

Network for Inter faith Concerns

Christian-Muslim News Digest Issue 3 2009

Christian-Muslim News Digest

Introduction

Welcome to the third issue of the Digest for 2009. This issue looks at news from China and the oppression of Uighurs in Xinjiang region; Iraq and bombing of churches in Baghdad; Malaysia and whether or not Christians can use 'Allah' for God; Somalia and the killing of Christians; Pakistan and the Taliban's introduction of *jizya* in Malakand; then at a Global Study of Interfaith Relations conducted by Gallup Poll, which concentrates on the integration of Muslims in Europe.

There is no in-depth country report in this issue, but Malaysia will be examined in the next issue.

China: Uighurs in Xinjiang

There have been wide-spread reports of ethnic violence in Urumqi the capital of Xinjiang Region. The violence, starting on 5th July 2009, occurred when indigenous Uighurs attacked Han Chinese, after taking to the streets to protest against an ethnic clash at a factory in south China in June, when two Uighur migrant workers had died. Many of the media reports said that the Uighurs are Muslims. This may have been surprising to many, unaware of the presence of significant numbers of both non-Chinese and Muslims in China.

Reuters first report '[Three killed in riot in China's Xinjiang region](#)' was released on the same day, followed by reports in the world's media, including, on 10th July, a report in *Al-Arabiya* that '[China arrests Uighurs following Friday prayers](#)'. On 15th July *The Independent* reported '[Death toll in China riots rises to 192](#)', and on 18th July the BBC carried a report '[China admits Uighur riot killings](#)' where the governor of Xinjiang region acknowledged that the security forces had shot dead 12 rioters.

The reason for the violence has been generally reported as being ethnic clashes, however there has been little reference to religious oppression as being an additional factor.

The region has been in Chinese control since the eighteenth century. In the 1950s the Chinese government began mass resettlement of ethnic Han Chinese into the region. Today about 8 million of the population are Han Chinese.

Because Xinjiang is a remote region, relatively little has been written about the situation of the Uighurs, both Muslim and Christian. Two groups that have carried out surveys are Forum 18 and Human Rights Watch.

[Forum 18](#), a Norwegian group which publicises violations of religious freedom, reporting mainly on former Soviet states in Central Asia, is named after Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Its [Religious Freedom Survey of Xinjiang](#) reports that:

The Xinjiang-Uighur Autonomous Region (previously known as Eastern Turkestan) is situated in the north west of China and borders Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia and Russia. With 16 per cent of China's territory, it is the country's largest province. According to official Chinese statistics, Xinjiang has a population of 16.5 million. ... [Half the population] speak Turkic languages and practise Islam. Of [these] latter, Uighurs constitute 42 per cent, the Kazakhs 6.2 per cent and the Kyrgyz 1 per cent.

The Chinese government has been restricting the religious freedom of both Muslims and Christians in Xinjiang. The numbers of Christians in Xinjiang are smaller than Muslims. There are Catholic and Orthodox Churches in the region, but the authorities prevent any minors attending services. [Forum 18 reported](#) in December 2004 that police checkpoints were set up to prevent children from attending church.

In April 2009 [Compass Direct News](#) carried a brief report about a Uighur Christian, Alimjan Yimit, who has been in prison since January 2008, awaiting trial for 'leaking state secrets' and 'inciting secession'. The report states that:

Family, friends and work colleagues have insisted that Alimjan is a loyal citizen with no access to state secrets, and that his arrest was due largely to his Christian faith and association with foreign Christians.

Muslims are allowed to attend Mosques, however Forum 18 found that the Imams are all appointed by the government. They also found that religious literature is government controlled, with lists of 'approved religious books' and that book sellers stocking unapproved titles would lose their licences. They also found that an 'unofficial order' bans Muslims who work in state-owned businesses from visiting mosques under threat of dismissal. That there were [notices at mosques](#) prohibiting anyone younger than 18 attending the mosque.

