



Annual Report



SHIA RIGHTS WATCH

Defending Justice and Rights

Shia Rights Watch (SRW), established in 2011, SRW is the world's first independent organization dedicated to define and protect the rights of Shia Muslims around the world. SRW is a non-governmental, not-for-profit research entity and advocacy group headquartered in Washington D.C. U.S.A. Shia Rights Watch holds a 501(c) status, as well as a Special consultation status (ECOSOC) with the United Nations. Shia Rights Watch aims to draw international attention to countries where Shia rights are violated. The aim is to give a voice to the oppressed and hold oppressors accountable for their crimes. SRW achieves its objectives through strategic investigations supported by targeted advocacy in order to bring about informed action.

Vision

Freedom of Religion for all

Shia Rights Watch envisions a peaceful world for all regardless of religion, gender, race and origin. SRW believes that Shia Muslims should be recognized as a religious group by the countries in which they reside. Discrimination should not be allowed and be brought to light whenever and wherever it takes place. God has given us all the freedom of religion and the right to live in peace.

Mission

Shia Rights Watch is dedicated to protecting the rights of Shia Muslims worldwide. SRW stands up for victims of prejudice, and supports activism in order to prevent discrimination, support political freedom, and help ensure people's human rights and religious freedom. SRW enlists the local public and international communities to support the cause of human rights for all.

SRW achieves these ends by investigating violations against Shia communities in order to raise awareness and fight injustice. SRW promotes needed change through research and publications and submits reports and articles to governments and international organizations. Also, SRW continually monitors media outlets to ensure coverage of Shia rights violations.

The Purpose of SRW

Shia Muslims face constant oppression throughout the world solely due to their faith. In some parts of the world, Shia Muslims for centuries have been targeted for persecution, as evidenced by the well-documented extremism of the Wahhabi movement. SRW believes that Shia Muslims need a human rights organization that highlights the violations committed against them and gives voice to their call for help.

Staff Organization

Shia Rights Watch began with the collaborative efforts of religiously and ethnically diverse activists and volunteers who sought to advocate in support of international human rights. The momentum created by the activism of an increasing number of volunteers Shia Rights Watch. SRW currently has more than 1000 active members working in various locations worldwide. Members' responsibilities range from gathering news and information to publishing reports and articles in order to advocate for change.

SRW's Methodology

SRW believes that information is the most valuable resource in the investigative process. From the organization's inception, SRW has focused on gathering information through various media: interviewing witnesses, family members of victims and victims themselves; on-site collection of resources; analyzing reports from various national and international organizations; meeting with non-governmental and religious organizations, leaders, and journalists; and creating information networks in a wide range of social sectors. Based on the information collected from the above sources, SRW is able to identify different types of human rights violations. These violations include but are not limited to:

- Violation of the right of living;
- Arbitrary arrest;
- Unfair trial, and illegal detention;
- Psychological & psychological abuse: torture, rape, and sexual assault;
- Illegal confiscation of private property;
- Demolition of religious centers;
- Employment discrimination;
- Education discrimination;

SRW as a Resource

Journalists investigating topics regarding the Middle East will benefit from SRW's focus on the Shia communities since they are crucially important members of Middle Eastern society. For instance, in order to fully examine the ongoing atrocities committed against Arab Spring protesters, it is necessary to know about the Shia struggle in specific nations or regions in which the discrimination of Shia has been subtle, but persistent. The Arab Spring opened the door for more obvious persecution. Cases reported in other parts of the world, such as in South Asia, include violence and intimidation that reflect fluctuating trends in sectarian hostilities that have been fueled by various political issues, including terrorism. SRW's aim is to be able to report the crimes affecting Shia in every part of the globe.

SRW's investigators communicate directly with the victims and monitor multilingual news media outlets. SRW networks with national committees, international human rights organizations, as well as religious scholars of Shia communities. SRW's members are made up of people with diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds united in defense of human rights. This international network provides invaluable information to commentators and journalists who are seeking to explore the impact of events on the Shia communities worldwide. Reports can be viewed at www.shiarightswatch.org.

ANNUAL CASUALTY ANALYSIS

The Annual Analysis of 2015 is the first annual Shia Rights Watch review based on the compilation of the monthly analysis reports on Shia casualties. This analysis summarizes and visualizes key Shia rights issues in the fifteen countries that have the most Shia rights violations in events from the beginning of January through the end of December 2015.

The report reflects investigative work that the Shia Rights Watch staff undertook in 2015 with close partnership with human rights activists in each country. Shia Rights Watch's weekly news, issued throughout the year, contains a more detailed account of issues addressed in the brief summaries of this volume. Weekly news can be found on the Shia Rights Watch website,

www.ShiaRightsWatch.org.

The factors we considered in determining the focus of our work in 2015 include the number Shia Muslims killed, arrested, and wounded, in deviation to the International Bill of Human Rights.

This report neither reflects all of the work Shia Rights Watch does in terms of which countries we investigate for human rights violations, nor does it showcase every sin-

gle Shia human rights violation. The absence of a particular country or issue often simply reflects staffing limitations or lack of reliable information and should not be taken as commentary on significance of the problem. There are many serious Shia rights violations that SRW lacks the capacity to address.

For instance, countries such as Iran and Syria do have numerous Shia rights violations, however, due to restricted access and dangerous situations, our advocates could not pass on critical information to be included in this report. Finally, this report does not cover the number of casualties that are the results of armed conflict. The Shia Rights Watch condemns all human rights violations regardless of them being included in this report or not.

SHIA HISTORY AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS

Population

Today, Shia Muslims represent as much as half of the world-wide Muslim population, and their history has been discernible since the dawn of Islam.

It must be mentioned that the SRW count of the Shia population is higher than formal census as it includes subcategories such as Ismailis and Alawites. In addition, as well as fearing expression of their faith, many Shia believe their governments' under-report their populations in order to minimize their existence.

Ideology

The Shia Ideology is well spread through the world through countless writings and publications as well as through the foundation of a great number of religious and scientific schools, colleges, institutions and libraries- all led by top professional and religious scholars and preachers. These foundations are located worldwide in a number of holy cities such as, Najaf, Karbala, Kathimiya, Samarra, Qom, Mashad, capitals such as, Beirut, Cairo, Baghdad, Karachi, Jakarta, Kuwait, Qatar, Damascus and Tehran; cities such as, al Ahsa' and al Qatif in Saudi Arabia; and finally, countries such as Afghanistan, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Jordan, and many others.

Contributions

Shia have made great contributions to society. Great shia contributions include Abu-Raihan al- Biruni, the linguist, chronologist and historian who furthered his hands in physics, astrology and mathematics.

Shia Islam is a multi-cultural faith, independent from any geographical and political region, and any nation which announc-

es official representation of this group is taking advantage of their population statistics.

Citizenship

Human rights and self- empowerment are categories of great importance in this religion, as seen in text such as the "The Treatise of Rights" by Imam 'Ali Ibn al-Husayn as-Sajjad, which is one of the oldest and most valuable preambles to basic human rights shared by all regardless of faith, color, or ethnicity. The religion itself entrusts its followers in proactive citizenship, wherever they may be.

IN ADDITION, SHIA ISLAM PROMOTES THE FOLLOWING:

- Equal rights for both men and women in both citizenship and domestic affairs
- Shia Muslims to maximize efforts in freedom, dignity, justice, and equality.
- Achieving civilized goals through peaceful, non-violent action
- Politically, Shia Muslims believe in plurality, democracy and openness to all, which is why acceptance is highly granted in Shiism.

“National Security”, “Terrorism” and “ISIS”: Brands that Threaten Shia Muslims

Shia Muslims are the largest minority that have been targeted by terms such as “national security”, “terrorism”, and ISIS, as each of these terms have been changed and used by perpetrators to suit their own needs. Such terms have been used in relation to the Shia population not because they belong to these categories, but because they stand up for their rights and peacefully protest. Since each government in this report defines “terror” and “national security” to protect their personal power instead of using it for the benefit and protection of the masses, the demand for equal treatment by Shia Muslims is labeled as a “threat to national security”. Thus, even by peacefully demanding their own human rights, Shia Muslims are being ousted as “terrorists” and a threat to “national security,” which makes it extremely difficult for them to fight for their rights, leaving them virtually defenseless.

National Security & Terrorism

Terrorism is defined by the use of violence with aims of intimidating or endangering the public for individual agendas. A UN panel, on March 17, 2005, described terrorism as any act “intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act.” However, some countries modified their definition to cover up their illegal punishment of peaceful advocates or peaceful pro-freedom protesters. That’s because under law terrorism is one of the worst crimes, so by writing peaceful protests off as acts of terrorism, governments are free to punish the so-called “terrorists” with almost no backlash. Al-Khalifa of Bahrain and Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia arrest, punish, and pressure their oppositions under their definitions of “terrorism” and “national security”. According to Saudi Arabia Terrorism Law Template, a terrorist is defined in part, as a person who “insults the reputation of the state or its position”. Based on this definition, any pro-democracy protester, or anyone at all who critiques corruption of the authorities or questions the capa-

bility of the King and his officers is a threat to national security and unity, and will be punished as a terrorist. Authorities change these definitions out of fear that their own personal power will be threatened if they allow any sort of opposition to exist, so by changing them to fit their own needs they can punish all opposition and take away the oppositions’ human rights, legally. This sends a message to other citizens that the protesters are the problem, not the government, as they destroy the national peace, however, this is simply government propaganda, and has no truth in reality.

Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, also known as ISIS, became another means to target Shia Muslims along with other minorities. ISIS openly calls Shia non-Muslims who deserve to be killed, burned alive, and kept as slaves, solely on basis of religious deviation from Wahhabi ideals. This terrorist group has been targeting the Shia populations in many areas, especially in Iraq and Syria. They bomb, kill, raid, rape, and demolish Shia populations and their history with support of states such as Saudi Arabia, as they share the official religion of Wahhabism.

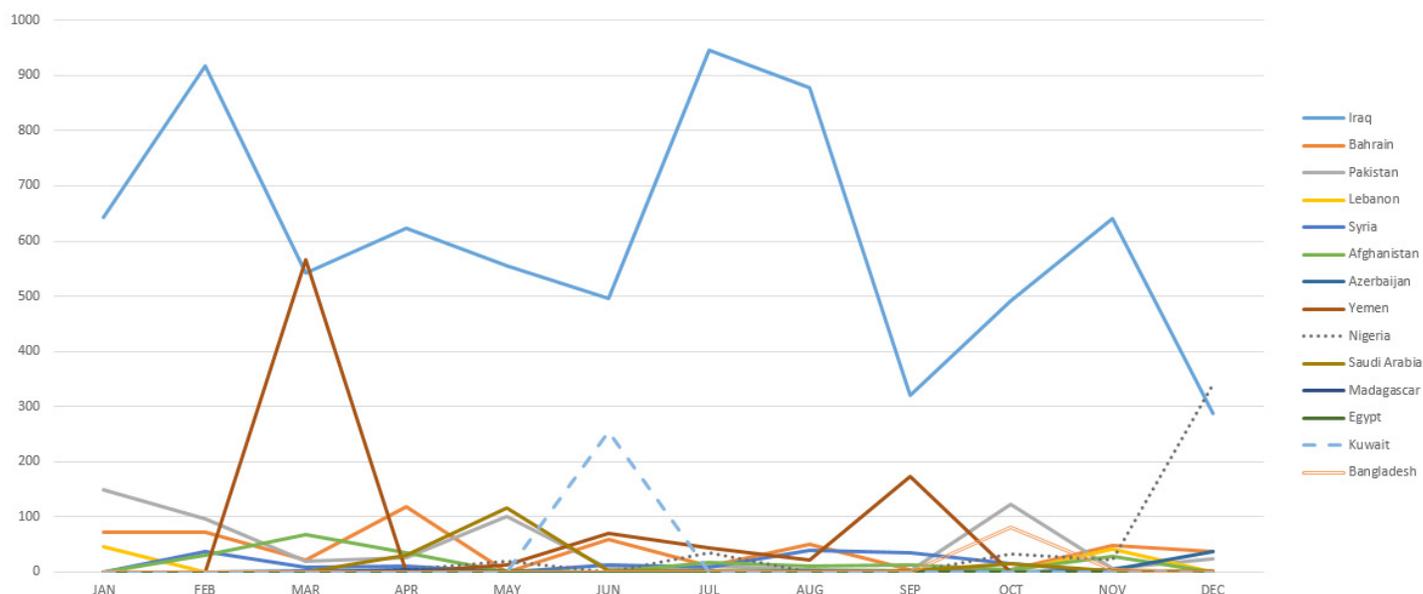
Ever since the birth of ISIS, Shia communities have faced increased human rights violations such as targeted bombings and killings, many of whose perpetrators went unprosecuted because ISIS claimed responsibility. As soon as governments hear ISIS claim responsibility, they cease litigation of parties involved. In truth, ISIS recruitment feeds on already present ideologies in society. Thus, a discriminatory mentality already exists in relation to Shia Muslims, which allows grounds for ISIS infiltration in said nation. As the brand of ISIS continues to grow internationally, individual authorities have placed less attention towards grass root investigations of risk groups that allow groups such as ISIS to spread. The Shia Rights Watch strongly believes that instead of branding ISIS as an internationally functioning unit, every single violation must be studied and prosecuted in their original location to prevent future ISIS recruitments and spread of hateful ideologies and actions.

THE WORLD MUST REVISIT TERMINOLOGIES

This NGO also urges authorities to revisit the terminology of “national security”, “terror” and “terrorist,” as well as their usage. As long as each county has its own definition for these terms, the world cannot successfully form coalitions to combat ISIS and its mission. Usage of “terror & terrorism” and “national security”, has led to the unlawful arrest and punishment of many minorities and advocates, which must be stopped. By adopting universal definition of such terms, such victims will receive more protection in the United Nations and under International Laws. It is vital to define these terms so that they suit all humanity and do not fulfil political desires of specific groups or governments.

Hawraa Zakary
Research Director of Shia Rights Watch

Anti-Shia Trends in 2015 by Month & Country



Executive Summary

The Annual Casualty Analysis released by Shia Rights Watch includes a list of countries with the most human rights violations committed to the Shia Muslim minority group. It should be noted that this analysis does not cover every human rights violation being done to this group, and instead focuses on the following human rights violations: murder, maiming, and unlawful arrest. This analysis provides a clear report of confirmed human rights violations being done to the Shia population. Just to give a sense of how dire this situation is, Shia Muslims have reported feeling insecure in twenty-four countries, fifteen of which have substantial evidence of Shia targeted murder, maiming, and arrest. It is important to note that Shia Muslims have reported to feeling unsafe in 50% of Islamic countries. An average of 14 Shia are killed daily in these fifteen countries. The highest ranking places with Shia rights violations are in the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa, making it a widespread issue.

One of the major factors leading to human rights violations of this minority group is the tendency for sovereigns to create their own definitions of the terms “terror”, “terrorist”, and “national security” in order to propel their own state-interests as opposed to using uniform definitions of these words. By skewing these terms sovereigns are able to curtail human rights on the accusation that the person in question is a “terrorist”. For example, according to the Saudi Arabian Terrorism Law Template, a terrorist is defined as someone, who “insults the reputation of the state or its position,” meaning that

under law even peaceful pro-democracy protesters would be punished as terrorists. According to many states’ laws, national security has to do with the security of their own personal power as opposed to the welfare of the common good. This makes equal rights hard to obtain in these countries because anyone who tries asking is punished on acts of “terrorism.” Thus, Shia Rights Watch urges all countries to adopt a universal definition of the terms, “terror” “terrorism” and “national security” so that state leaders cannot create their own definitions to suit personal needs and so that more can be done to help minorities, both in the United Nations, and in international laws.

The other huge issue leading to curtailing of basic human rights in minority groups, such as the Shia, is the worldwide spreading of ISIS. ISIS uses anti-Shia ideology which hurts this group especially in ISIS inhabited states. Unfortunately, most government agencies stop looking into any acts of terrorism against minorities once they know ISIS is involved, but it is important to note that ISIS cannot thrive in any state unless the already existing ideology aligned with that of ISIS, meaning that in any place with a strong ISIS hold, key problems were already in place. Therefore, it is important to look further into issues, policies, ideologies, etc, in ISIS controlled states, in order to find the key underlying issues that allow for this spread. By looking for the roots of the problems and not just putting full blame on ISIS, it will be easier to eradicate the problem altogether. This goes with the idea that prevention is better than treatment. It is better for the world if the spread of ISIS is stopped in its tracks as opposed to if ISIS is simply

fought.

Finally, it is vital to note that all countries mentioned in this report are United Nations member states and thus have all violated the International Bill of Human Rights. The Bill declares the following rights: all people are equal under the law, the right to leave and return to your country, the right to have and/ or change your nationality, freedom of expression, right to an education, including free elementary school, the right to participate in government, the right to participate in the cultural life of your community, and finally, no arrest, detention, or exile to occur without fair and public hearing by an impartial tribunal. Better precautions need to be taken to prevent states from violating these terms so easily and with little to no repercussions.

Summary of key findings

An average of twenty-nine to thirty Shia Muslims were killed, arrested, or wounded, in each country of investigation, on a daily basis.

Shia Muslims have reported to feeling insecure in a total of twenty-seven countries in which they reside, which is eleven percent of the world's 196 countries.

