of agreement with five statements about other religious faiths:](#)

***Isolated.** This group makes up 17% of the population. Isolated individuals are less likely than those who are tolerant and integrated to be members of any particular faith group, but if they are members, they tend to believe that their religion is right or true and all other religions are wrong or false. They don't know much about other religious faiths, nor do they want to. They don't always treat those of other religious faiths with respect, and they don't always feel respected by members of other faiths.*

***Tolerant.** This group makes up 46% of the population, and a high percentage of them are members of faith communities. The tolerant have a "live-and-let-live" attitude toward people of other faiths, and generally feel that they always treat people of different religious faiths with respect. However, those in the tolerant category are not particularly likely to go out of their way to try to learn more*

about other religious traditions, nor are they likely to say that they have learned something from someone of another religious faith in the past year.

Integrated. *This group makes up 37% of the population. The majority of integrated individuals are not only members of faith communities, but they are also engaged in those communities. They go beyond a "live-and-let-live" attitude, actively seeking to learn more from others of different religious traditions. They believe that most religious faiths make a positive contribution to society, and not only do they feel they always respect others of different traditions; they always feel respected by them as well.*

According to the [Gallup Religious Tolerance Index](#), Muslims in America are 44 percent “integrated,” a word demonstrating the highest tier of religious tolerance, putting them on par with Mormons (46 percent) and greater than Jewish Americans (36 percent), Protestants (35 percent), and Catholics (34 percent).

It is proposed that the reason Muslims in America fare better is because there is more pluralism within the Muslim community – [American Muslims are composed of Muslims from seventy-seven countries](#), whereas in most western European countries, the Muslims all derive from one ethnic or national group, so their practice of Islam is less diverse and more homogenous.

III. Islamophobia and Media Representation in the United States

According to “[Fear, Inc.](#),” a publication by the Center for American Progress, Islamophobia is defined as:

An exaggerated fear, hatred, and hostility toward Islam and Muslims that is perpetuated by negative stereotypes resulting in bias, discrimination, and the marginalization and exclusion of Muslims from social, political, and civic life.

Islamophobia is evident in American media representation of Muslims. [In a study](#) where seven “coders” were trained to sample programs from 146 news programs, researchers discovered that “Muslim perpetrators are much more likely to be portrayed as terrorists than to actually be terrorists in US society,” and non-Muslims are underrepresented as terrorists compared to how often they appear as terrorists in society.

Additionally, in a widely cited study titled “[The Fringe Effect](#),” plagiarism detection software compared 1084 newspaper articles and television transcripts by 120 civil society organizations to 50,407 newspaper articles and television transcripts between 2001-2008 (post-9/11) and found that anti-Muslim fringe organizations dominated mass media “via displays of fear and anger.”

IV. Anti-Muslim Sentiment and Discrimination against Muslims in the United States

The [Gallup Muslim-West Perceptions Index](#) in 2011 found that 52 percent of people surveyed in the US do not believe that Western societies respect Muslim societies.

And Muslims globally see the West as mistreating Muslims – a [Gallup Poll from 2008](#) of a subset of majority Muslim countries from within the MENA region finds that more than one-half do not agree that Muslims in the West are treated as equal citizens.

[More recent polls from February 2015 by the Economist and YouGov](#) echo the same perception: When asked how much discrimination do Muslims feel in America today? 39 percent of respondents answered “a great deal,” 34 percent answered “a fair amount,” 20 percent answered “not much,” and only 7 percent answered “not at all.”

There is a significant difference between Democrats/liberals and Republicans/conservative sentiment towards Muslims ([the full poll results here, page 17](#)): Though 48 percent of those polled agreed with the statement that “Islamic religion is more likely than others to encourage violence among its believers” (52

percent do not agree), when this is broken down, only 41 percent of reported Democrats agreed with the statement compared to 74 percent of Republicans who did, and only 35 percent of liberals agreed with the statement compared to 69 percent of Conservatives who did.

