

BLASPHEMY LAW COMPENDIUM



UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

USCIRF'S MISSION

*To advance international freedom of religion or belief, by
independently assessing and unflinchingly confronting threats
to this fundamental right.*

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ABOUT THE UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

WHO WE ARE

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) is an independent, bipartisan U.S. federal government commission created by the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA). USCIRF uses international standards to monitor violations of religious freedom or belief abroad and makes policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State, and Congress. USCIRF Commissioners are appointed by the President and Congressional leaders of both political parties. The Commission's work is supported by a professional, nonpartisan staff of regional subject matter experts. USCIRF is separate from the State Department, although the Department's Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom is a non-voting, ex officio Commissioner.

WHAT RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IS

Inherent in religious freedom is the right to believe or not believe as one's conscience leads, and to live out one's beliefs openly, peacefully, and without fear. Freedom of religion or belief is an expansive right that includes the freedoms of thought, conscience, expression, association, and assembly. While religious freedom is America's first freedom, it also is a core human right that international law and treaty recognize; a necessary component of U.S. foreign policy and America's commitment to defending democracy and freedom globally; and a vital element of national security, critical to ensuring a more peaceful, prosperous, and stable world.

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BLASPHEMY LAW COMPENDIUM

USCIRF defines blasphemy as “the act of insulting or showing contempt or lack of reverence for God or sacred things.” Blasphemy laws punish expressions or acts deemed blasphemous, defamatory of religion, or contemptuous of religion or religious symbols, figures, or feelings. Countries throughout the world continue to have and enforce criminal blasphemy laws, often justifying them as necessary to promote intergroup religious harmony. However, laws criminalizing blasphemy are inconsistent with Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which protect the right to freedom of religion or belief. Laws criminalizing blasphemy are also inconsistent with Article 19 of the UDHR and Article 19 of the ICCPR, which protect the right to freedom of opinion and expression. In addition, blasphemy laws promote official discrimination and intolerance against minorities and minority viewpoints and encourage individuals and non-state groups to seek retribution against alleged blasphemers.

This blasphemy law compendium compiles national laws criminalizing blasphemy worldwide and updates the compilation of blasphemy laws found in USCIRF’s 2020 report [*Violating Rights: Enforcing the World’s Blasphemy Laws*](#). As of September 2023, USCIRF has identified 95 countries with such laws. Penalties for committing blasphemy range from fines to capital punishment. USCIRF continues to call on the President, U.S. Department of State, and Congress to urge countries around the world to repeal all legislation criminalizing blasphemy. For additional USCIRF resources on blasphemy laws, please see our [webpage](#).

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BLASPHEMY LAWS WITH CRIMINAL SANCTIONS AS OF 2023

AFGHANISTAN

The religious framework of the state: Hanafi Jurisprudence¹

Although the Taliban “does not have in place a clear and cohesive legal framework, judicial system, or enforcement mechanisms,” the Taliban did state that Hanafi jurisprudence is the basis for Afghanistan’s legal framework.² According to Hanafi jurisprudence, blasphemy is a capital crime.³

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Mass Media Law⁴

Article 45:

Production, reproduction, print, and publishing of the following reports and material in mass media, and agencies mentioned in article (27) of this law are not permissible:

- (1) Works and materials [that] are contrary to the principles and provisions of the holy religion of Islam.
- (2) Works and materials [that] are offensive to other religions and sects.
- (3) Works and materials [that] are defamatory, insulting, and offensive to the real or legal persons.
- (4) Works and materials that are considered libelous/ defamatory to real and legal persons, and cause damage to their personality and credibility.
- (5) Works and materials that are contrary to the Constitution and are considered crime by the Penal Code.

ALGERIA

The religious framework of the state: Constitution⁵

Article 2: State Religion

Islam is the religion of the state.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code⁶

Article 144 bis 2:

Allows for up to 5 years’ imprisonment and a fine of 50,000 to 100,000 dinars for “insulting the prophet and any of the messengers of God, or denigrating the creed and precepts of Islam, whether by writing, drawing, declaration, or any other means.”⁷

ANDORRA

The religious framework of the state: Constitution⁸

Article 11(3): State Religion

The Constitution guarantees the Roman Catholic Church free and public exercise of its activities and the preservation of the relations of special cooperation with the state in accordance with the Andorran tradition.

The Constitution recognizes the full legal capacity of the bodies of the Roman Catholic Church which have legal status in accordance with their own rules.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Criminal Code⁹

Article 339:¹⁰

Anyone who, with intent to insult and in public, commits acts or utters statements [that] are seriously offensive for members of a religious, national, ethnic, union, or political group or people professing a particular belief or ideology shall be punished by a term of imprisonment.

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

The religious framework of the state: Constitution¹¹

Preamble:

WHEREAS the People of Antigua and Barbuda–

(1a) proclaim that they are a sovereign nation founded upon principles that acknowledge the supremacy of God, the dignity and worth of the human person, the entitlement of all persons to the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, the position of the family in a society of free men and women and free institutions.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Small Charges Act¹²

Part II Article 9:

Anyone who makes use of any abusive, blasphemous, indecent, insulting, profane, or threatening language–

- (a) in any public place; or
- (b) in any place to the annoyance of the public; or
- (c) tending to a breach of the peace;

shall be liable to a fine not exceeding 500 East Caribbean dollars or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one month.

AUSTRIA

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Criminal Code¹³

Section 188: Disparaging of religious precepts

Whoever publicly disparages or mocks a person or a thing, respectively, being an object of worship or a dogma, a legally permitted rite, or a legally permitted institution of a church or religious society located in Austria, in a manner capable of giving rise to justified annoyance, is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or to a fine.