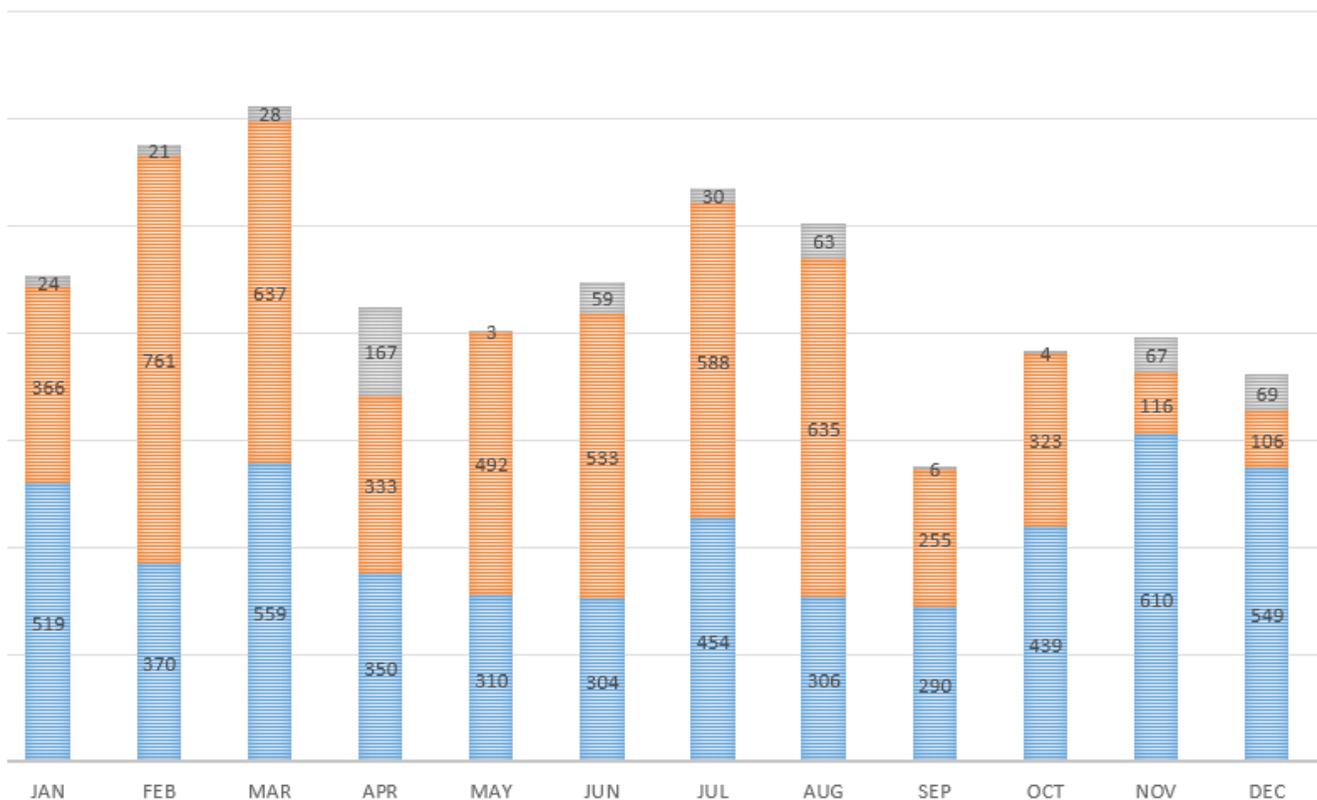
There is clear evidence of serious casualties of Shia Muslims in fifteen of those twenty-seven countries. This means that in sixty-three to sixty-four percent of those countries, Shia Muslims face either killings, injuries, or arrest. Please note this number does not include other types of human rights violations such as right to education or employment.

2015 saw Shia Muslims targeted in fifteen different countries.

Iraq had the most killings and Iran had the least.

Shia Muslims are reported to be unsafe in half of all Islamic countries.

■ Killed ■ Wounded ■ Arrested/Kidnapped



Chapter 1

In order to fully understand this report, researchers invite readers to carefully read this chapter. This part of the research aims to help readers understand the context of Shia and Shia rights violations during 2015.

Tactics of Violations

When it comes to killings (or violations to the right of life in Shia communities), bombing is the most frequent method used, with a majority of victims being killed via bomb explosions. The bombs used to target Shia Muslims have been a mix of bombs installed into parked cars and suicide bombers that set their bombs off in large crowds such as marketplaces. In both methods, high amounts of people are wounded and killed. Most of these bombings usually take place in crowded Shia populated areas. Many times explosions come in a combination of both methods. For example, often violators explode a parked car at a busy market, and when people gather after the explosion, a suicide bomber detonates his vest. This method has resulted in death of many that come in aid, including medical teams.

Individual assassinations or terror activities are also common. In Pakistan, for instance, most killings are done by masked individuals who attack Shia professionals or businessmen at their work or during their commute time. Therefore, it is almost never safe for Shia Muslims, whether they are by themselves or in a crowd, which shows how dire of a problem this has become.

Governments' Role in Violations

Governments are not always directly involved in violations that results in casualties. In countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Lebanon, and Iraq, the local governments do not directly attack or kill Shia, however the governments fail to provide enough security for this population, essentially allowing for such attacks to happen. Therefore, the governments are indirectly involved with Shia Human Rights violations.

In other countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Azerbaijan, Nigeria and Yemen, the government does directly attack

Shia communities through arrests and murder. Although such treatment counters the government's own constitution as well as the International Bill of Human Rights, these nations have faced no consequence for their actions. This is likely due to the fact that key definitions such as "terrorist", "terrorism", and "national security" have been changed in order to fit the government's own needs, as was explained previously.

What is Not Covered in this Report?

Violations toward the Shia population are widespread, but due to nature of the violations, many of them are not included in this report as this report is only to cover casualties and arrests. Violations such as limiting visibility, banning publications, expelling Shia from the country, pressure to Shia activists, and limiting Shia from accessing higher education and better employment, have been reported. Below are some examples:

The United Arab Emirates (UAE)

In March 2015, the UAE expelled seventy Lebanese Shia from the country without any explanations. The only accusation was a possible link to Hezbollah, but the matter was never investigated nor proved.

Indonesia

In continuum of previous years, Indonesian Shia Muslims have faced numerous hate incidents in their country. Anti-Shia banners appeared in several parts of the country —mostly on the streets of Yogyakarta in early February, as insecurity in the area has increased. Those banners contain hate speech messages such as "Syiah Bukan Islam" (Shia is not Islam), and "Shia Kafir" (Shia infidels). This goes with the message ISIS has been spreading about Shia not being true Muslims.

In another incident, a number of Shia Muslims who were detained by the government were asked to forsake their Shia faith. Shiism is a growing faith in South Asia and anti-Shia responses are increasing as a reaction. This may be due to the fact that people from other Muslim sects, such as Sunni, see

Shia Islam as a threat due to its rapid increase in popularity.

In 2011 and 2012, various mobs attacked Shia communities in Nangkernang and Sampang, burning down their homes. As a result, many Shia Muslims were forced to leave their residence and take shelter in sports facilities. Many of them were told they have to “convert to Islam” before they will be allowed to return to their homes and reconstruct as needed. As of now, those displaced Shia families are still unable to go back to their homes.

Morocco

There are reports that anti-Shia groups in Morocco have reacted to the small Shia groups such as that of the northern city of Tangier. The claim is that Shia presence will lead to instability of the region. Although no threatening activities have ever been reported from the Shia population, anti-Shia groups spread lies and propaganda, frightening the general population about the Shia presence.

India

The municipal government of Lucknow has denied Shia the right to put up billboards on a stretch of road between two Islamic centers where they had traditionally been placed during Muharram. Shia attendees believe this act was done purposely to limit the Shia visibility in their city.

Somalia

Back in early January, ‘Mungaab’ the mayor of Mogadishu and the Governor of the Banadir region vowed to take action against the expansion of the Shia ideology. Mungaab stated, “Somalia is a Sunni Nation and doesn’t need a false Shia ideology... I will not allow Shia ideology to spread and will fight it at every cost.” Fears of bloodshed, as is the case in Nigeria, is a possibility in this nation, as non-Shia scholars and authorities are increasing expression of discrimination and sectarian beliefs in their statements and education.

UK

During Ramadan in 2015, sectarian forces vandalized a Shia mosque in Bradford, UK with the words “Shia Kafir,” meaning Shia infidel. The Shia community reported the incident to officials and worked alongside them with aims to capture the criminal and bring justice to the targeted Shia population. Despite criminal attempts to marginalize this group, Shia Muslims have met the community with open arms in expression of solidarity and peace.