The same gap was observed in responses to whether Muslims in the US are patriotic Americans “who believe in patriotic values” or not ([page 18 of poll results](#)) – 45 percent of Democrats responded yes while 21 percent of Republicans did, and 55 percent of liberals responded yes while 26 percent of Conservatives did.

Does this perception of discrimination translate to reality?

[In a 2010 Gallup Poll](#), 48 percent of Muslims say they have experienced racial or religious discrimination, comparable to the proportion of Hispanic Americans and African Americans who reported experience of discrimination, 48 percent and 45 percent, respectively.

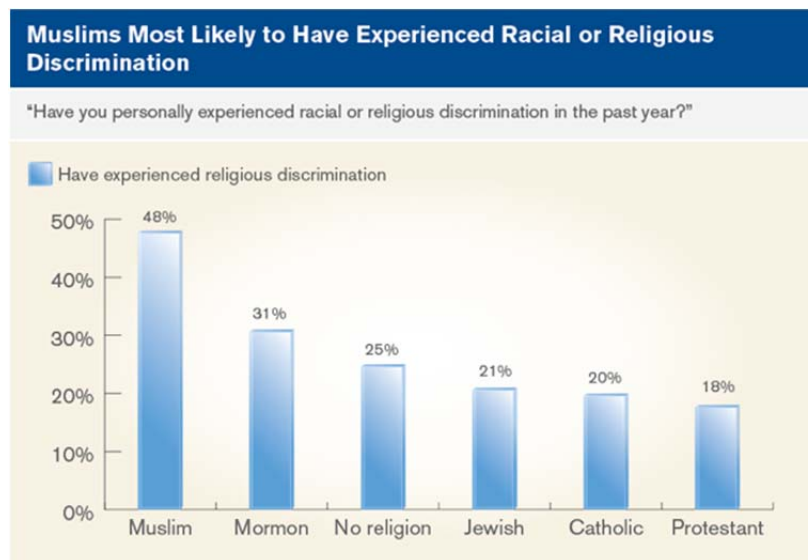


Figure 1 2010 Gallup Poll

The negative media representation (discussed in section III) may translate, at least in part, to discrimination against those believed to be Muslim.

The 2011 “Fear, Inc.” report found that a core group of individuals and organizations fuel the media Islamophobia and anti-Muslim rhetoric and noted that it translated into direct anti-Muslim sentiment and acts of discrimination in a follow-up report published in February 2015 – “[Fear, Inc. 2.0](#).”

For example, the authors of “Fear, Inc.” noted that in 2011, a [series of articles on The Wired](#) revealed FBI’s Quantico training facility portrays Muslims in simplistic and inaccurate generalizations in their biased training programs. A direct quote from the first article in the series about a [training presentation](#) used as recently as 2009:

Among the 62 slides in the presentation, designed to teach techniques for ‘successful interviews/interrogations with individuals from the M.E. [Middle East],’ is an instruction that the ‘Arabic mind’ is ‘swayed more by words than ideas and more by ideas than facts.’

[The American Civil Liberties Union \(ACLU\) reports more manifestations of discrimination](#): discriminatory profiling including [invasive questioning at the border](#), unlawful detainment, and [illegal surveillance](#) to unnecessary [anti-Sharia state legislation](#) and prejudicial [anti-terrorism financing laws](#).

In 2011, [Shoshana Hebshi's unlawful detention](#) after boarding a flight on the tenth anniversary of 9/11 went viral. In April 2015, she was compensated \$40,000 by the federal government. [In the judge's verdict:](#)

As of yet, there is no "suspected terrorist activity exception" to the probable cause requirement of the Fourth Amendment. The Court declines to sacrifice these principles of liberty to the cause of hyper-vigilance.