BAHAMAS

The religious framework of the state: Constitution¹⁴

Preamble:

And whereas the people of this family of islands, recognizing that the preservation of their freedom will be guaranteed by a national commitment to self-discipline, industry, loyalty, unity and an abiding respect for Christian values and the rule of law;

Now know ye therefore:

We the inheritors of and successors to this family of islands, recognizing the supremacy of God and believing in the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, do hereby proclaim in solemn praise the establishment of a free and democratic sovereign nation found on spiritual values and in which no man, woman or child shall ever be slave or bondsman to anyone or their labor exploited or the lives frustrated by deprivation.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Criminal Code¹⁵

Section 321:

A publication of defamatory matter is privileged, on condition that it was published in good faith, in any of the following cases, namely —

- (1) if the matter published is in fact a fair report of anything said, done or shown in a civil or criminal inquiry or proceeding before any court or commission of inquiry: Provided that if the court or commissioners prohibit the publication of anything said or shown before it, on the ground that it is seditious, immoral or blasphemous, the publication thereof shall not be privileged.

Section 489:

Whoever publishes, sells, or offers for sale any blasphemous or obscene book, writing or representation, shall be liable to imprisonment for two years: Provided that no one shall be convicted under this section for publishing any opinion on religious subjects expressed in good faith and in decent language, or for attempting to establish by arguments used in good faith and conveyed in decent language any opinion on a religious subject.

BAHRAIN

The religious framework of the state: Constitution¹⁶

Article 2:

The religion of the state is Islam. The Islamic Shari'a is a principal source for legislation. The official language is Arabic.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code¹⁷

Article 309:

A punishment for a period not exceeding one year or a fine not exceeding 100 Bahraini dinar shall be inflicted upon any person who commits an offense by any methods of expression against one of the recognized religious sects or ridicules the rituals thereof.

Article 310:

The punishment provided for in the preceding Article shall be inflicted upon any person who commits in public an insult against a symbol or a person that is glorified or considered sacred to members of a particular sect; (or) upon any person who imitates in public a religious ritual or ceremony with the intention of ridiculing it.

BANGLADESH

The religious framework of the state: Constitution¹⁸

Article 2A: The state religion

The state religion of the Republic is Islam, but the State shall ensure equal status and equal right in the practice of the Hindu, Buddhist, Christian and other religions.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code¹⁹

Article 295: Injuring or Defiling Place of Worship, with Intent to Insult the Religion of Any Class

Whoever destroys, damages or defiles any place of worship, or any object held sacred by any class of persons with the intention of thereby insulting the religion of any class of persons or with the knowledge that any class of persons is likely to consider such destruction, damage or defilement as an insult to their religion, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to 2 years, or with a fine, or with both.

Article 295A: Deliberate and Malicious Acts Intended to Outrage Religious Feelings of Any Class by Insulting its Religion or Religious Beliefs

Whoever, with deliberate and malicious intention of outraging the religious feelings of any class of the citizens of Bangladesh, by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representations insults or attempts to insult the religion or the religious beliefs of that class, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to 2 years, or with fine, or with both.

Article 298: Uttering Words, etc., with Deliberate Intent to Wound Religious Feelings

Whoever, with the deliberate intention of wounding the religious feelings of any person, utters any word or makes any sound in the hearing of that person or makes any gesture in the sight of that person or places any object in the sight of that person, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to one year, or with a fine, or with both.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act²⁰ 57: Punishment for publishing fake, obscene or defaming information in electronic form

(1) If any person deliberately publishes or transmits or causes to be published or transmitted in the website or in electronic form any material which is fake and obscene or its effect is such as to tend to deprave and corrupt persons who are likely, having regard to all relevant circumstances, to read, see or hear the matter contained or embodied in it, or causes to deteriorate or creates possibility to deteriorate law and order, prejudice the image of the State or person or causes to hurt or may hurt religious belief or instigate against any person or organization, then this activity of his will be regarded as an offence.

(2) Whoever commits offence under sub-section (1) of this section he shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to ten years and with fine which may extend to Taka one crore.

Digital Security Act²¹

28: Publication, broadcast, etc. of information in website or in any electronic format that hurts the religious values or sentiment.

(1) If any person or group willingly or knowingly publishes or broadcasts or causes to publish or broadcast anything in website or any electronic format which hurts religious sentiment or values, with an intention to hurt or provoke the religious values or sentiments, then such act of the person shall be an offence.

(2) If any person commits an offence under sub-section (1), he shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 (five) years, or with fine not exceeding Taka 10 (ten) lac, or with both.

(3) If any person commits the offence referred to in sub-section (1) for the second time or repeatedly, he shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 (ten) years, or with fine not exceeding Taka 20 (twenty) lac, or with both.

BARBADOS

The religious framework of the state: Constitution²²

Preamble:

Now, therefore, the people of Barbados–

a. proclaim that they are a sovereign nation founded upon principles that acknowledge the supremacy of God, the dignity of the human person, their unshakable faith in fundamental human rights and freedoms, the position of the family in a society of free men and free institutions.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Defamation Act²³

Section 11:

(1) Subject to this section, the publication of any report or matter referred to in the First Schedule shall be protected by qualified privilege.

(2) In an action for defamation in respect of the publication of any report or matter referred to in Part II of the First Schedule, the provisions of this section shall not be a defence if it is proved that the defendant

(a) has been requested by the plaintiff to publish at the defendant's expense and in such manner as is adequate or reasonable in the circumstances a reasonable letter or statement by way of explanation or contradiction; and

(b) has refused or neglected to do so or has done so in a manner not adequate or not reasonable in the circumstances.

(3) Nothing in this section shall be construed as protecting the publication of

(a) any matter the publication of which is prohibited by law;

(b) any matter which is not of public concern and the publication of which is not for the public benefit; or

(c) any blasphemous or obscene matter.

Section 34:

(3) A court of summary jurisdiction shall, with the consent of the defendant, have power to hear and determine a prosecution for criminal libel and shall have power to impose on conviction a fine not exceeding \$2 000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months or both.