Anti-Shia Trends in 2015 by Month

JANUARY

Killed 519
Wounded 366
Arrests 024

FEBRUARY

Killed 370
Wounded 761
Arrests 021

MARCH

Killed 559
Wounded 637
Arrests 028

APRIL

Killed 350
Wounded 333
Arrests 167

MAY

Killed 310
Wounded 492
Arrests 003

JUNE

Killed 304
Wounded 533
Arrests 059

JULY

Killed 545
Wounded 588
Arrests 030

AUGUST

Killed 306
Wounded 635
Arrests 063

SEPTEMBER

Killed 290
Wounded 255
Arrests ---

OCTOBER

Killed 439
Wounded 232
Arrests 004

NOVEMBER

Killed 610
Wounded 116
Arrests 067

DECEMBER

Killed 549
Wounded 106
Arrests 069

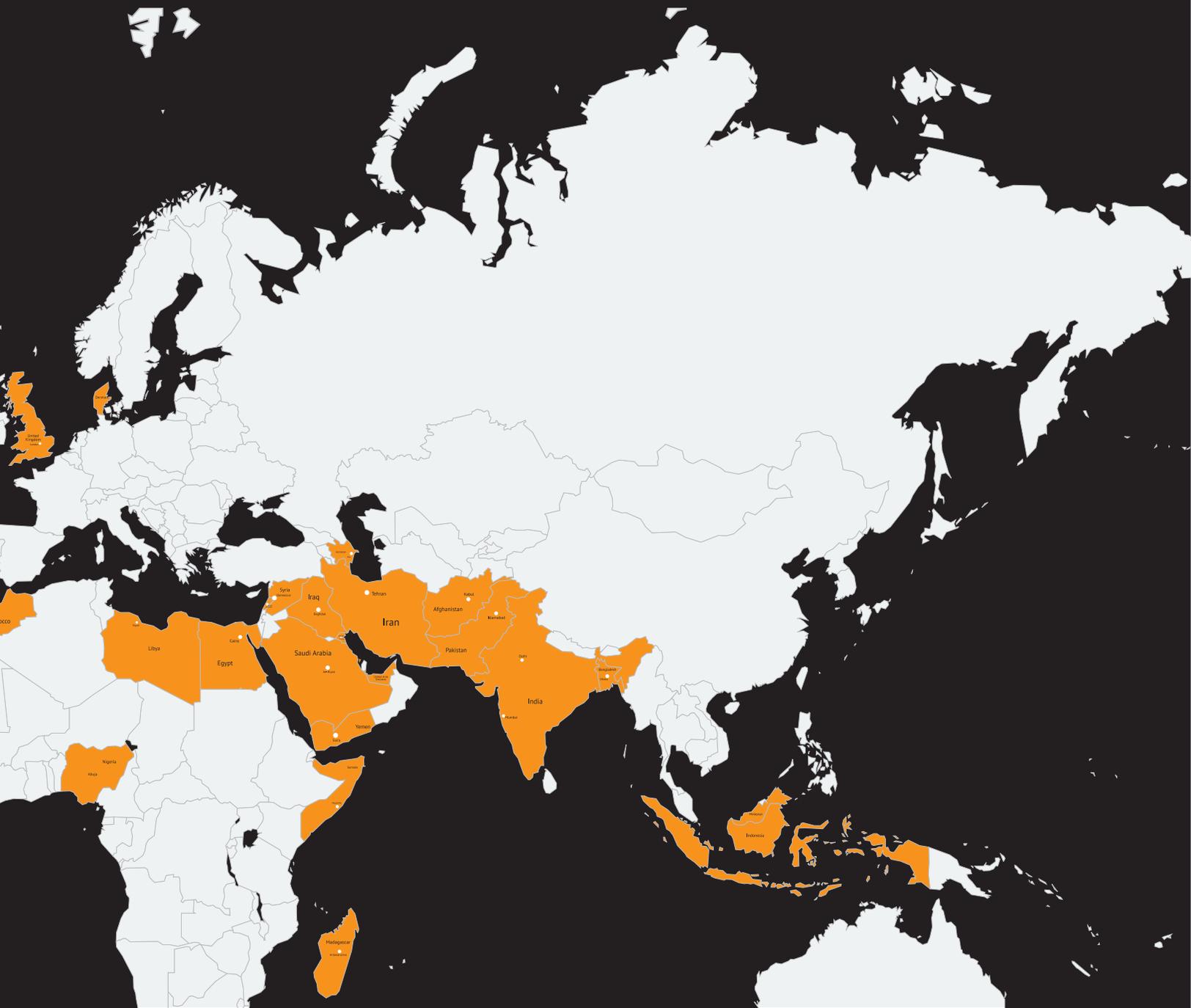
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Shia Muslims were killed



Represent
100 Shia Muslim





SHIA MUSLIMS FEEL INSECURE

Based on SRW research, Shia Muslims feel unsafe in at least twenty-four countries in the world, including half of all Islamic countries. While casualties have not been reported in every single country, hateful messages, governmental and cultural restriction, and other anti-Shia practices have led to increased insecurity of many Shia Muslims to publicize Shia identity and to practice Shia rituals. Due to past victimizations and a history of rights violations, Shia Muslims anticipate harm and insecurity in many countries of the world. The following are countries in which Shia confirmed feeling insecure on a daily basis.

- Afghanistan
- Azerbaijan
- Bahrain
- Bangladesh
- Denmark
- Egypt
- India
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Iraq
- Kuwait
- Lebanon
- Libya
- Madagascar
- Malaysia
- Morocco
- Nigeria
- Pakistan
- Saudi Arabia
- Somalia
- Syria
- UAE
- UK
- Yemen

Chapter 2

Countries Detailed Analysis

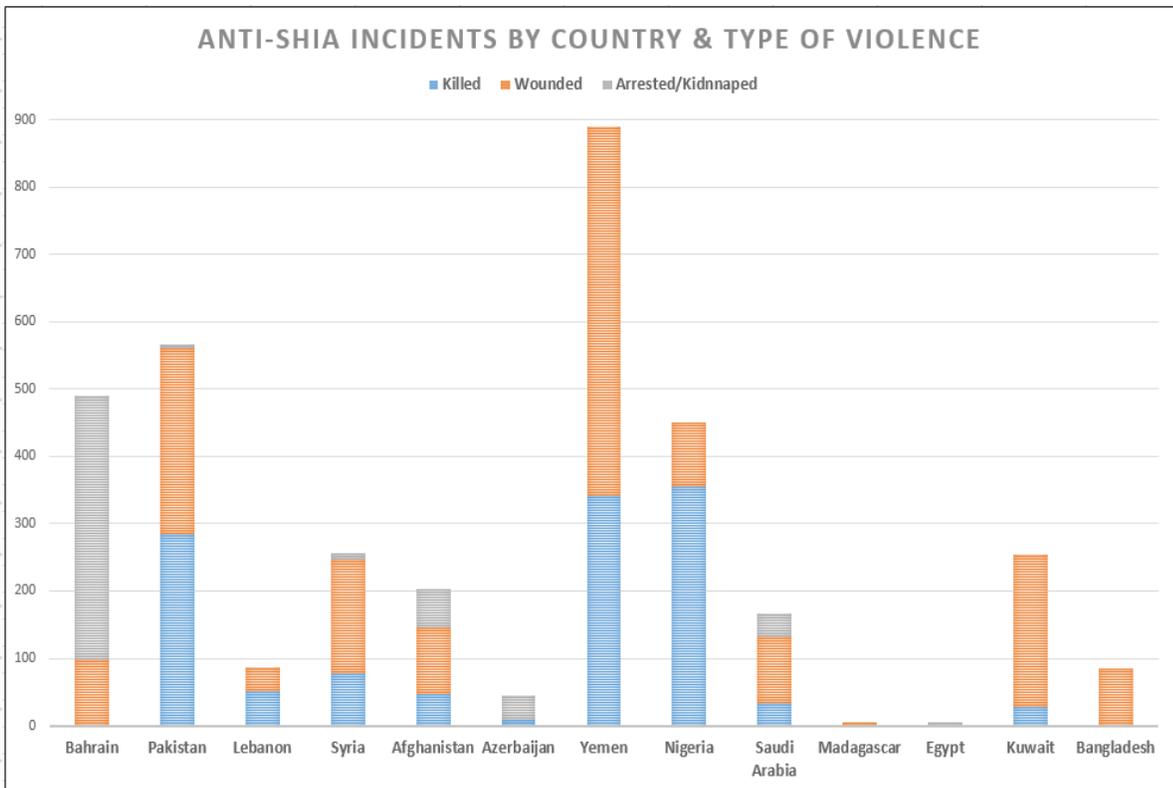
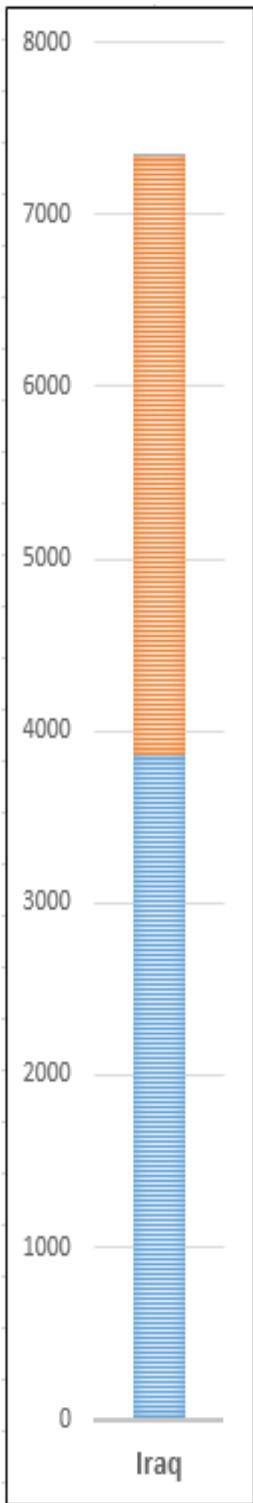
This chapter of the annual report summarizes key findings of the casualties and unlawful arrests of Shia Muslims in fifteen countries of the world.

Fourteen of the fifteen countries detailed here are Muslim ruled.