These reports of restrictions on religious activity are borne out by [Human Rights Watch](#) in the *World Report 2009*, which says this about the situation in Xinjiang:

Tensions worsened in 2008 in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. Beijing identified Uighur separatism as one of “the top three security threats for the games,” and launched a year-long security campaign focusing on “the three evil forces”—“terrorism, religious extremism, and separatism”—which resulted in even more drastic restrictions on religious, cultural, and political rights. Many Uighurs feel increasingly marginalized by rapid economic development but the government continues to prohibit domestic discussion of or reporting on human rights issues concerning Xinjiang.

The government prohibited employees and students from fasting during Ramadan, tightened control over religious personnel and mosques, reinforced civil militias, and deployed army and police patrols to prevent protests. Police also continued to confiscate Muslims’ passports in an apparent bid to prevent them from making non-state-approved pilgrimages to Mecca. In February new regulations were published prohibiting “23 types of illegal religious activities,” including praying in public or at wedding ceremonies. In March the authorities put down a large, peaceful demonstration in the town of Khotan.

At several points in 2008 police authorities in Xinjiang and Beijing announced that they had foiled “terrorist plots” and arrested “terrorist gangs” seeking to carry attacks during the games, but without releasing information sufficient to dispel concerns that Beijing was using counterterrorism concerns, which were legitimate—as cover for a crackdown on peaceful political opposition.

These incidents, which the government says demonstrate that it is facing a serious armed separatist threat in Xinjiang, have deepened the polarization between Han Chinese and Uighurs (pages 246-247).

The reports from Forum 18 and HRW make it clear that the current news has made public an on-going issue where the Chinese government has been oppressing the Turkic speaking Uighurs and denying both Muslims and Christians freedom of religion.

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Iraq: Churches Bombed

On Sunday 12th July 2009 *Reuters* reported ‘[bombs explode outside Baghdad churches](#)’. A car bomb exploded outside the Chaldean Church of St. Mary in eastern Baghdad, killing four and injuring many more. Over a period of 48 hours eight Churches were bombed. There were reports on the [BBC](#) and in the [Los Angeles Times](#) based on the *Reuters* report. Then *Reuters* updated the report the next day ‘[Iraq authorities boost security after church bombs](#)’, however in general the media carried no reports on the attacks.

The religious press did carry reports: *The Church Times* of 17th July had an article by Gerald Butt ‘[Christians in Iraq urged not to leave](#)’, setting the bombings in the wider context of previous attacks including those in October 2008, which were reported in the January issue of the *Digest*.

The Chaldean Auxiliary Bishop in Baghdad, Mgr Shlemon Warduni, who was at St. Mary’s when the bomb exploded, is reported as saying that the churches had received warnings that they would be targeted, and that the authorities had been informed but had not responded.

The Church Times reports a statement by an Iraqi government spokesman who said 'We will do everything within our power to prevent further attacks and ensure that our Iraqi Christian community can remain in Iraq and live peacefully. We ask them to stay'.

On 16th July *Oasis International Foundation* issued a statement '[on the Recent Attacks on Christian Churches in Iraq](#)'. It expressed sympathy for the victims and condemned the attacks, quoting Pope John Paul II's words spoken on his visit to Damascus, that 'places of worship are oases in which one meets with the Merciful God ... and with one's brothers and sisters in the bond of religion'.

[Oasis](#) is a study centre based in Italy which promotes meeting and understanding between Christians and Muslims. It produces a Newsletter and a Journal.

These attacks and the media's apathy in reporting them are worrying as Christians in Iraq continue to come under pressure from insurgents.

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Malaysia: Can Allah be used for God's name?

There has been an on-going legal dispute over the use of Allah for God by Christians in Malaysia. The Malay language, Bahasa Melayu, adopted Arabic script in the fourteenth century. Christians have used 'Allah' for God in Malaysia for centuries.