V. Select Verses from the Qu'ran

While there are many positive aspects of the Qu'ran (for examples, see [2:177](#), [2:193](#), [2:215](#), [2:224](#), [2:256](#), [2:271](#), [2:273](#), [2:280](#), [4:36](#), [4:135](#), [5:32](#), [7:31](#), [17:23-24](#), [23:61](#), [46:15](#), [49:11](#), [49:12](#), [81:8-9](#), [109:1-6](#)), there are also many verses that are incompatible with equality and rights for women, LGBT equality and rights, and the freedom to practice or choose not to practice a religion in peace. A few of these verses, which are incompatible with humanist values, are highlighted below.

Note: There are many English translations of the Quran. Each version varies marginally, but when compared with each other, they may demonstrate different interpretations. The two most widely used versions are written by Dr. Muhsin Khan and Abdullah Yusuf Ali, respectively, and we have chosen to use Dr. Muhsin Khan's translation. We invite you to peruse the additional translations provided in the hyperlinks of the verses.

A. The Qu'ran on Women

a. Women are "unpure" during menstruation – [2:222](#)

They ask you concerning menstruation. Say: that is an Adha (a harmful thing for a husband to have a sexual intercourse with his wife while she is having her menses), therefore keep away from women during menses and go not unto them till they have purified (from menses and have taken a bath). And when they have purified themselves, then go in unto them as Allah has ordained for you (go in unto them in any manner as long as it is in their vagina). Truly, Allah loves those who turn unto Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves (by taking a bath and cleaning and washing thoroughly their private parts, bodies, for their prayers, etc.).

b. Women are objectified as fields for cultivation of seed, of use to men – [2:223](#)

Your wives are a tilth for you, so go to your tilth (have sexual relations with your wives in any manner as long as it is in the vagina and not in the anus), when or how you will, and send (good deeds, or ask Allah to bestow upon you pious offspring) before you for your own selves. And fear Allah, and know that you are to meet Him (in the Hereafter), and give good tidings to the believers (O Muhammad SAW).

c. The Qu'ran sanctions polygamy and marriage to slaves – [4:3](#)

And if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with the orphan-girls, then marry (other) women of your choice, two or three, or four but if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one or (the captives and the slaves) that your right hands possess. That is nearer to prevent you from doing injustice.

d. Women receive less inheritance than men – [4:11](#)

Allah commands you as regards your children's (inheritance); to the male, a portion equal to that of two females; if (there are) only daughters, two or more, their share is two thirds of the inheritance; if only one, her share is half. For parents, a sixth share of inheritance to each if the deceased left children; if no children, and the parents are the (only) heirs, the mother has a third; if the deceased left brothers or (sisters), the mother has a sixth. (The distribution in all

cases is) after the payment of legacies he may have bequeathed or debts. You know not which of them, whether your parents or your children, are nearest to you in benefit, (these fixed shares) are ordained by Allah. And Allah is Ever All-Knower, All-Wise.

e. Women should be confined for “illegal sexual intercourse.”— [4:15](#)

And those of your women who commit illegal sexual intercourse, take the evidence of four witnesses from amongst you against them; and if they testify, confine them (i.e. women) to houses until death comes to them or Allah ordains for them some (other) way.

f. Men must provide a dowry for virgin women, who are allowed to give the dowry back for the man’s use – [4:24](#)

Also (forbidden are) women already married, except those (captives and slaves) whom your right hands possess. Thus has Allah ordained for you. All others are lawful, provided you seek (them in marriage) with Mahr (bridal money given by the husband to his wife at the time of marriage) from your property, desiring chastity, not committing illegal sexual intercourse, so with those of whom you have enjoyed sexual relations, give them their Mahr as prescribed; but if after a Mahr is prescribed, you agree mutually (to give more), there is no sin on you. Surely, Allah is Ever All-Knowing, All-Wise.

g. Men are in charge of women and may beat them “lightly” if they disobey – [4.34](#)

Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has made one of them to excel the other, and because they spend (to support them) from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient (to Allah and to their husbands), and guard in the husband's absence what Allah orders them to guard (e.g. their chastity, their husband's property, etc.). As to those women on whose part you see illconduct, admonish them (first), (next), refuse to share their beds, (and last) beat them (lightly, if it is useful), but if they return to obedience, seek not against them means (of annoyance). Surely, Allah is Ever Most High, Most Great.

h. Women’s bodies and faces are to be forbidden from view from anyone with “sense of shame of sex” – [24:31](#)

And tell the believing women to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts, etc.) and not to show off their adornment except only that which is apparent (like palms of hands or one eye or both eyes for necessity to see the way, or outer dress like veil, gloves, head-cover, apron, etc.), and to draw their veils all over Juyubihinna (i.e. their bodies, faces, necks and bosoms, etc.) and not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husband's sons, their brothers or their brother's sons, or their sister's sons, or their (Muslim) women (i.e. their sisters in Islam), or the (female) slaves whom their right hands possess, or old male servants who lack vigour, or small children who have no sense of the shame of sex. And let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment. And all of you beg Allah to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful.

B. The Qu’ran on Homosexuality

a. Homosexuality is a punishable sin according to passage borrowed from Biblical story of Sodom – [7.80](#), [7.81](#), [7.84](#)

(7.80) And (remember) Lout (Lot), when he said to his people: "Do you commit the worst sin such as none preceding you has committed in the 'Alamin (mankind and jinns)?"

(7.81) "Verily, you practise your lusts on men instead of women. Nay, but you are a people transgressing beyond bounds (by committing great sins)."

(7.84) And We rained down on them a rain (of stones). Then see what was the end of the Mujrimun (criminals, polytheists, sinners, etc.).

C. The Qu'ran on Apostasy and Violence

a. Disbelievers will be punished on Earth and in the "afterlife" – [3:56](#)

"As to those who disbelieve, I will punish them with a severe torment in this world and in the Hereafter, and they will have no helpers."

b. Disbelievers will be turned "black" and sent to hell. (Some interpret this to be figurative language, others see it as literal racism in the Qu'ran) – [3:106](#)

On the Day (i.e. the Day of Resurrection) when some faces will become white and some faces will become black; as for those whose faces will become black (to them will be said): "Did you reject Faith after accepting it? Then taste the torment (in Hell) for rejecting Faith."

c. Believers should not trust those of other faiths. – [5:51](#)

O you who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians as Auliya' (friends, protectors, helpers, etc.), they are but Auliya' to one another. And if any amongst you takes them as Auliya', then surely he is one of them. Verily, Allah guides not those people who are the Zalimun (polytheists and wrong-doers and unjust).

d. Mushrikun, enemies of Islam, should be captured and killed. – [9:5](#)

Then when the Sacred Months (the 1st, 7th, 11th, and 12th months of the Islamic calendar) have passed, then kill the Mushrikun (see V.2:105) wherever you find them, and capture them and besiege them, and prepare for them each and every ambush. But if they repent and perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat), and give Zakat, then leave their way free. Verily, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

e. Disbelievers will be punished by fire and boiling water. – [22:19-22:22](#)

These two opponents (believers and disbelievers) dispute with each other about their Lord; then as for those who disbelieve, garments of fire will be cut out for them, boiling water will be poured down over their heads.

With it will melt or vanish away what is within their bellies, as well as (their) skins.

And for them are hooked rods of iron (to punish them).

Every time they seek to get away therefrom, from anguish, they will be driven back therein, and (it will be) said to them: "Taste the torment of burning!"

f. Disbelievers will burn in hell. – Numerous references, some cited here: [33:64-33:66](#), [38:55-38:59](#), [72:23](#), [98:6](#)

(98:6) Verily, those who disbelieve (in the religion of Islam, the Quran and Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him)) from among the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians) and Al-Mushrikun will abide in the Fire of Hell. They are the worst of creatures.

g. In religious war, disbelievers should be killed or captured and used for ransom to benefit Islam. – [47:4](#)