BOTSWANA

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code²⁴

Article 33: General punishment for offences

When in this Code no punishment is specially provided for any offence, it shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or with a fine, or with both.

Article 136: Insult to religion of any class

Any person who destroys, damages or defiles any place of worship or any object [that] is held sacred by any class of persons with the intention of thereby insulting the religion of any class of persons or with the knowledge that any class of persons is likely to consider such destruction, damage or defilement as an insult to their religion, is guilty of an offence.

Article 138: Trespassing on burial places

Every person who, with the intention of wounding the feelings of any person or of insulting the religion of any person or with the knowledge that the feelings of any person are likely to be wounded, or that the religion of any person is likely to be insulted thereby, commits any trespass in any place of worship or in any place of sepulture, or in any place set apart for the performance of funeral rites or as a depository for the remains of the dead, or offers any indignity to any human corpse, or causes disturbance to any persons assembled for the purpose of funeral ceremonies, is guilty of an offence.

Article 140: Writing or uttering words with intent to wound religious feelings

Any person who, with the deliberate intention of wounding the religious feelings of any other person, writes any word or any person who, with the like intention, utters any word or makes any sound in the hearing of any other person or makes any gesture or places any object in the sight of any other person, is guilty of an offence and is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year.

BRAZIL

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code²⁵

Article 208:

Publicly mock someone for reasons of belief or religious function, prevent or disrupt the ceremony or practice of religious worship, publicly vilify, act or object of worship:

Penalty – imprisonment of one month to one year or a fine.

Sole Paragraph – If there is use of violence, the penalty is increased by a third, without prejudice to the corresponding violence.

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

The religious framework of the state: Constitution²⁶

Article 3: Religion of Brunei Darussalam and religious observances

(1) The official religion of Brunei Darussalam shall be the Islamic religion: Provided that all other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony by the persons professing them.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Syariah Penal Code²⁷

110: Contempt of Nabi: “Contempt of the Prophet”

(1) Any Muslim who contempts or brings into contempt Nabi [Prophet] Muhammad Sallallahu ‘Alaihi Wa Sallam [Peace be upon him] or any Nabi Allah and it is proved either by ikrar [confession] of the accused, or by syahadah [profession of faith] of at least two syahid [witnesses] according to Hukum Syara’ [rulings of Shari’a] after the Court is satisfied having regard to the requirements of tazkiyah al syuhud [certification of witnesses], is guilty of the offense of irtidad [apostasy] and shall be liable on conviction to death as hadd [corporal punishment].

(2) Any Muslim who contempts or brings into contempt Nabi Muhammad Sallallahu ‘Alaihi Wa Sallam or any Nabi Allah and it is proved by evidence other than those provided under subsection (1) is guilty of the offense of irtidad and shall be liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 30 years and whipping not exceeding 40 strokes.

111: Deriding etc. verses of the Al-Qur’an, hadith or obligatory matters with ijma’

(1) Any Muslim who–

(a) derides, mocks, mimics, ridicules or insults any verse of the Al-Qur’an or hadith of Nabi Muhammad Sallallahu ‘Alaihi Wa Sallam;

(b) denies the hadith of Nabi Muhammad Sallallahu ‘Alaihi Wa Sallam as a source or authority (hujjiyyah) [authenticity] of the teachings of the religion of Islam; or

(c) denies obligatory matters with ijma’ [consensus], and it is proved either by ikrar of the accused, or by syahadah of at least two syahid according to Hukum Syara’ after the Court is satisfied having regard to the requirements of tazkiyah al syuhud, is guilty of the offense of irtidad and shall be liable on conviction to death as hadd.

(2) Any Muslim who–

(a) derides, mocks, mimics, ridicules or insults any verse of the Al-Qur’an or hadith of Nabi Muhammad Sallallahu ‘Alaihi Wa Sallam;

(b) denies the hadith of Nabi Muhammad Sallallahu ‘Alaihi Wa Sallam as a source or authority (hujjiyyah) of the teachings of the religion of Islam; or

(c) denies obligatory matters with ijma’, and it is proved by evidence other than those provided under subsection (1) is guilty of the offense of irtidad and shall be liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 30 years and whipping not exceeding 40 strokes.

213: Publication contrary to Hukum Syara’

(1) Any person who–

(a) prints, publishes, imports, broadcasts or distributes for purposes of sale or otherwise or in any other manner; or

(b) has in his possession, any publication that gives or purports to give instruction on any matter relating to the teachings of Islam, containing any matter that is contrary to Hukum Syara’ is guilty of an offense and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding 8,000 Brunei dollars, imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years or both.

(2) The Court may order for any documents or thing, among others, used in the commission of or related to the offense referred to in subsection (1) to be forfeited and destroyed notwithstanding that no person may have been convicted for the offense.

214: Delivering or giving publications relating to religion other than religion of Islam to Muslims or persons having no religion

(1) Any person who sends or delivers or causes to be sent or delivered to a Muslim or person having no religion, any publication relating to religion other than the religion of Islam, or any advertising material for such publication that the other person did not request for, is guilty of an offense and shall be liable on conviction to a fine of not exceeding 2,000 Brunei dollars, imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months, or both.

(2) For the purpose of subsection (1), any publication sent or delivered to the address of any person shall be deemed to be sent or delivered to that person.

(3) It shall not be a defense against a charge under subsection (1) that the person to whom the publication was sent or delivered has requested for it if that request has been persuaded by the accused person or any person acting on his behalf.

(4) Subsection (1) does not apply to the delivery of any publication by the Post Office and any similar services.

215: Giving in public places publications relating to religion other than religion of Islam to Muslims or persons having no religion

(1) Any person who gives any publication relating to religion other than the religion of Islam to a Muslim or person having no religion in public places is guilty of an offense and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$1,000, imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 months, or both.