In most of those countries Shia are minorities, but in four, Shia make up the majority of the population.

In the countries that have the most Shia human rights violations such as murder and arrests, twenty-six percent of them have Shia majority populations.

This shows that Shia Muslims lack a clear safe-space where they can practice their religion in peace from either government or terrorist organizations.

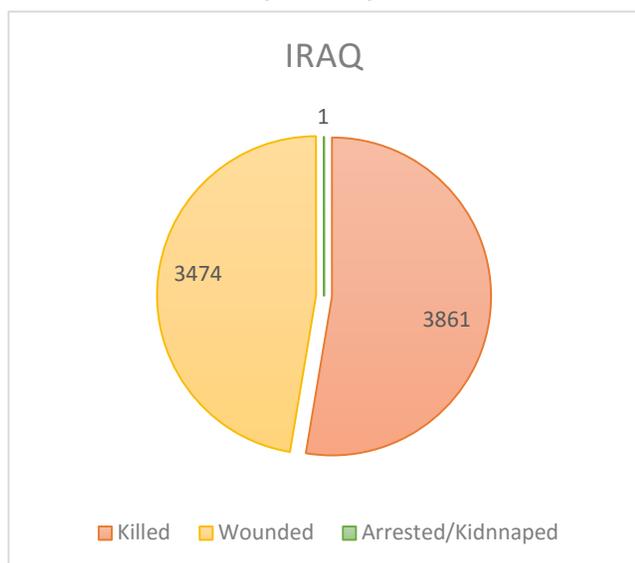


IRAQ

Following past trends, Iraq was once again ranked number one in terms of highest amount of Shia killed, arrested, or maimed. The violence against Shia Muslims in Iraq continues to be a direct result of the actions of non-state actors persecuting Shia for their beliefs. The deaths of most Shia in Iraq resulted from bombings and gunfire, whereas the injuries occurred mostly from bombings. There were at least 3861 deaths and 3474 injuries in Iraq this year as a direct product of anti-Shiism ideology. February, July, and August contained the highest number of casualties.

Discoveries of mass graves were also reported during 2015. Most of these graves belong to Shia Muslims and are located in Shia populated cities.

Iraq is a country of significance to the Shia faith as it is home to number of Shia shrines. As a result, millions of Shia Muslims visit this country annually. During off season visits, Shia groups have been targeted and killed. However based on analyses, the amount of attacks decrease during Shia seasonal pilgrimages such as the month of Muharram (coincided with November 2015) when Shia commemorate the death of their third Imam and the event Arbæen (coincided with December 2015). Iraq becomes the destination for more than thirty million Shia Muslims. During such high traffic seasons, security



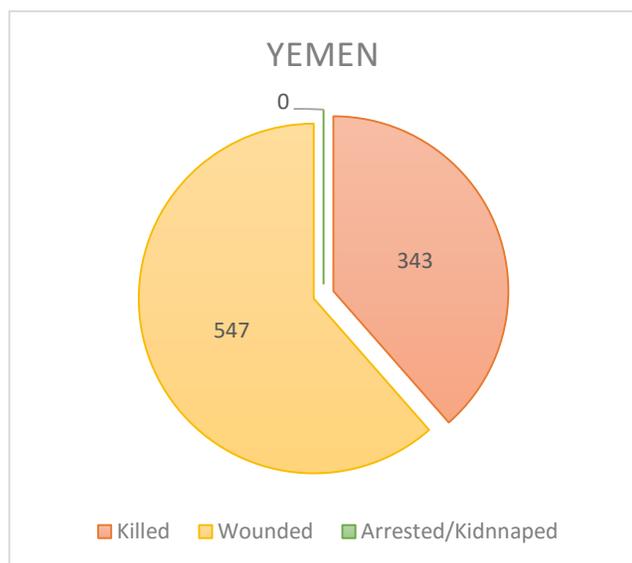
increases dramatically, resulting in an extreme decrease in the number of casualties. Such negative correlation between high security and low causality is a promising finding that proves the government can protect more areas if the security of people becomes a priority. Shia militias, such as Hashd al-Shaabi have added to the security of the area by training and unifying citizens to defend their own properties and spread the sense of responsibility among citizens. If Iraq makes security of all people a priority, Shia death rates will likely go down as seen by data collected during popular pilgrimage times.

YEMEN

After a failed Gulf Cooperation Council brokered democratic transition, Yemen sought to break from its violent past and establish a government that adhered to the demands of its people. Power struggles between Houthis and the Yemeni official government, along with the support of Saudi military, has led to the deaths of thousands of civilians, as well as the destruction of schools, homes, and businesses. Although many categorized Houthis as Shia, it is worthy to note that the Shia community does not consider the Houthis to be their representatives. This militant group is acting based on their own political agenda and not as a Shia group. In the past year alone, the UN has announced the death of over 3,000 civilians and a displacement of over half of the country's population. SRW sources have confirmed the death of 343 Shia civilians, and the wounding of 547 others.

The ongoing lack of government authority and stability has led to an increase in extremist activity in the nation, including that of al-Qaeda affiliates and ISIS. Such expansion has encouraged the targeting of minority groups such as the Zaidis and Shia twelvers. Moreover, the unrelenting bombing of Saudi forces and coalitions has left the nation in ruins; civilian infrastructure in particular. Although Houthi forces have denounced the role of religion in their uprising, international authorities have intermixed the two groups, making gathering data of non-militants killed and injured, even harder for humanitarian organizations such as SRW. It is worth a mention that the international community's lack of humanitarian perspective in relation to Yemen has led to the lack of pub-

lication in the area of effective demographical statistics. By categorizing the two groups as one and the same, not much can be done to help peaceful Shia civilians living in Yemen. Already the poorest country in the region, Yemen will continue its depletion in resources and further reduce sanitation and health measures.

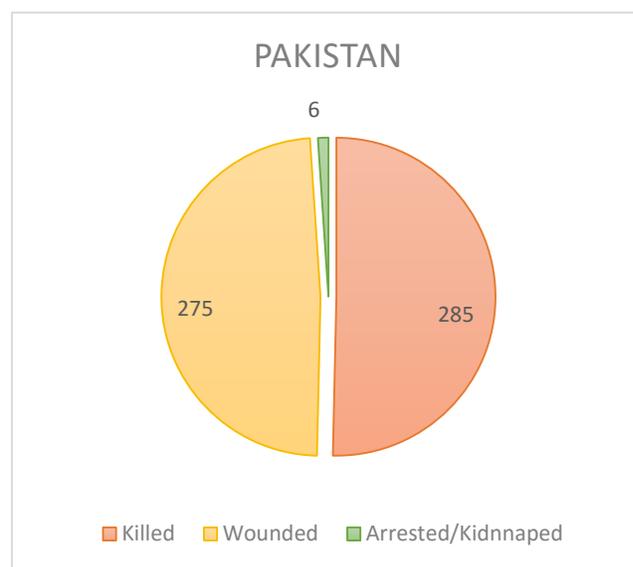


PAKISTAN

In 2015, Pakistan ranked third in the number of anti-Shia incidents with a total of 285 killed, 275 wounded, and six kidnapped.

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is a democratic parliamentary federal republic that recognizes Islam as its official faith. Despite the self-proclaimed Islamic ideology of this nation, Muslim populations have been under extreme pressure. Systematic targeting of this population by terror organizations, such as LeJ, have killed dozens of innocent civilians, and the government is yet to effectively prosecute and reduce hatred towards minority populations. For years, Shia intellectuals and socialites have been targeted and killed solely based on their religious identity, with little being done to bring justice to those who have been wrongly killed. January, May, and October were the months with the highest number of anti-Shia incidents. Bombings have been a favored method of targeting. The Pakistani Shia remain the main target of such incidents. Although the police and government condemn such heinous

attacks, there have been minimal results to their investigations, which shows that they are not fully committed to the protection of the Shia population. In some cases, the government has instigated anti-Shia sentiments. In March, the government of Punjab arrested Shia leader Allama Ghulam Raza Naqvi along with five of his guards. There have been numerous reports of shootings targeted at Shia mosques and businesses. Very few were arrested following the shootings, and there have not been any credible reports on how the arrestees were charged and sentenced. This shows that Shia security is not one of the Pakistani government's main areas of focus. SRW's analysis on Pakistan shows that in 2015, as with previous years, there was a positive trend of anti-Shia incidents, as approximately every three to four months there was a major suicide bombing attack.