Recently the government has banned its use in print by Christians and then given conditional permission. *The Herald*, a Catholic weekly newspaper, has been at the centre of this dispute. *Al-Arabiya* reported on 27th February 2009 that the government had [gazetted a prohibition](#) of the use of four specific words in any document and publication relating to Christianity, but allowing conditional use.

The printing, publishing, sale, issue, circulation and possession of any document and publication relating to Christianity containing the words Allah, Kaabah, Baitullah and Solat are prohibited unless on the front cover of the document and publication are written with the words 'For Christianity'.

A new Bible in Malay has further complicated the situation, as it uses Elohim rather than Allah for God, and this is seen as weakening the case for the continued use of Allah by Christians.

An article in a Malaysian paper *The Sun Daily* on 11th March 2009 by Dzulkifli Abdul Razak '[Inconsistent, insensitive translations of 'Allah'](#)' discusses the use of 'Allah' using Luke's Gospel:

In Luke, "God" is generally substituted by "Allah", whereas "Tuhan" is commonly used to substitute "the Lord". Note the article "the" applies to "Tuhan," but not to "Allah". Hence, where there is "the Lord God" in the English version, it becomes "Tuhan Allah". ... On some occasions though, "God" is also translated as "Tuhan", though "God" in this example does not carry the article "the" as in "the Lord". So does it mean there is a time when "God" is not "Allah"? Or that "Tuhan" is "Allah" after all? Just from these few random examples, one can already sense the complexity and confusion in the use of "Allah" in the translated version. To make matters even more confusing, the biblical name "Mary" is rendered as "Maria" – when the Quranic equivalent would have been "Maryam". ... Or for that matter "Gabriel" is not even translated but kept as it is. The Quranic "Jibrail" as an equivalent is not even considered! How about "Jesus" himself? Why is this rendered as "Yesus", rather than "Isa"?

The article raises valid points from a Muslim perspective; the same questions can be asked of versions of the Bible in many other languages, for example Swahili in East Africa. It is a challenge to Christians to explain why different names are used in some situations.

The government rescinded the conditional permission after a few days and sent it for judicial review, saying that the use of the Arabic word might offend the sensitivities of Malaysia's Muslim population. The ruling was set for 17th July, but as yet no ruling has been published.

Christians in Malaysia are not alone in using 'Allah' for God; Christians in Indonesia, Pakistan, the Middle East, Malta and Sudan all do.

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Somalia: Somali Islamist Shabaab movement behead Christians

During July, reports have been received of the increasingly strict implementation of *sharia* by the Shabaab movement in Somalia. On 10th July 2009 [Reuters](#) reported that seven people were beheaded in Baidoa, in south-central Somalia, for being "Christians" and "spies".

The Shabaab, which means 'youth', are reported as being linked to al Qaeda and are said to have vowed to rule the majority Muslim nation by a strict interpretation of Islamic law. Reuters reports that Shabaab have dug up Sufi graves, forced women to wear veils and amputated limbs for theft.

In late June Shabaab are reported to have [killed the children](#) of a Christian leader in Kismayo, southern coastal Somalia, and on 20th July 2009 [Compass Direct](#) reports that a Christian convert from Islam was shot dead by Shabaab at Mahadday Weyne, Somalia, 100 kilometers north of Mogadishu. He is reported to have been a Christian for fifteen years.

Compass Direct News reports that Shabaab are:

Intent on "cleansing" Somalia of all Christians, [they] are monitoring converts from Islam especially where Christian workers had provided medical aid, such as Johar, Jamame, Kismayo and Beledweyne, sources said. Mahadday Weyne, 22 kilometers north of Johar, is the site of a former Christian-run hospital.

Linked with Islamic extremist al Qaeda terrorists, *al Shabaab* rebels have mounted an armed effort to topple President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed's Western-backed Transitional Federal Government with the intention of imposing *sharia*. The group is already enforcing *sharia* in large parts of southern Somalia that they control.

