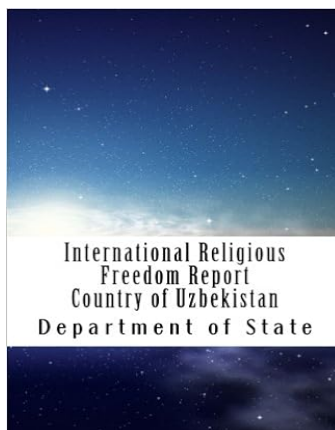


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Ausgabe **KINDLE**

Executive Summary Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance. Article 18, Universal Declaration of Human Rights To think, believe, or doubt. To speak or pray; to gather or stand apart. Such are the movements of the mind and heart, infinitives that take us beyond the finite. Freedom of religion, like all freedoms of thought and expression, are inherent. Our beliefs help define who we are and serve as a foundation for what we contribute to our societies. However, as the International Religious Freedom Reports document, too many people live under governments that abuse or restrict freedom of religion.

People awaken, work, suffer, celebrate, raise children, and mourn unable to follow the dictates of their faith or conscience. Yet, under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, governments have committed to respect freedom of religion. As President Barack Obama said, they ought to "bear witness and speak out" when violations of religious freedom occur. With these reports, we bear witness and speak out. We speak against authoritarian governments that repressed forms of expression, including religious freedom.

Governments restricted religious freedom in a variety of ways, including registration laws that favored state-sanctioned groups, blasphemy laws, and treatment of religious groups as security threats. The report focuses special attention on key trends such as the impact of political and demographic transitions on religious minorities, who tended to suffer the most in 2011; the effects of conflict on religious freedom; and the rising tide of anti-Semitism. Impacted groups, to name just a few, included Baha'is and Sufis in Iran; Christians in Egypt; Ahmadis in Indonesia and Pakistan; Muslims in a range of countries, including in Europe; Tibetan Buddhists, Christians, and Uighur Muslims in China; and Jews in many parts of the world.