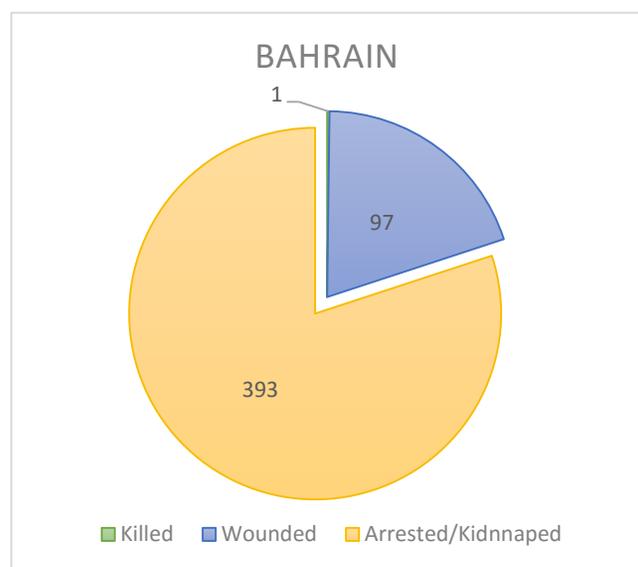
BAHRAIN

The Shia populated-Sunni lead archipelago of Bahrain has brought forth an extensive number of human rights violations that have specifically worked to limit the freedom of speech, religion, and gathering of the majority Shia population. In addition to unjust prosecution and imprisonment, Bahrain has one of the largest number of revoked citizenships of the area, leading to the displacement of dozens of Bahraini families. Further, Bahrain has continued its inhumane detainment of

underage activists, forcing many to forsake school. In the case of Bahrain, the arrest of minors has led to a lack of education which further threatens the future of the country in the larger picture. Bahraini kingdom is not only violating Shia rights to education, but by doing this, is also risking their future right to employment, assembly, and political participation as adults in the near future.

Bahrain has the highest number of Bahraini Shia arrests compared to other countries with Shia rights violations. Although this country promised to investigate the violations, arbitrary arrests have not declined since the Arab Spring of 2011. Beside arrests, there are confirmed reports that officials use torture on Shia detainees. Since violations are done directly by the state, it is almost impossible to hold officials accountable for torture and other serious rights violations.

There has been 393 cases of Shia arrests, ninety-seven woundings, and one killed during the year 2015.



Nigeria

Between the incompetency of the government and the radical nature of the Boko Haram, conditions in Nigeria are less than favorable. In the past year, hundreds of women and young girls were abducted, civilians were killed, and homes were destroyed. The corruption of the government and its deep rooted discriminatory standards have left the lives of thousands

of residents in danger. Minority leaders, especially those who openly criticize the government are arrested, detained and tortured, along with their supporters. Human rights abuses continue post-mortem, as the rights to burial are not regarded and many of those killed are buried in mass graves. Nigeria is home to one of the largest growing Shia populations in Africa. It is important to mention that the main religions practiced in this nation are Christianity and Islam, a majority of which are non-Shia. In late 2015, Shia growth under the leadership of Sheikh Ibraheem Zakzaky became a target for attack. In a religious procession post-Arbaeen, hundreds, if not a thousand, of Shia along with well-known leader, Zakzaky, were injured, and then abducted. The whereabouts of Zakzaky remain unknown. Later, a mass grave containing bodies of victims was announced by the Nigerian government. Access to the grave is yet to be granted to families. Shia groups report hundreds of their members remain missing since the attack. The government accused Zakzaky of intention to assassinate the General. SRW believes even with that accusation, Nigerian authorities cannot justify their brutal killing and attack to the Shia community. SRW confirms the deaths of 355 Shia Muslims due to recent attack. It is important to note that the local Shia population believes the number of deaths to be much higher than reported.

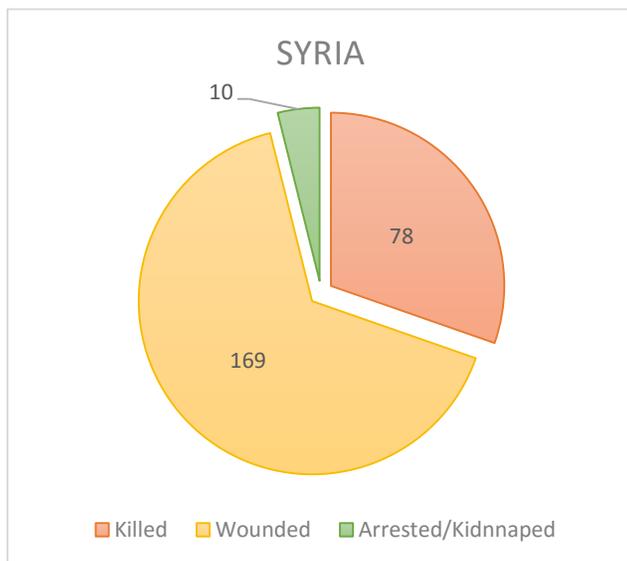
The case of Shia Muslims in Nigeria is in progress, but if authorities cannot control hateful propaganda encouraging the marginalization of Shia Muslims, in addition to other minority groups in the nation, the death toll will continue to rise.

Syria

Syria is known to have the most humanitarian crises in the world today as half the country's pre-war population — more than eleven million people — have been killed or forced to flee their homes. Ongoing war in the Syrian Arab Republic has left the nation in ruins. By August 2015, over 250,000 people were killed, almost twice the amount compared with previous years, depicting an image of a growing conflict in the region. Instability as a result of internal conflict has allowed for penetration of extremist organizations such as ISIS and al-Nusra front to infiltrate the region and even expand further into neighboring nations, (ie. Iraq). Despite attempts to reduce conflict, external involvement in the Civil War has

multiplied the number of civilian injuries and deaths. Unfortunately, aid to civilians in need has been reduced by international organizations such as the UN, leaving hundreds, if not thousands, starving and displaced. According to the UN, it will take \$7.7 billion to meet the urgent needs of the most vulnerable Syrians in 2016. However, the current lack of humanitarian support does not leave room for optimism.

Syrian Shia not only share sorrows of war with the rest of Syrians, but they have been victims of targeted attacks. Anti-Shia groups have repeatedly attacked the Shia Shrine in Zainabia, as well as the cities of Nabal and al-Zahra, killing tens of Shia Muslim civilians. ISIS has attacked many Shia communities, beheading leaders as well as civilians.



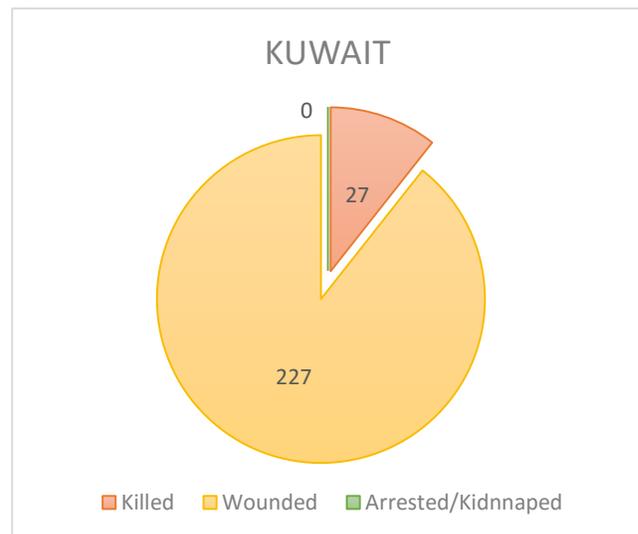
Abducted Syrian civilians, including women and children, have also been reported from the Syrian towns of Al-Zahra (Al-Zahraa) and Nabal (Nubbol). Many NGOs ceased covering and recording human rights violations in Syria due to the violence escalation in the area. SRW confirmed Shia deaths of seventy-eight civilians, the wounding of 169, and kidnapping of ten, in Syria. This NGO is certain that Shia casualties are much higher, but more resources are needed to confirm all of such cases.

Kuwait

In 2015, Kuwait ranked seventh in the number of anti-Shia incidents.

The Kingdom of Kuwait is a nation populated by thirty to forty percent Shia Muslims, with the estimated rest being of Sunni Muslim faith. Despite being a nation with a bit more tolerance to the minority faith compared to its neighboring nations, the past year Kuwait has been subjected to multiple bombing of Shia populated mosques and commemoration halls during the holy months of Ramadan and Moharram.

The June suicide bombing in a Shia mosque has created a large amount of casualties and deaths. In this attack, twenty-seven were killed and 227 were wounded. ISIS claimed responsibility for this attack.

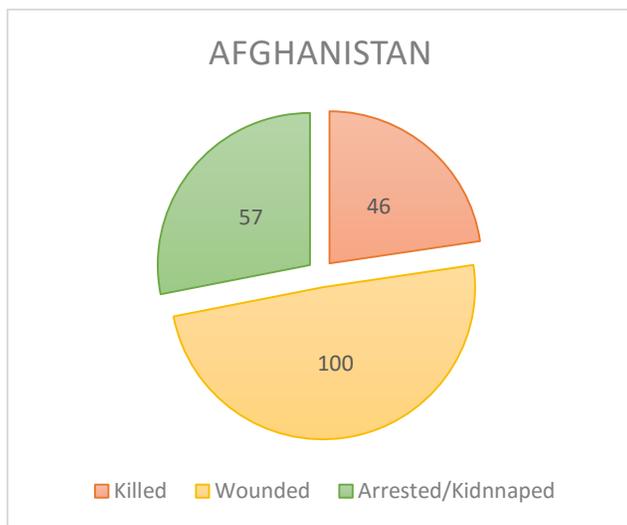


Afghanistan

Today, Afghanistan faces an increase in human rights violation. Insurgent forces are using the instability of constant political transition as well as withdrawal of combat troops to elicit attacks on targeted groups, all across the nation. In the past year, the nation witnessed a high number of abductions and killings based on racial and ethnic background. The government has lacked any attention or an increase in security for the targeted groups.