The number of Christians in Somalia is extremely small. It is possible that many of those being killed are being targeted because they are suspected of being Christians, because they are known to have had links with Christian missions in the past.

Shabaab are gaining attention in the West following the [capture of French security officials](#) by Hizbul Islam, who then handed them over to Shabaab. However Shabaab deny involvement in the [capture of aid workers](#) near the Kenyan border and are reported to have vowed to track the kidnappers down.

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Pakistan: Taliban impose *jizya* in Malakand

The situation in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) continues to be of concern. The Diocese of Peshawar of the Church of Pakistan covers NWFP and reports that there are 100,000 Christians living there amongst 17 million Muslims. Following the actions of the Taliban, the Diocese is caring for many Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs); it produces a regular [bulletin](#) reporting on the situation of the IDPs.

Houriya Ahmed, writing in the *Observer* 3rd May 2009 '[The Taliban's perversion of sharia law](#)', raised many concerns about the impact of the Taliban in Malakand division in NWFP where they have begun to correct the "moral wrongs" of society. The article mentions the banning of women from shopping in public areas, men being punished for shaving their moustaches and listening to music. It then reports that 'as non-Muslims living under sharia law, the Sikh community in Orazkai Agency is being forced to pay 15m rupees, approximately £130,000, in tax to live in peace. If Sikhs refuse, then the Taliban will occupy their properties'. This is based on reports from India that the Indian government is worried that Sikhs were being asked to pay 'jizya or protection tax' and are being forced out of Pakistan, and that 35 Sikh families had been forced to leave [Orazkai Agency](#), a section of NWFP where there has been a Sikh community for many years.

A further report '[Taliban's Terror – Jizya on Sikhs](#)', by Ram Puniya in *Teheeka*, an Indian weekly news magazine, on 8th May 2009, explains the purpose of Jizya:

The logic of Jizya [imposed] on non Muslims in the conquered areas was that the non Muslims are to be exempted from military service, they are under the protection of the rule of Muslims so this tax [is levied]. It was a negotiable tax to be paid at the end of the year; it was levied only on the earning population in exchange for state protection.

The article also explains that *jizya* had been imposed by some of the Mughal rulers of Indian states.

It seems that the Taliban in Malakand are treating *jizya* as a way of raising finance in order to continue their insurgency against the government of Pakistan.

This is not the first time that the Taliban has attempted to single out non-Muslims for 'special treatment'. An article '[Taliban forces labels on Hindus](#)' in the *Guardian* 23rd May 2001 reported the actions of the Taliban government in Afghanistan:

Afghanistan's hardline Islamic Taliban government has ruled that Hindus must wear labels on their clothing and put large flags outside their houses to distinguish them from Muslims.

The purpose of the ruling is not immediately known. The religious police minister, Mohammed Wali said only that Islam required it. "Religious minorities living in an Islamic state must be identified," he said, adding that Hindu women would have to wear the veil.

Mr Wali said the new edict would only apply to Hindus because there are no Christians or Jews in Afghanistan, while Sikhs could be easily recognised by their turbans.

In 2001 it was clear that the West did not understand the implications of 'labelling Hindus' and the position of non-Muslims living in an Islamic State, whereas today there is at least some awareness as to what *Jizya* means.

Whilst the current reports mention *Jizya* being a tax for non-Muslims, none of them go on to explain the underlying concept of *dhimmi* status. '*Dhimmi*' is applied to non-Muslims under the protection of an Islamic state. The Qur'anic basis for *Jizya* is a verse in al-Tawba (9): 29

Fight against such of them who have been given the scripture until they pay the tribute (*al-jizya*) readily, being brought low.

The way in which Christians and Jews were protected under Islam was largely determined by the interpretation of verses from the Qur'ān. The ways in which these strictures were followed varied greatly from age to age and area to area.