217: Offenses in relation to use of certain words in respect of religion of Islam

(1) Any person who, in any–

- (a) publication;
- (b) speech or public statement;
- (c) speech or statement addressed to any assembly; or
- (d) published or broadcasted speech or statement and at the time of the speech or statement was made he knows, or reasonably should have known, that it will be published or broadcasted, uses any word listed in Part I of the Fifth Schedule, or any derivatives or its variation, to state or express any fact, belief, idea, concept, act, activity, matter or instances of or relating to a religion other than the religion of Islam is guilty of an offense and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding 12,000 Brunei dollars, imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 years or both.

(2) Any non-Muslim who, in instances mentioned in subsection (1), uses any expression listed in Part II of the Fifth Schedule, except as a citation or reference, is guilty of an offense and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding 12,000 Brunei dollars, imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 years, or both.

(3) The Court may order for any publication or thing, among others, used in the commission of or related to the offense referred to in subsections (1) and (2) to be forfeited and destroyed notwithstanding that no person may have been convicted for the offense.

220: Contempt or brings into contempt etc. religion of Islam

Any person who, orally, in writing, by visible representation or in any other manner contempts or brings into contempt, insults, makes fun of, mocks, mimics or ridicules–

- (a) the teaching of the religion of Islam;
- (b) the practice or ceremony related to the religion of Islam;
- (c) words that are regarded as holy by Muslims;
- (d) any law in force related to the religion of Islam;
- (e) any sahabat;
- (f) the tenets of any recognised sect; or
- (g) any fatwa published in the Gazette,

is guilty of an offense and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding 12,000 Brunei dollars, imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 years, or both.

221: Contempt of Nabi by non-Muslim

(1) Any non-Muslim who, orally, in writing, by visible representation or in any other manner contempts or brings into contempt Nabi Muhammad Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam or any Nabi Allah and it is proved either by ikrar of the accused, or by syahadah of at least two syahid according to Hukum Syara' after the Court is satisfied having regard to the requirements of tazkiyah al syuhud, is guilty of an offense and shall be liable on conviction to death penalty.

(2) Any non-Muslim who, orally, in writing, by visible representation or in any other manner contempts or brings into contempt Nabi Muhammad Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam or any Nabi Allah and it is proved by evidence other than those provided under subsection (1) is guilty of an offense and shall be liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 30 years and whipping not exceeding 40 strokes.

222: Deriding etc. verses of Al-Qur'an or hadith by non-Muslim

(1) Any non-Muslim who derides, mocks, mimics, ridicules or contempts, by word or deed, any verse of the Al-Qur'an or hadith of Nabi Muhammad Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam and it is proved either by ikrar of the accused, or by syahadah of at least two syahid according to Hukum Syara' after the Court is satisfied having regard to the requirements of tazkiyah al syuhud, is guilty of an offense and shall be liable on conviction to death penalty.

(2) Any non-Muslim who derides, mocks, mimics, ridicules, or insults, by words or deed, any verse of the Al-Qur'an or hadith of Nabi Muhammad Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam and it is proved by evidence other than those provided under subsection (1) is guilty of an offense and shall be liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 30 years and whipping not exceeding 40 strokes.

230: Contempt etc. of religious authority

(1) Any person who in any manner contempts, neglects, contravenes, opposes or insults any titah of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan with respect to religion in his capacity as the Head of the official religion of Brunei Darussalam is guilty of an offense and shall be liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years.

(2) Any person who in any manner contempts–

- (a) the Majlis or Members of the Majlis;
- (b) any committee of the Majlis or its members;
- (c) Court; or
- (d) the administration of the Syariah justice,

is guilty of an offense and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$8,000, imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years, or both.

BURMA

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code²⁸

295: Whoever destroys, damages or defiles any place of worship, or any object held sacred by any class or persons, with the intention of thereby insulting the religion of any class of persons or with the knowledge that any class of persons is likely to consider such destruction, damage or defilement as an insult to their religion, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both.

295A: Whoever, with deliberate and malicious intention of outraging the religious feelings of any class of [persons resident in the Union] by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representations, insults or attempts to insult the religion or the religious beliefs of that class, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to 2 years, or with fine, or with both.

298: Whoever, with the deliberate intention of wounding the religious feelings of any person, utters any word or makes any sound in the hearing of that person or makes any gesture in the sight of that person or places any object in the sight of that person, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to one year, or with a fine, or with both.

CAMBODIA

The religious framework of the state: Constitution²⁹

Article 43

Buddhism is the State's religion.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Criminal Code³⁰

Article 502: Insult

Insult consists of words, gestures, written documents, pictures or objects liable to undermine the dignity of a person.

Article 516: Insult of Buddhist monks, nuns, and laymen

When insult as defined in Paragraph 1 of Article 502 (Insult) of this Code is committed against a Buddhist monk, nun or layman in the exercise or on the occasion of the exercise of the functions, it shall be punishable by imprisonment from one day to six days and a fine from one thousand to one hundred thousand Riels.

CAMEROON**Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:****Penal Code³¹****Section 241: Contempt of Race or Religion**

- (1) Whoever commits a contempt, within the meaning of section 152 of this Code, of the race or religion of a number of citizens or residents shall be punished with imprisonment for from 6 days to 6 months and with a fine of from CFAF 5,000 (five thousand) to 500,000 CFA francs.
- (2) Where the offense is committed by means of the press or wireless the fine may extend to 20,000,000 CFA francs.
- (3) Where the offense is committed with intent to arouse hatred or contempt between citizens, the penalties provided by the foregoing subsections should be doubled.