In 2015, Afghanistan ranked eighth in the number of anti-Shia incidents. Approximately forty-six Shia civilians were killed, 100 were wounded, and fifty-seven were kidnaped. Shia killings resulted mainly from shootings, beheadings, and

stabbings. The most worrisome events in Afghanistan were the cases of kidnapping and abduction. With a weak central government, kidnapping has become a routine. The Hazara community of Afghanistan continues to be the main target of such incidents. In one case, twenty Hazara Shia were kidnapped. The residents of Kabul, in a protest, announced their solidarity with the Hazara community, and demanded more security for religious minorities in Afghanistan. Our analysis shows an increasing dangerous trend of abductions and kidnappings in Afghanistan for 2015.



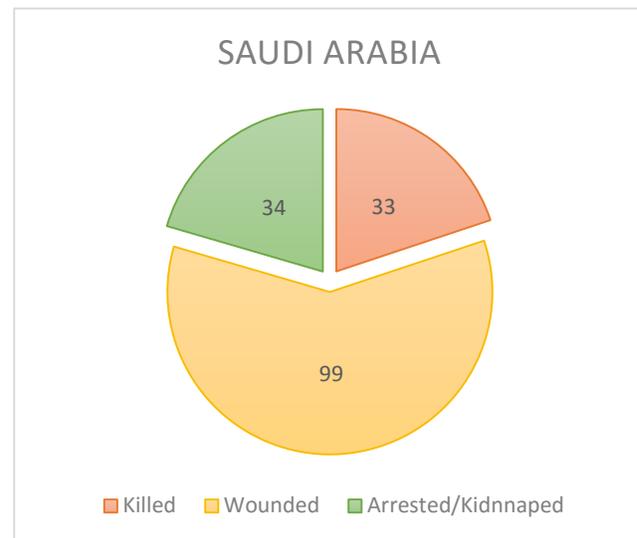
Saudi Arabia

The year 2015 has brought special attention to the second largest Arab nation in the world. Despite obvious and long standing human rights violations in Saudi Arabia, Faisal bin Hassan Trad, the Saudi ambassador to UN, was elected as a chair for the panel of independent experts on the UN Human Rights Council. However, despite this, targeting of the Shia minority has only increased in the past year. For decades, the Wahhabi education has induced an unjust hatred towards the Shia population of the country and the world. They are discriminated against in regards to education, the workforce, and even government representation. Those who have risen in dissent to the unjust monarchy have been tortured, persecuted and executed.

In 2015, Saudi Arabia ranked ninth in the number of anti-Shia incidents as thirty-three Shia were killed, ninety-nine were wounded and thirty-four were arrested. May was the deadliest month for the Shia population of Saudi Arabia, with

two separate suicide bombing attacks on Shia mosques occurring in this month alone. It must be mentioned that there is no proof whether punishments were actually carried out for the bombings' suspects. Saudi Arabia, who claims to be the guardian of the shrines, annually published hundreds if not thousands of educational booklets denouncing Shia Muslims and eliciting sectarian mentalities all over the world. Funding of hate-filled propaganda fueled by the Wahhabi ideology has encouraged and instigated the marginalization and killing of Shia Muslims, as well as non-Muslim groups. This propaganda makes anti-Shia ideology very hard to combat as it is a huge part of the Saudi education system.

Illegal arrest is another incident frequent in the monarchy. In 2015, Shia Rights Watch received numerous reports on house raids in the Eastern region of the country where the majority of Saudi Shia live. There was no evidence of a fair and just trial for the ones arrested.

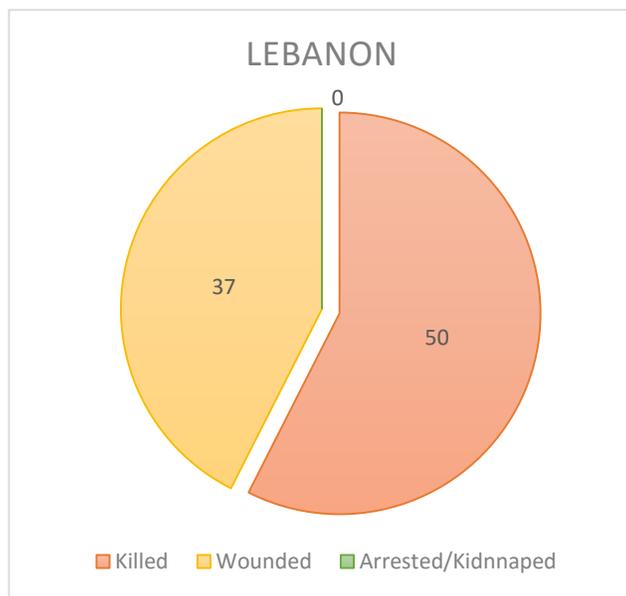


Although this country ranked 9th based on number of Shia casualties, it must be mentioned that Saudi Arabia has been known to human rights advocates as the mother of Wahhabism, the root of most anti-Shia violations. Saudi contributor, Saudi Wahhabi beliefs and Saudi clerics have always fueled anti-Shia activities, hatred messages and even casualties by their money and religious ceremonies, especially in Islamic nations. In most Islamic nations clerics are employees of Saudi Arabia, therefore clerics of most mosques of the world that are built with the support of Saudi Arabia spread this country's message of Wahhabism. This means that despite being ninth of the list, Saudi Arabia's ideology of Wahhabism has been the root cause for many of the world's anti-Shia cases.

Lebanon

As a ripple of the Syrian War, chaos has spilled over in the Lebanese Republic. ISIS benefits directly from the instability in the region and the huge influx of immigrants. Lebanon itself is a parliamentary democracy by which religion and politics work hand in hand with hopes of deterring cross-religious strife. The major religions in this nation are known to be Christianity and Islam. While the nation consists of Shia and Sunni Muslims alike, leadership under Hezbollah plays an influential role in the power dynamic of the nation.

In 2015, Lebanon ranked tenth in the number of anti-Shia incidents as fifty Shia were killed and thirty-seven were wounded. November was the deadliest month for the Shia in Lebanon as Beirut witnessed one of its most devastating bombings in many years. A suicide bombing attack which injured over 200 people, was targeted at the southern part of Beirut, home to a majority Shia population. ISIS claimed responsibility for this horrendous attack.



Bangladesh

Being one of the world's most densely populated nations, the People's Republic of Bangladesh is home to Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Christians alike. In lieu of regional instability, the nation of Bangladesh has displayed infiltration of a hateful mentality which systematically targets minority groups. Extremist organizations have targeted areas highly populated with Shia Muslims, and unfortunately the authorities have displayed a lack of ability when it comes to finding those responsible and enforcing justice.

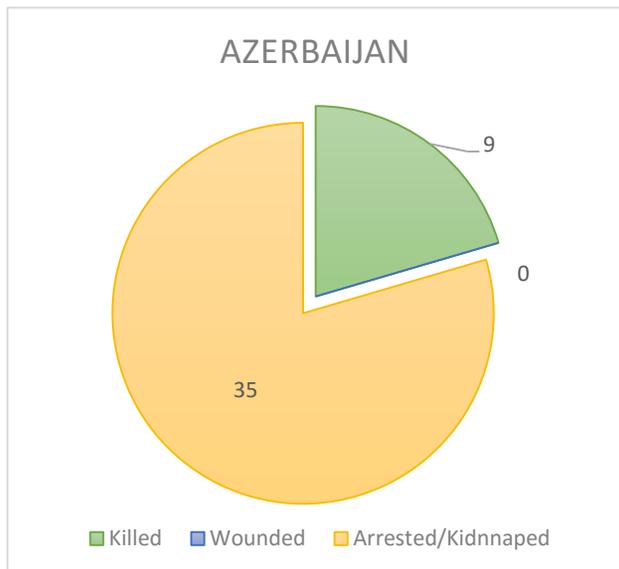
In 2015, Bangladesh ranked eleventh in the number of anti-Shia incidents as two Shia were killed and eighty-three were wounded. October of 2015 saw the highest number of Shia wounded. This country has not traditionally been anti-Shia, but recent attacks in Bangladesh and the presence of an ISIS branch makes it a high risk country for the Shia minority. In October, as 20,000 Shia Muslims gathered around the old town area of Dhaka, three bombs detonated killing one person and injuring eighty more. The government of Bangladesh strongly condemned these attacks and promised to arrest and illuminate ISIS in Bangladesh. This country did not previously have a trend of anti-Shia sentiments, but is now on the Shia Rights Watch's radar.



Azerbaijan

Despite the secular environment of the nation, the Republic of Azerbaijan has displayed a lack of tolerance for any criticism or freedom of speech. Dozens of activists in the area of human rights, politics, journalists, bloggers, and even participants in religious events have been arrested and detained. The area of Nadaran, Baku has been under special pressure as it has been blockaded off from the rest of the city and has been deprived of electricity and power. If the current human rights violations are not brought to justice and the human rights abuses are not halted, the condition of the nation's future has no security.