Gudrun Krämer, in 'Dhimmi or Citizen? Muslim-Christian Relations in Egypt' (1998) discusses the ways that Islamic jurists viewed the *dhimmi*:

[They] interpret[ed] the subjection of *dhimmi*s to Islamic authority as a justification for discriminatory and humiliating measures imposed upon them. This principle was based upon a well-known verse in the Qur'ān [Sura 9:29] and upon the agreement, known as the covenant of 'Umar (1998:36).

AbuSulayman is of the opinion that jurists took this verse out of context. They did not project Islam as a mercy and betterment for these peoples, but as a humiliation (1988:11).

The ways in which this tax was collected has varied over history. In general, only the 'breadwinners' were liable to pay the tax, but some jurists argued that no one was exempted from it. The uses to which the taxes were put were not specified, and decisions as to its use were left to the authorities. AbuSulayman comments that this explains 'the lack of enthusiasm on the part of some Muslim rulers to see converts joining Islam. They regarded it as loss of governmental revenues' (1988:11). This comment also points to a problem that *dhimmi* faced: Whether or not to give up their 'protected' status and to submit to Islam. The ways in which the tax was collected often served to humiliate the payer and this could force someone to give-in and to submit to Islam, rather than to be humiliated yet again.

The tax was to be paid by each male above the age of puberty. In some cases it was paid publicly, in a humiliating fashion, with the *dhimmi* being struck on the neck or head (Chapman 2007:329). Payment of *jizya* only ceased in

the countries under Ottoman rule in 1839 and in Egypt in 1855 (Courbage & Fargues 1998:22). However, payment of *jizya* continued in some Islamic countries, notably North Africa and the Yemen, even during the colonial period, when certain citizens had gained European protection.

One of the most influential Muslim writers of the 20th Century, whose views are widespread in Africa, is Abul A'la Maudūdī (1903-1979) founder of the *Jamā'at-i Islāmi* (Party of Islam). In his commentary on Sura Al-Tawba (9):29 he writes that:

The purpose for which the Muslims are required to fight is not as one might think to compel the unbelievers into embracing Islam. Rather, their purpose is to put an end to the sovereignty and supremacy of the unbelievers so that the latter are unable to rule our men. The authority to rule should only be vested in those who follow the true faith; unbelievers who do not follow this true faith should live in a state of subordination.

Unbelievers are required to pay *jizya* (poll tax) in lieu of security provided to them as the *Dhimmīs* ('Protected People') of an Islamic state. *Jizya* symbolizes the submission of the unbelievers to the suzerainty of Islam. 'To pay *jizya* of their own hands humbled' refers to a payment in a state of submission. 'Humbled' also reinforces the idea that the believers, rather than the unbelievers, should be the rulers in performance of their duty as vicegerents (1990:202).

The very fact that such an influential writer from Pakistan as Maudūdī argued for *jizya* to be paid is a concern and has further reaching implications for all non-Muslims.

In an article, '*Dhimmī* Status in Islam from an Historical Perspective with Implications for Present day Africa', published in 2004, I asked whether it was possible that *jizya* could be re-introduced as a tax on *dhimmī*? It seems that the Taliban at least believe that it should be imposed and the prospect of a Taliban controlled government in Pakistan or Afghanistan is disturbing, especially where Christians and other non-Muslim minorities are concerned. Other news from Pakistan is more positive:

In late April, the Diocese of Lahore, Church of Pakistan, organised an 'International Consultation on Inter-Faith Dialogue'. Rana Khan, Advisor to the Bishop of Lahore on Inter-Faith Relations, reports that about 200 people participated in the opening session, where papers were given by: Dr. Khalid Masood, Chairman of the Islamic Ideological Council of Pakistan on 'Islam and Inter-Faith Dialogue' and Dr. Hugh van Skyhawk on 'The Heart of Religion: A Sufi's thoughts in Dialogue between Religious Committees'. On the second day Christians met to hear four papers and to discuss different approaches to inter-faith dialogue from a Christian perspective. The [Diocese of Lahore's](#) Faith and Friendship page on the website gives the Vision and Objectives of the Interfaith Forum and is where the consultation papers will be posted.