CAPE VERDE**The religious framework of the state: Constitution****Article 49: Freedom of conscience, religion, and worship³²**

- (1) Freedom of conscience, religion, and worship is inviolable, everyone having the right, individually or collectively, to profess a religion or not, to have a religious conviction of their choice, to participate in acts of worship and to freely express their faith and spread their doctrine or conviction, as long as they do not undermine the rights of others and the common good.
- (2) No one can be discriminated against, persecuted, harmed, deprived of rights, benefited, or exempted from duties because of their religious faith, convictions, or practice.
- (3) Churches and other religious communities are separated from the state and are independent and free in their organization and exercise of their own activities, considered partners in promoting the social and spiritual development of the Cape Verdean people.
- (4) Freedom of religious education is guaranteed.
- (5) Freedom of religious assistance is guaranteed in hospital, care, and prison establishments, as well as within the armed forces, under terms of the law.
- (6) Churches are recognized the right to use social media to carry out their activities and purposes, under terms of the law.
- (7) Protection of places of worship is guaranteed, as well as religious symbols, ensigns, and rites, and mocking or ridicule is prohibited.
- (8) The right to conscientious objection is guaranteed, under terms of the law.

COLOMBIA**The religious framework of the state: Constitution³³****Preamble:**

The people of Colombia, in exercise of their sovereign power, represented by their delegates to the National Constituent Assembly, invoking the protection of God, and in order to strengthen the unity of the nation and ensure to its members life, peaceful coexistence, work, justice, equality, knowledge, freedom, and peace with a legal, democratic, and participatory framework that guarantees a just political, economic, and social order, and committed to promoting the integration of the Latin American community decree, authorize, and promulgate the following

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:**Penal Code****Article 203: Damages or injuries to people or things intended for worship³⁴**

Whoever causes damage to objects belonging to a cult, or the symbols of any legally permitted religion, or publicly offends such cults or their members by reason of their investiture, will incur a fine.

COMOROS**The religious framework of the state: Constitution³⁵****Preamble:**

The Comorian people solemnly affirm their will to: cultivate a national identity based on a sole people, a sole religion (Sunni Islam) and a sole language;

This Preamble is an integral part of the Constitution.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:**Penal Code³⁶****Article 230:**

Any person who in any way profanes:

- (1) Places for or currently used for the performance of a cult;
- (2) The objects of worship in the places listed above shall be punished by a fine of 15,000 to 100,000 Comoro francs and imprisonment from 3 months to 1 year.

Article 231:

Anyone who has insulted the minister of religion, in the exercise of his functions, is liable to a fine of 15,000 to 45,000 Comorian francs and an imprisonment of 6 months to 2 years.

He who struck the minister of religion in the exercise of his duties, shall be punished with imprisonment from 2 to 5 years.

CYPRUS

The religious framework of the state: Constitution³⁷

Article 2:

For the purposes of this Constitution

- (1) the Greek Community comprises all citizens of the Republic who are of Greek origin and whose mother tongue is Greek, or who share the Greek cultural traditions, or who are members of the Greek-Orthodox Church;
- (2) the Turkish Community comprises all citizens of the Republic who are of Turkish origin and whose mother tongue is Turkish, or who share the Turkish cultural traditions, or who are Muslims;

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Criminal Code³⁸

Article 138:

Any person who destroys, damages, or defiles any place of worship or any object [that] is held sacred by any class of persons with the intention of thereby insulting the religion of any class of persons or with the knowledge that any class of persons is likely to consider such destruction, damage, or defilement as an insult of their religion, is guilty of a misdemeanor.

Article 141:

Any person who with the deliberate intention of wounding the religious feelings of any person utters any word or makes any sound in the hearing of that person, or makes any gesture in the sight of the person, or places any object in the sight of that person, is guilty of misdemeanor and is liable to imprisonment for 1 year.

Article 142:

(1) Any person who publishes a book or pamphlet or any article or letter in a newspaper or periodical [that] any class of persons considers as a public insult to their religion, with intent to vilify such religion or to shock or insult believers in such religion, is guilty of misdemeanor.

(2) A prosecution for an offense under the provisions of this section shall not be commenced except by, or with the consent of, the Attorney-General of the Republic.

EGYPT

The religious framework of the state: Constitution³⁹

Article 1: Nature of the Republic

The Arab Republic of Egypt is a sovereign state, united and indivisible, where nothing is dispensable, and its system is [a] democratic republic based on citizenship and the rule of law.

Egypt is part of the Arab nation and enhances its integration and unity. It is part of the Muslim world, belongs to the African continent, is proud of its Asian dimension, and contributes to building human civilization.

Article 2: Islam, Principles of Islamic Shari'a

Islam is the religion of the state and Arabic is its official language. The principles of Islamic Shari'a are the principle source of legislation.

Article 3: Christian and Jewish religious affairs

The principles of the laws of Egyptian Christians and Jews are the main source of laws regulating their personal status, religious affairs, and selection of spiritual leaders.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code⁴⁰

Article 98(f):

Detention for a period of not less than 6 months and not exceeding 5 years, or paying a fine of not less than 500 Egyptian pounds and not exceeding 1,000 Egyptian pounds shall be the penalty inflicted on whoever exploits and uses the religion in advocating and propagating by talk or in writing, or by any other method, extremist thoughts with the aim of instigating sedition and division or disdaining and contempting any of the heavenly religions or the sects belonging thereto, or prejudicing national unity or social peace.

Article 161:

These penalties shall be imposed on any encroachment that takes place by one of the methods prescribed in Article 171, on a religion whose rituals are publicly held.

The following shall fall under the provisions of this Article:

First: Printing and publishing a book which is viewed as holy by members of a religion whose rituals are publicly held, if a text of this book is perverted in a way that changes its meaning.

Second: Imitating a religious celebration in a public place or public community, with the aim of ridicule, or for the attendants to watch.

Article 171:

Whoever induces one or more persons to commit a felony or misdemeanor, by talks, shouting in public, a deed, or a hint insinuated in public, by writing, drawing, pictures/ photographs, marks and symbols, or any other method of representation made in public, or in any other means of publicness, shall be considered an accomplice in doing it, and shall be punished with the penalty prescribed therefor, if such inducement results in actual occurrence of the felony or misdemeanor.