So, when you meet (in fight Jihad in Allah's Cause), those who disbelieve smite at their necks till when you have killed and wounded many of them, then bind a bond firmly (on them, i.e. take them as captives). Thereafter (is the time) either for generosity (i.e. free them without ransom), or ransom (according to what benefits Islam), until the war lays down its burden. Thus [you are ordered by Allah to continue in carrying out Jihad against the disbelievers till they embrace Islam (i.e. are saved from the punishment in the Hell-fire) or at least come under your protection], but if it had been Allah's Will, He Himself could certainly have punished them (without you). But (He lets you fight), in order to test you, some with others. But those who are killed in the Way of Allah, He will never let their deeds be lost.

VI. Global Terrorism

According to the [Institute for Economics & Peace's Global Terrorism Index \(GTI\) 2014](#), the four terrorist groups responsible for 66 percent of all deaths from claimed terrorism incidents, Talban, Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in order of deadliness, all “ascribe broadly to the Wahhabi sect of Sunni Islam and have an association with al-Qaeda.”

The GTI includes profiles on each organization and the composition of their terrorist activities by frequency and type of attack, and by targets of attacks (private citizens and property; government, police, and military; educational and religious institutions; others).

The Taliban uses suicide bombings approximately 10 percent of the time, with the majority of attacks via roadside bombing, and primarily targets government, policy, and military (though they are responsible for 75 percent of civilian deaths in Afghanistan since 2010).

Al-Qaeda committed “high profile attacks” prior to Osama Bin Ladin’s death – i.e. September 11, the London bombings, and the Madrid bombings. The number of attacks by Al-Qaeda dropped from 405 in 2012 to 166 in 2013 perhaps due to their “reduced organizational capacity.”