In the April Digest it was reported that 'the National Assembly has passed a bill that gives Christians a 5% quota of jobs in the government sector'. This has now progressed further and the *Daily Times* of Pakistan on 27th May 2009 reported in '[5% federal jobs quota for minorities notified](#)' that:

The government on Tuesday issued a notification to reserve five percent quota for religious minorities in all federal government jobs in pursuance of a federal cabinet decision on May 20th. According to the notification, this quota would also apply to all attached departments, autonomous bodies, public corporations and companies administratively controlled by the federal government and jobs to be filled by direct recruitment including the Central Superior Services (CSS) examination.

The reservation of seats would have the same parameters as stipulated for the reservations of quota for women under the Establishment Division notification dated May 22, 2007.

Aftab Mughal in an article published 30th May 2009 in *Spero News*, '[Pakistan: job quotas for religious minorities](#)' reported that on 28th May Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani said:

[T]hat he would ask the provinces to fix a five percent quota in government jobs for minorities. "I will ensure the implementation of 5 percent of jobs quota for minorities in the federal government departments in letter and spirit. I will also advise the semi-government departments and provinces to allocate and ensure a five percent quota of jobs for minorities."

This clarifies that the 5% quota is apportioned amongst all minorities. Government figures say that religious minorities are about 3%, with Christians comprising about 1.5%. As long as the quota is fairly implemented, it should help to ensure representation for religious minorities, including Christians, in the government sector.

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A Global Study of Interfaith Relations

In May 2009 the Gallup Poll organisation issued [The Gallup Coexist Index 2009: A Global Study of Interfaith Relations](#) based on extensive polling of opinions in many parts of the world. The Press release says that it:

[O]ffers insight into the state of relations between people of different religions around the world. Created in partnership with the Coexist Foundation, it marks Gallup's first report of public perceptions concerning people of different faiths. In addition, the report provides an in-depth analysis of attitudes regarding integration among Muslims and the general public in France, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

The research was carried out by the [Gallup Center for Muslim Studies](#) for the [Muslim West Facts Project](#) and the [Coexist Foundation](#). The Coexist Foundation is a charity, established in 2006 to promote better understanding between Jews, Christians and Muslims - the Abrahamic Faiths - through education, dialogue and research.

The media response to the publication of the Gallup Poll Coexist Report is of interest; several headlines concentrated on the attitudes to homosexuality. On 7th May *The Guardian* Religious affairs correspondent's article was headlined '[Muslims in Britain have zero tolerance of homosexuality, says poll](#)'. The article itself is accurate whilst concentrating on only one aspect. On 8th May *The Independent* had an article '[Patriotic, respectful and Homophobic: a portrait of British Muslims' state of mind](#)', which at least quotes the Gallup Coexist Index accurately. The 8th May *Daily Mail*'s article '[Just one in 10 British Muslims feel integrated into society, study claims](#)', had a picture of a woman in *niqab*, and is at best misleading and at worst an inaccurate interpretation of the report. Dalia Mogahed, the Executive Director of the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies wrote an article in *The Guardian* (20th May) '[Studying Muslim integration in Europe](#)' which served to redress the balance of earlier media stories.

What does the Gallup Coexist Index 2009 report? The researchers conducted interviews in 27 countries world-wide asking the participants' level of agreement with a series of statements:

I always treat people of other religious faiths with respect.

Most religious faiths make a positive contribution to society.

I would not object to a person of a different religious faith moving next door.

People of other religions always treat me with respect.

In the past year, I have learned something from someone of another religious faith.

From these responses, Gallup then classified populations as:

Isolated: Isolated individuals tend not to be members of any particular faith group, but if they are, they tend to believe in the truth of their perspective above all others. They do not want to know about other religions. They also neither respect nor feel respected by those of other faiths.