However, if the inducement results in just an attempt of murder, the judge shall apply the legal provisions on attempt penalty.

Talk or shouting shall be considered publicly made if it is declared openly or reiterated via any mechanical method at a general meeting, on a public road or any other frequented place, or if it is declared openly or reiterated, such that anyone found on that road or in that place can hear it, or if it is diffused by wireless or any other method. The deed or hint shall be considered publicly made if it takes place at a general meeting, on a public road, or at any other frequented place, or if it takes place such that whoever is found on that road or at that place can see it. Writing, drawings, pictures, photographs, signs, symbols, and other representation methods shall be considered as publicly displayed, if they are distributed without differentiation to a number of people, or if they are displayed such that whoever is found on the public road or at any frequented place can see them, or if they are sold or offered for sale at any place.

Note on Law No. 263 of 1960⁴¹

“[P]racticing the Baha’i faith is considered blasphemy. The religion is criminalized under Law No. 263 of 1960, which bans Baha’i institutions and community activities and strips Baha’is of any legal recognition.”

EL SALVADOR

The religious framework of the state: Constitution⁴²

Preamble

We, the representative of the Salvadoran people gathered in constituent assembly, putting our trust in God, our will in the high destinies of the country and in exercise of the sovereign authority that the people of El Salvador have conferred to use, encouraged by the fervent desire to establish the foundations of a more just society, the essence of democracy and the spirit of freedom and justice, values of our humanistic inheritance, decree, sanction and proclaim, the following Constitution

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code⁴³

Article 296: Attacks Relating to Freedom of Religion

One who in any way prevents, interrupts, or disturbs the free exercise of a religion, publicly offends the feelings or beliefs of the same, mocks the dogmas of any religion that has proselytes in the Republic, or destroys or causes damage to objects destined for a religion will be imprisoned for six months to two years.

If the above is committed with publicity, the sanction will be imprisonment from one to three years.

The reiteration of the conduct will be sanctioned with imprisonment for three to five years.

If the conduct is carried out repeatedly and with publicity, the sanction will be imprisonment for four to eight years.

ERITREA

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code⁴⁴

Article 196: Disturbance of Religious or Ethnic Feelings

A person who intentionally and publicly disparages a ceremony or rite of any lawful religious group, or profanes a place, image, or object used for such religious ceremonies or ceremonies relating to any ethnic group, is guilty of disturbance of religious or ethnic feelings, a Class 1 petty offense, punishable with a definite term of imprisonment of not less than 6 months and not more than 12 months, or a fine of 20,001 – 50,000 nakfas, to be set in intervals of 2,500 nakfas.

ETHIOPIA

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Criminal Code⁴⁵

Article 492: Outrage on Religious Peace and Feeling

Whoever publicly:

- prevents the solemnization of, or disturbs or scoffs at, an authorized religious ceremony or office; or
- profanes a place, image, or object used for religious ceremonies,

is punishable with a fine not exceeding 1,000 birr, or with simple imprisonment not exceeding 2 years.

Article 816: Blasphemous or Scandalous Utterances or Attitudes

Whoever, apart from the cases punishable under the Criminal Code (Arts 492 and 493), in a public place or in a place open to the public or that can be viewed by the public, by gestures or words scoffs at religion or expresses himself in a manner which is blasphemous, scandalous, or grossly offensive to the feelings or convictions of others or towards the Divine Being or the religious symbols, rites, or religious personages, is punishable by fine or arrest not exceeding 1 month.

FINLAND

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code⁴⁶

Chapter 17 [Offenses against public order (563/1998)]

Section 10: Breach of the sanctity of religion (563/1998)

A person who

(1) publicly blasphemes against God or, for the purpose of offending, publicly defames or desecrates what is otherwise held to be sacred by a church or religious community, as referred to in the Act on the Freedom of Religion (267/1998), or

(2) by making noise, acting threateningly or otherwise, disturbs worship, ecclesiastical proceedings, other similar religious proceedings or a funeral,

shall be sentenced for a breach of the sanctity of religion to a fine or to imprisonment for at most 6 months.

GAMBIA

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Criminal Code⁴⁷

Chapter III: General Rules as to Criminal Responsibility

34: When in this Code no punishment is specially provided for any misdemeanor, it shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or with a fine or with both such imprisonment and such fine.

Chapter XIV: Offenses Related to Religion

117: Any person who destroys, damages, or defiles any place of worship or any object [that] is held sacred by any class of persons with the intention of thereby insulting the religion of any class of persons, or with the knowledge that any class of persons is likely to consider such destruction, damage, or defilement as an insult to their religion, is guilty of a misdemeanor.

119: Every person who, with the intention of wounding the feelings of any person or of insulting the religion of any person, or with the knowledge that the feelings of any person are likely to be wounded, or that the religion of any person is likely to be insulted thereby, commits any trespass in any place of worship or in any place of sepulture, or in any place set apart for the performance of funeral rites or as a depository for the remains of the dead, or offers any indignity to any human corpse, or causes disturbance to any persons assembled for the purpose of funeral ceremonies, is guilty of a misdemeanor.

120: Any person who, with the deliberate intention of wounding the religious feelings of any person, utters or writes any word, or makes any sound in the hearing of that person, or makes any gesture in the sight of that person, or places any object in the sight of that person; is guilty of a misdemeanor, and is liable to imprisonment for 1 year.

GERMANY

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Criminal Code (1998)⁴⁸

Section 166: Insulting of faiths, religious societies, and organizations dedicated to a philosophy of life

(1) Whoever publicly or by disseminating content (section 11 (3)) reviles the religion or ideology of others in a manner suited to causing a disturbance of the public peace incurs a penalty of imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years or a fine.

(2) Whoever publicly or by disseminating content (section 11 (3)) reviles a church or other religious or ideological community in Germany or its institutions or customs in a manner suited to causing a disturbance of the public peace incurs the same penalty.