INCIDENTS, DEATHS & INJURIES

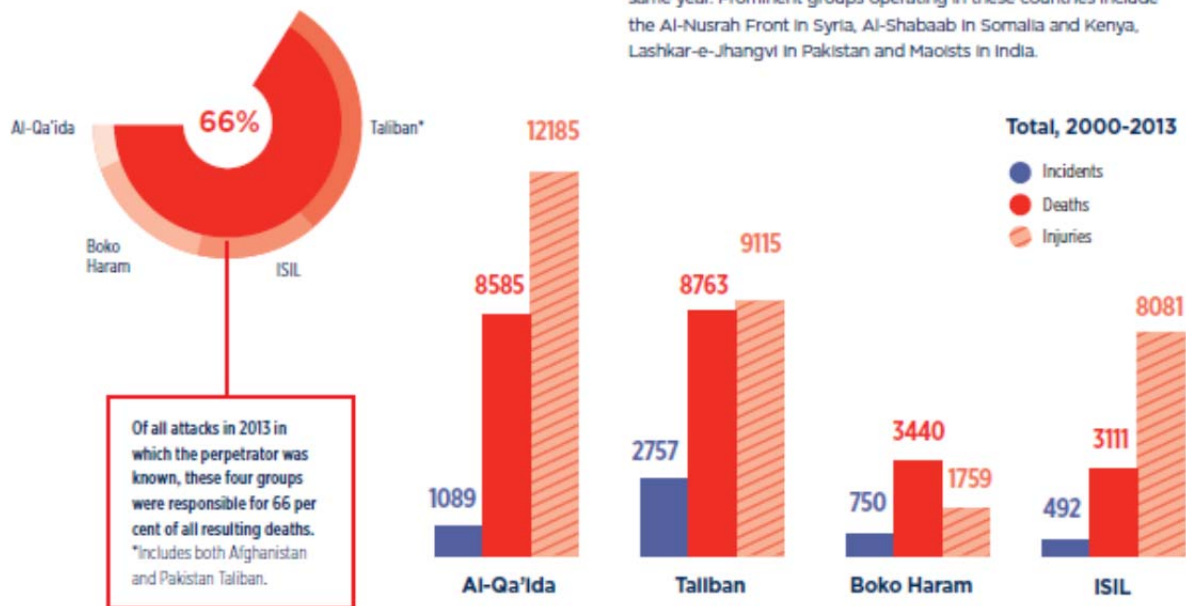


Figure 2 Global Terrorism Index 2014, page 50

Boko Haram (which means “Western education is forbidden”) is growing in deadliness by the year. 60 percent of Boko Haram attacks are armed assaults using guns. Suicide bombings make up 5 percent of their attacks. They received widespread media attention in April 2014, when they kidnapped 219 female students from the Government Secondary School in Chibok, Nigeria.

ISIL, also known by alternative names ISIS, ISI, actively works to acquire and maintain control over land. It is one of the wealthiest terrorist organizations and is building infrastructure – “There are departments which draft and implement ISIL policies. Responsibilities include developing laws, recruitment, controlling financial matters including a 410 page annual report and oil and weapon sales, propaganda and media outreach. As well as internal organizational roles, councils have adopted governance responsibilities including the establishment of Islamic courts as well as policing and punishment.” 2014 UN [“Report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict in Iraq”](#) estimates at least 8,493 civilians killed in the first eight months of 2014, with an estimated one million Iraqis displaced from their homes in ISIL-controlled areas.

UNAMI/OHCHR has received reports of serious violations of international humanitarian law and gross abuses of human rights that have been perpetrated by ISIL and associated armed groups, with an apparent systematic and widespread character. These include attacks directly targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure, executions and other targeted killings of civilians, abductions, rape and other forms of sexual and physical violence perpetrated against women and children, forced recruitment of children, destruction or desecration of places of religious or cultural significance, wanton destruction and looting of property, and denial of fundamental freedoms.

On March 12, 2015, [ISIL accepted Boko Haram’s pledge of allegiance.](#)

VII. Muslim View of Extremism

Despite the efforts of Al-Qaeda, ISIS, and Boko Haram, a Pew report on “[The World’s Muslims: Religion, Politics and Society](#)” found a median of 72 percent of Muslims around the world believe that suicide bombing or other violence against civilians is never justified, and when measuring only American Muslims, 81 percent believe it is never justified. Interestingly, Americans are the most likely to say military attacks targeting civilians are sometimes justified (49 percent) as compared to 43 percent of Haitians, 43 percent of Israelis, 41 percent of Bangladeshis, and 40 percent of Congolese.

However, substantial minorities in several countries think violence against civilians is at least sometimes justified – 40 percent in the Palestinian territories, 39 percent in Afghanistan, 29 percent in Egypt, 26 percent in Bangladesh, and 19 percent in the United States.

VIII. Support for Shari’a Law Around the World & Views on Religious Freedom

[The Council on Foreign Relations provides a thorough background on shari’a law](#) with highlights of shari’a versus secular law integration in political systems. In the section titled “What is Sharia?”

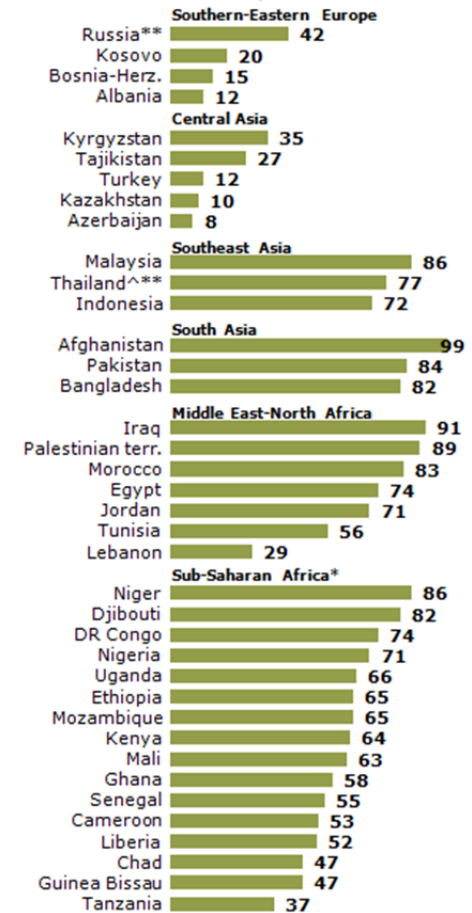
Also meaning “path in Arabic, sharia guides all aspects of Muslim life, including daily routines, familial and religious obligations, and financial dealings. It is derived primarily from the Quran and the Sunna – the sayings, practices, and teachings of the Prophet Mohammed. Precedents and analogy applied by Muslim scholars are used to address new issues. The consensus of the Muslim community also plays a role in defining this theological manual.