Tolerant: Tolerant individuals have a "live-and-let-live" attitude toward people of other faiths, and they generally feel that they treat others of different faiths with respect. However, they are not likely to learn from or about other religions.

Integrated: Integrated individuals go beyond a “live-and-let-live” attitude and actively seek to know more about and learn from others of different religious traditions. They believe that most faiths make a positive contribution to society. Furthermore, integrated people not only feel they respect people from other faith traditions, but they also feel respected *by* them.
(Coexist 2009:10)

The first section, pages 10-18, gives the results of the 27 country survey for the five statements with some analysis. The results are presented as a series of graphs, tables and charts for different regions of the world: Europe, the United States and Canada; Africa; and Asia.

Figure 1 (page 11) shows the percentage who responded “yes” to a question as to whether religion is an important part of daily life. All African and Asian countries apart from South Africa (82%) and India (79%) had percentages of over 90, whereas Italy (72%) and the United States (67%) were the only Western countries with percentages above 50%, with Norway at 20% being the lowest figure recorded.

Figures 2, 4 and 6 show the percentages who feel Integrated, Tolerant or Isolated in the three regions.

In the European countries surveyed, the Gallup Coexist Index shows that relatively high proportions of the British (35%) and German (38%) general populations are classified as isolated in contrast with populations in the United States (15%) and Canada (20%) that fall under the same category (page 12).

Across African countries surveyed, Niger (42%), Chad (44%), and Djibouti (44%) have the highest proportions of respondents who can be classified as isolated. This is in sharp contrast to the low percentages in Senegal (12%), Sierra Leone (12%), and South Africa (17%) (page 13).

Majorities in Afghanistan (84%) and Israel (71%) are classified as isolated. Although Afghanistan is overwhelmingly Muslim, decades of civil war fought along ethnic and sectarian lines help to explain the large majority of Afghans considered isolated. This suggests that civil strife alone is not enough to create religious isolation, but that this conflict must be along religious or sectarian lines. Somewhat surprisingly, Pakistan and India, with different religious compositions, have similar proportions of integrated respondents, 22% and 21%, respectively. However, more Pakistanis (34%) than Indians (17%) can be classified as isolated (pages 14-15).

Figures 3, 5 and 7 are Tables that present the Mean Scores for the responses to the five statements.

Of the European populations surveyed, the Dutch and the French are most likely to be open to having a neighbor of a different faith, but the Dutch are among the least likely to agree that most religions make a positive contribution to society. The Dutch and the French are among the most likely to agree that they always treat people of other faiths with respect. At the same time, the Dutch are among the least likely to agree that they have learned something from people of other faiths in the past year (page 11).

Respondents in Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, and Burkina Faso are the most likely to agree with most of the items that make up the Gallup Coexist Index. At the other end of the spectrum, populations in Chad, Djibouti, and Niger are the least likely of the African populations surveyed to be positive about coexistence (page 13).

Among Asian populations surveyed, Malaysians are among the most likely to agree that most religions make positive contributions to society, while Indians are the most likely to agree that they always treat people of other faiths with respect and that people of other religions always treat them with respect (page 15).

This part of the report can be seen as giving a ‘snapshot’ of the current attitudes in 27 countries where Muslims co-exist with those of other faiths and those who are secular.

The section concludes (pages 15-18) with an examination of a comparative analysis of French, German, and British Muslims and their respective public populations. In each country, the general public is more likely than its Muslim population to be considered isolated. This pattern ranges from relatively small differences in the United Kingdom (35% among the general public versus 30% among British Muslims) to more pronounced differences in Germany (38% among the general public versus 22% among German Muslims).

Section two (pages 19-44) provides an in-depth analysis of attitudes regarding integration among Muslims and the general public in France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. The choice of these three European countries is interesting, as each one has different experiences with its Muslim populations, largely as a result of the individual government’s attitude to migrants and the ethnic origins of the Muslims.