Network Enforcement Act (2017)⁴⁹

Section 1:

(1) This Act shall apply to telemedia service providers which, for profit-making purposes, operate internet platforms which are designed to enable users to share any content with other users or to make such content available to the public (social networks). Platforms offering journalistic or editorial content, the responsibility for which lies with the service provider itself, shall not constitute social networks within the meaning of this Act. The same shall apply to platforms which are designed to enable individual communication or the dissemination of specific content.

(3) Unlawful content shall be content within the meaning of subsection (1) which fulfills the requirements of the offences described in sections 86, 86a, 89a, 91, 100a, 111, 126, 129 to 129b, 130, 131, 140, 166, 184b in connection with 184d, 185 to 187, 241 or 269 of the Criminal Code and which is not justified.⁵⁰

GRENADA

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Criminal Code⁵¹

Section 429: Publication or Sale of Blasphemous or Obscene Matter

Whoever publishes, sells, or offers for sale any blasphemous or obscene book, writing, or representation, shall be liable to imprisonment for 2 years.

GUATEMALA

The religious framework of the state: Constitution⁵²

Preamble:

Invoking the name of God, We the representatives of the people of Guatemala, elected freely and democratically, gathered in [the] National Constituent Assembly, with the goal of legally and politically organizing the State; affirming the primacy of the human person as [the] subject and purpose [fin] of the social order; recognizing the family as the primary and fundamental genesis of the spiritual and moral values of the society and the State...solemnly decree, sanction, and promulgate the following: Political Constitution of the Republic of Guatemala

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code⁵³

Chapter VI: Offences against Religious Liberty and Religious Sentiment

Article 224: Disturbance of Religious Acts

Anyone who interrupts the celebration of a religious ceremony or performs acts in contempt or offense of worship or objects intended for worship shall be punished with imprisonment from one month to one year.

GUYANA

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Criminal Code⁵⁴

Part V: Offences against Religion, Morality, and Public Inconvenience

Title 24: Offences against Religion

Article 348:

(1) Everyone who publishes any blasphemous libel shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and liable to imprisonment for 1 year.

(2) It shall be a question of fact whether any particular published matter is or is not a blasphemous libel:

Provided that no person shall be liable to be convicted on any indictment for a blasphemous libel only for expressing in good faith and in decent language, or attempting to establish any arguments used in good faith and conveyed in decent language, any opinion whatever upon any religious subject.

INDIA

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code⁵⁵

Article 295: Injuring or defiling place of worship, with intent to insult the religion of any class

Whoever destroys, damages, or defiles any place of worship, or any object held sacred by any class of persons with the intention of thereby insulting the religion of any class of persons, or with the knowledge that any class of persons is likely to consider such destruction, damage, or defilement as an insult to their religion, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to 2 years, or with a fine, or with both.

Article 295A: Deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs

Whoever, with deliberate and malicious intention of outraging the religious feelings of any class of [citizens of India], [by words, either spoken or written, or by signs or by visible representations, or otherwise] insults or attempts to insult the religion or the religious beliefs of that class, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to [3 years], or with a fine, or with both.

Article 296: Disturbing religious assembly

Whoever voluntarily causes disturbance to any assembly lawfully engaged in the performance of religious worship, or religious ceremonies, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to 1 year, or with a fine, or with both.

Article 297: Trespassing on burial places, etc.

Whoever, with the intention of wounding the feelings of any person, or of insulting the religion of any person, or with the knowledge that the feelings of any person are likely to be wounded, or that the religion of any person is likely to be insulted thereby, commits any trespass in any place of worship or on any place of sepulture, or any place set apart for the performance of funeral rites or as a depository for the remains of the dead, or offers any indignity to any human corpse, or causes disturbance to any persons assembled for the performance of funeral ceremonies, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to 1 year, or with a fine, or with both.

Article 298: Uttering words, etc., with deliberate intent to wound religious feelings

Whoever, with the deliberate intention of wounding the religious feelings of any person, utters any word or makes any sound in the hearing of that person or makes any gesture in the sight of that person or places any object in the sight of that person, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to 1 year, or with a fine, or with both.

INDONESIA

The religious framework of the state: Constitution⁵⁶

Article 29:

(1) The state shall be based upon the belief in the One and Only God.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code⁵⁷

Article 300:

Any person who publicly:

- commits an act of hostility;
- makes a statement of hate or hostility;
- incites hostility, violence, or discrimination

against a religion, belief, classes of people or groups on the basis of religion or belief in Indonesia, faces a maximum three-year prison term or Category IV fine.

Law No. 11 of 2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions

Article 27:⁵⁸

Prohibited Acts

(1)(3) Any person who knowingly and without authority distributes and/or transmits and/or causes to be accessible Electronic Information and/or Electronic Documents with contents of affronts and/or defamation.

Amendment to Law No. 11 of 2008 on Electronic Information and Transactions⁵⁹

Article 45:⁶⁰

(1) Any person who knowingly and without authority distributes and/or transmits and/or causes to be accessible Electronic Information and/or Electronic Records with contents of affronts and/or defamation as referred to in Article 27 paragraph (3) shall be sentenced to imprisonment not exceeding 4 years and/or a fine not exceeding 750,000,000.00 rupiah.

IRAN

The religious framework of the state: Constitution⁶²

Article 1: Form of Government

The form of government of Iran is that of an Islamic Republic, endorsed by the people of Iran on the basis of their longstanding belief in the sovereignty of truth and Koranic justice, in the referendum of 29 and 30 March 1979, through the affirmative vote of a majority of 98.2% of eligible voters, held after the victorious Islamic Revolution led by Imam Khomeini.