In 2015, Azerbaijan ranked twelfth in the number of anti-Shia incidents as nine Shia were killed and thirty-five were arrested. November and December of 2015 were the months with the highest anti-Shia reports. The population of Azerbaijan is eighty-five percent Shia, and although the country is secular and relatively safe, the government does not tolerate any kind of religious activity that expresses any level of criticism towards the government. In November, the police killed four people during a daytime raid at the north part of the capital, Baku. Several outspoken members of the community were arrested, as well. Since then, there have been ongoing cycles of assault against the Shia of Azerbaijan.



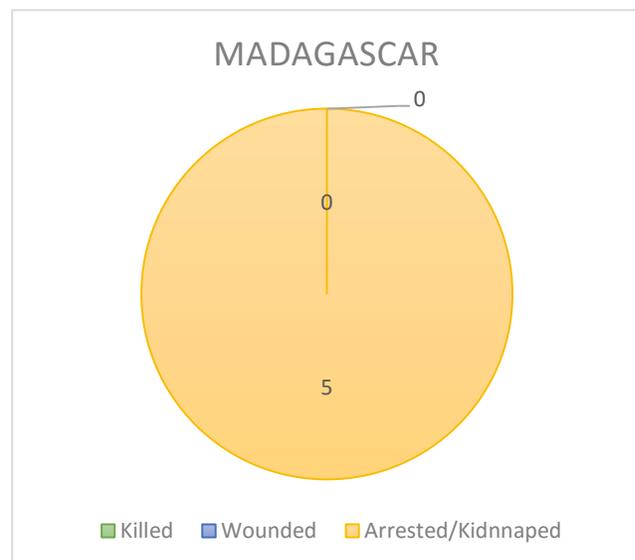
Azerbaijan's Interior Minister, Ramil Usubov, said that the Shia population have been targeted in the eastern village of Nardaran for allegedly plotting a coup against the government. He mentioned that five Shia were killed and thirty-two

were arrested. Azerbaijan's parliament has been debating a law to ban the display of flags honoring the martyred Shia Imam Hussein on streets and also prohibiting those Azerbaijanis who have received religious education abroad from performing religious ceremonies. The incidents in Azerbaijan are extremely concerning for Shia Rights Watch, since the government does not allow any independent human rights organizations to operate and investigate. We believe that the Shia of Azerbaijan will face more human rights abuses in time, since this country has been under the radar and does not receive any coverage regarding its human rights abuses. The trend of 2015 shows that unfortunately, there will be an increase in anti-Shia incidents in 2016.

Madagascar

Madagascar is a semi-presidential representative democratic multiparty republic on the coast of Southeast Africa. The twenty-two million person population of this nation can be divided into eighteen sub-ethnic groups, adding to its rich and vibrant diversity. Second to the traditional "razana" religion, Catholicism is a major religion in Madagascar.

In 2015, Madagascar ranked thirteenth in the number of anti-Shia incidents. In the city of Mahajanga, five Shia Muslims were arrested without explanation. Eyewitness reports have proclaimed the arrest of Shia mosque leadership. It must be mentioned that the Shia community in Madagascar is small, making them a minority population in this nation.



Egypt

Despite international efforts, a portrait of deteriorating human rights has replaced the rich history of the Egyptian Republic in both textbooks and newspapers. Basic rights of citizens in this nation have been revoked in attempts to consolidate the lack of authoritative means to meet public needs. Furthermore, not only are human rights activists and critics being arrested and detained, but an ongoing education promoting hatred towards minority groups is maintained and enforced by government and majority organizations. The Shia minority, especially, has been under extreme pressure to conform to the mass religion and has also had to deal with being renounced in faith and publicly discriminated against.

In 2015, Egypt ranked fourteenth in the number of anti-Shia incidents as four Shia Muslims were arrested. These arrests happened in May and August of 2015. Although the Shia community in Egypt is immensely small, they have received lots of hatred and discrimination. For instance, a physician was sentenced to six months in prison for practicing Shiism. He was charged of blasphemy, attempting to cause sectarian strife, and threatening national security by attempting to spread Shia ideology.

Another source reported that two Egyptian were arrested at the Cairo airport just after their return from Iran. Although Shiism is officially recognized by the Al-Azhar in Egypt, any public exhibition of Shiism will have negative consequences.



Accusations of blasphemy for the Shia citizens of Egypt are extremely worrisome for the SRW. It must be mentioned that while the number of incidents of violation are apparently minimal, the Al-Azhar University has been the instigator of discriminatory propaganda against Shia minorities, which has encouraged the ostracizing of Shia Muslims in the global community. Since anti-Shia propaganda has been spreading to university students, it is likely that anti-Shia sentiment will continue to increase in the upcoming years.

Iran

Although Iran is a Shia populated country led by a Shia government, Shia Muslims are not permitted to independently practice their faith. Due to the high risk environment of Iran, activists cannot freely report incidents, which means that this report fails to provide in depth analyses of the violations in Iran. The following are only some examples that could be confirmed. The government has attacked Muharram commemorations in Isfahan and an Islamic center was closed in this city. Independent Shia TV stations were threatened in Qom and closed by local state authorities. Activists report that any independent Shia entities face restriction. Religious group that function under supervision of Shia Maraji' (Scholars) must both confirm with the government and report to it, or else limit their activities.

Employees of number of independent Shia TV stations such as Marjaeyat TV and ImamHussein TV were arrested and their properties were seized. Sheikh Nematullahi, the director of the Marjaeyat TV, was arrested without charges. Later, he was released on bonds, but as of now, he cannot leave the country to his home in Iraq where his wife and children are.

In another violation, on Friday October 16th, two were killed and two others were injured during a shooting at a Shia mosque in Iran. According to local authorities, two masked individuals shot and killed Muharram attendees at the mosque. The gunmen opened fire from a moving car as the worshippers were commemorating the martyrdom of the Shia third Imam.

The shooting took place in Deszul area of the Khuzestan Province. Although Iran is a Shia populated country, Deszul has a relatively mixed population of Shia and non-Shia.

INTERNATIONAL BILL OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION

All countries analyzed in this report are Member States of the United Nations, yet they have all clearly violated various articles under the International Bill of Human Rights (IBHR). Casualties and arrests reported in this report violate the following articles of the IBHR...

Article 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 6. Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7. All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 9. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10. Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 13 Section 1. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State.

Article 13 Section 2. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 15- Section 1. Everyone has the right to a nationality.

Article 15-Section 2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 19. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20 Section 1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

Article 20 Section 2. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21- Section 1. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

Article 21- Section 2. Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country.

Article 26-Section 1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

Article 27-Section 1. Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

Conclusion

Although efforts to identify human rights violators, increase security and promote increased peace education are improving each day, the number of casualties and human rights violations are increasing.

Misplaced economic and political priorities of governments directly and indirectly impact domestic and foreign dynamics.

Due to already existing intolerance toward minority groups, minority populations are the first groups to be affected by political and economic changes in most countries. They are treated as second-class citizens, and are further scapegoated as a response toward national grievances.

Whether it be a grievances response such as the lack of freedoms, limitation to economic resources, or lack of public acceptance toward marginalized groups, minority populations are often the first to be threatened in safety and future.

Protecting minorities requires the full will of all local, regional, national, and international actors.

Safety of civilian minorities has yet to become a primary focus of states, which has increased the risk of non-state perpetrator formations such as that of ISIS.

SRW believes authorities should be proactive in ensuring the security of minorities, as to prevent further radicalization of intolerant individuals in midst of social conflict. Formation of such groups does not only threaten the minorities, but will affect the security and stability of the countries and region as a whole.

Shia Muslims are the largest and fastest growing minority in the Middle East. They have proven to peacefully coexist with their compatriots. As any citizen, they are entitled to basic rights such as human dignity, education, employment, and expression. If their governments respected minority rights, terror groups such as ISIS and al Qaeda would not feel immune targeting and slaughtering these specific populations. Furthermore, such targeting can elicit protest from minority groups, further increasing social instability.

Life of all citizens must be valued equally; thus the high number of Shia being killed, arrested, and wounded must be investigated for as means of violence prevention by both govern-

ments and UN actors.

Final Word

The victims we spoke to were fearful to share their stories. Many of them prefer to live life under oppression than to risk being killed. Families who have witnessed the torture of their loved ones are thankful they did not lose them. One Shia of Saudi Arabia told a SRW representative while she had tears in her eyes “I do not talk about our Shia history, rituals, and beliefs with my children, the less they practice, the safer they are.” The fearful situation of Shia Muslims is affecting their existence and soon their rich contributions will be demolished if international committees do not act promptly to protect them.

SRW believes detailed analysis of minority civilian casualties based on their faith is important because it can improve the understanding of status of the minority rights in the world. In addition, data collected on the nature and effects of violence can guide the development of preventative policies. Finally, such report can be used by researchers, students, and human rights activists to back up their findings and furthermore uplift all oppressed populations.



Almost always, the creative dedicated minority has made
the world better.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

[/ShiaRightsWatch](#)