Shar’ia law is controversial because groups practicing Islam (or claiming to practice Islam) can use shari’a to condone practices such as honor killings, stoning as punishment for adultery, female genital cutting, child and adolescent marriages, polygamy, and gender-biased inheritance rules, as acceptable forms of devotion to their religion and of administering justice. Because shar’ia law is based on Sunnah, which is the way of life as interpreted from the Qur’an and interpreted from hadiths (the sayings of Mohammed as recorded by his companions in several volumes of varying acceptance), different practitioners of Islam may disagree on the verity of the sources of shar’ia law as Islam and attribute them to cultural customs that predate it.

According to the Pew study of the world’s Muslims, support for shari’a law is lower in Southern and Eastern Europe and in Central Asia than in MENA, Southeast Asia and South Asia. It is often higher in countries where Islam is an “officially favored religion” or where the court system already mimics shar’ia principles – for example, 99 percent of Muslims in Afghanistan support official shar’ia law while only 12 percent do in Turkey – however, support is also higher among Muslims with more religiosity.

Support for Sharia

% of Muslims who favor making sharia the official law in their country



*Data for all countries except Niger from “Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa.”

^Interviews conducted with Muslims in five southern provinces only.

**Question was modified to ask if sharia should be the law of the land in Muslim areas.

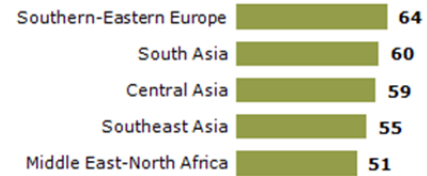
This question was not asked in Uzbekistan.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q79a.

Additionally, the study found that 58 percent of Muslims think shar'ia should only be applicable to Muslims in the country, and that many more Muslims support shar'ia law application in situations involving family and property matters rather than in severe punishment – 76 percent of South Asian Muslims who support shar'ia law also support executing those who leave Islam, but the global median is lower at 28 percent of Muslims who support shar'ia law. The global median percentage of Muslims who support shar'ia law for religious decisions in family law is much higher at 73 percent.

Should Sharia Apply Only to Muslims?

Among sharia supporters, median % of Muslims who say sharia should apply to Muslims only



This question was not asked in sub-Saharan Africa.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Q79a and Q81.

IX. View on Religious Freedom (and can you be good without a god?)

While the Pew report on the world's Muslims found the median 93 percent of Muslims in the world think religious freedom is a "good thing," 86 percent agree that in order for a person to be moral, he or she must believe in God.

Wide Agreement that Certain Behaviors are Morally Wrong

Median % of Muslims who say each behavior is morally wrong

	Prostitution	Homosexuality	Suicide	Sex outside marriage	Drinking alcohol	Abortion	Euthanasia
Southern-Eastern Europe	90	83	83	67	62	71	64
Central Asia	89	85	80	85	66	61	62
Southeast Asia	94	95	95	94	93	93	88
South Asia	84	79	80	87	82	64	68
Middle East-North Africa	95	93	82	94	84	72	75
Sub-Saharan Africa*	91	91	89	78	82	88	80

*Data for all countries except Niger from "Tolerance and Tension: Islam and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa."

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