Gallup Poll questioned just over 1000 people from the general public and just over 500 Muslims from each of the three countries. They were asked a range of questions, which included attitudes to National Identity, Actions necessary for Integration, Democratic Institutions, orally acceptable behaviour, Perception of headscarves. The results are presented in a series of Graphs, Charts and Tables, with a comparison between the public and Muslims of each country.

When asked about identifying with Country and Religion:

British, French, and German Muslims are more likely than the general populations in those three countries to identify strongly with their faith, but Muslims surveyed are also as likely (if not more likely) than the general public to identify strongly with their countries of residence (page 19).

They were asked 'how strongly do you identify with your religion, your country'. The Table shows the Percentage who say "extremely strongly" or "very strongly".

	Your Religion	Your Country
French Muslims	58%	52%
French Public	23%	55%
German Muslims	59%	40%
German Public	23%	32%
British Muslims	75%	77%
British Public	23%	50%

(Adapted from Figure 14, page 19)

The results concerning whether Muslims are loyal to their country of residence showed that around half the public in Germany and Britain thought that Muslims were not loyal, whereas strong majorities of the Muslims interviewed think that Muslims are loyal (page 20).

When it looks at attitudes to morally acceptable behavior, including abortion, homosexual acts, viewing pornography, sex between unmarried people, suicide and crimes of passion the Muslims were very conservative, with very few regarding these as being 'morally acceptable', British Muslims in particular.

When asked about the death penalty, 63% of British Muslims interviewed said it was 'morally acceptable', whereas 50% of the British Public said it was. The results for France (Muslims 24%, Public 35%) and Germany (Muslims and Public both 27%) reveal the differences between the countries (pages 30-35).

The perception of what wearing a headscarf (*hijab*) represents is examined, with respondents being asked whether they regarded it as showing courage, being religious, fanaticism or oppression, amongst others (pages 35-38).

It is interesting to note that the general European populations surveyed are more likely to associate *hijab* with religiosity than fanaticism, oppression, or being against women. It is also worth noting the stark contrast between British, French, and German populations in their perceptions of veiling, where the British public is significantly less likely than the French or German publics to associate negative attributes of "oppression" and being "against women" with the *hijab*. The British general public is also more likely to associate *hijab* with confidence (41%) than oppression (31%) in contrast to the French and German general populations (page 38).

The report repays study as it gives an insight into how Muslims in three European countries regard themselves and how they are regarded by the public in those countries.

A detailed insight into Muslims in the whole of Europe can be found in the [Yearbook of Muslims in Europe](#). Edited by Jørgen S. Nielsen, Samim Akgönül, Ahmet Alibašić, Brigitte Maréchal, Christian Moe and published by Brill, it provides up-to-date factual information, statistics and analysis of the situation of Muslims in 37 European countries. The first edition of this new publication will be published in October 2009.

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IN CONCLUSION

When preparing this issue of the Digest I found reports of many events which could have been included in this issue.

In some cases they have been covered more thoroughly in Christian media whilst being largely ignored by other media; the news of the bombing of churches in Baghdad is an example of this. It went unreported in most major newspapers as a [letter to the Guardian](#) on 15th July highlights:

On Sunday in Baghdad seven churches were attacked and at least 14 people killed. Where is the condemnation of this or the media coverage? Or has the targeting of Christians in Iraq become so much the norm it is no longer considered news?

The lack of reporting of events in the media is a concern, not only in Iraq but also in many other places. Another problem that I found was the failure of journalists to corroborate stories.

This is seen in a story not covered here:

An internet site reported that on 28th June 2009 two church buildings were burned down in Zanzibar.

There are tensions between the Muslim majority on Zanzibar and Christians, partly due to political factors and partly because many of the Christians are from mainland Tanzania, rather than the Islands.

The event is not dealt with in the Digest, as every report I read of the events could be traced back to a single source. The local newspapers reported nothing about it and when I contacted church workers in Zanzibar they were unaware of the event.

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