Article 12: Official Religion

The official religion of Iran is Islam and the Twelver Ja'fari school, and this principle will remain eternally immutable. Other Islamic schools are to be accorded full respect, and their followers are free to act in accordance with their own jurisprudence in performing their religious rites. These schools enjoy official status in matters pertaining to religious education, affairs of personal status (marriage, divorce, inheritance, and wills) and related litigation in courts of law. In regions of the country where Muslims following any one of these schools constitute the majority, local regulations, within the bounds of the jurisdiction of local councils, are to be in accordance with the respective school, without infringing upon the rights of the followers of other schools.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code⁶³

Article 262:

Anyone who swears at or commits qazf against the Great Prophet [of Islam] (peace be upon him) or any of the Great Prophets, shall be considered as Sāb ul-nabi [a person who swears at the Prophet], and shall be sentenced to the death penalty.

Note: Commission of qazf against, or swearing at, the [12] Shi'ite Imams (peace be upon them) or the Holy Fatima (peace be upon her) shall be regarded as Sab-e nabi.

Article 263:

When the accused of a sabb-e nabi (swearing at the Prophet) claims that his/her statements have been under coercion or mistake, or in a state of drunkenness, or anger or slip of the tongue, or without paying attention to the meaning of the words, or quoting someone else, then s/he shall not be considered as Sāb ul-nabi [a person who swears at the Prophet].

Note: When a sabb-e nabi (swearing at the Prophet) is committed in the state of drunkenness, or anger, or quoting someone else, if it is considered to be an insult, the offender shall be sentenced to a ta'zir punishment of up to 74 lashes.

Article 513:⁶⁴

Anyone who insults the sacred values of Islam or any of the Great Prophets or [twelve] Shi'ite Imams or the Holy Fatima, if considered as Saab ul-nabi [as having committed actions warranting the hadd punishment for insulting the Prophet], shall be executed; otherwise, they shall be sentenced to one to five years' imprisonment..

IRAQ

The religious framework of the state: Constitution⁶⁵

Article 2: Official State Religion

(1) Islam is the official religion of the state and is a foundation source of legislation:

- (a) No law may be enacted that contradicts the established provisions of Islam.
- (b) No law may be enacted that contradicts the principles of democracy.
- (c) No law may be enacted that contradicts the rights and basic freedoms stipulated in this Constitution.

(2) This Constitution guarantees the Islamic identity of the majority of the Iraqi people and guarantees the full religious rights to freedom of religious belief and practice of all individuals such as Christians, Yazidis, and Mandaean Sabians.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code⁶⁶

Chapter 8 Section 2: Offenses that violate religious sensibilities

Paragraph 372:

The following persons are punishable by a period of detention not exceeding 3 years or by a fine not exceeding 300 dinars:

- (1) Any person who attacks the creed of a religious minority or pours scorn on its religious practices.
- (4) Any person who prints or publishes a book sacred to a religious minority and deliberately misspells the texts so that the meaning of the text is altered or who makes light of its tenets or teachings.
- (5) Any person who publicly insults a symbol or a person who constitutes an object of sanctification, worship, or reverence to a religious minority.
- (6) Any person who publicly imitates a religious ceremony or celebration with intent to deceive.

ISRAEL

The religious framework of the state: Basic Law for Human Dignity and Liberty (1992)⁶⁷

1a. Purpose (Amendment No. 1):

The purpose of this Basic Law is to protect human dignity and liberty, in order to establish in a Basic Law the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code⁶⁸

Article 170: Insult to religion

If a person destroys, damages, or desecrates a place of worship or any object [that] is held sacred by a group of persons, with the intention of reviling their religion, or in the knowledge that they are liable to deem that act an insult to their religion, then he is liable to 3 years' imprisonment.

Article 173: Injury to religious sentiment

If a person does any of the following, then he is liable to 1-year imprisonment:

- (1) he publishes a publication that is liable crudely to offend the religious faith or sentiment of others;
- (2) he voices in a public place and in the hearing of another person any word or sound that is liable crudely to offend the religious faith or sentiment of others.

ITALY

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Criminal Code⁶⁹

Article 402: Insulting the State religion⁷⁰

Anyone who insults the state religion shall be subject to a prison sentence of up to 1 year.

Article 403: Offenses to a religious confession by offending people

Anyone who publicly offends a religious confession, by disrespecting those who profess it, is punished with a fine from 1,000 to 5,000 euros. The fine from 2,000 to 6,000 euros is applied to those who offend a religious confession, by offending a minister of religion.

Article 404: Offenses to a religious confession by insulting or damaging things

Anyone who, in a place destined for worship, or in a public place or open to the public, offending a religious confession, reviles with insulting expressions things that form the object of worship, or are consecrated to worship, or are necessarily intended for the exercise of worship, or commits the act on the occasion of religious services, performed in a private place by a minister of the cult, is punished with a fine from 1,000 to 5,000 euros. Insulting the state religion by offending against property.

Article 406: Offenses against religions recognized by the State⁷¹

Anyone who commits one of the offenses established under Articles 403, 404, and 405 [not included] against a religion recognized by the state shall be punished in accordance with the aforementioned articles, but the sentence shall be reduced.

Article 724: Blasphemy and outrageous manifestations towards the dead

Anyone who publicly blasphemes, with invectives or outrageous words against a deity, is punished with a pecuniary administrative sanction from 51 to 309 euros. The same sanction applies to those who carry out any public outrageous demonstration against the dead.

JORDAN

The religious framework of the state: Constitution⁷²

Article 2:

Islam is the religion of the state and Arabic is its official language.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code⁷³

Article 273:

Anyone proven to have publicly offended any prophet shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a period between 1 to 3 years.

Article 278:

Anyone found guilty of any of the following shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a period not exceeding 3 months or a fine not exceeding 20 dinars:

- (1) Publishing any material that is offensive to other people's religious feelings or beliefs.
- (2) Publicly, with another person listening thereto, making a speech or sound that is offensive to said other person's religious feelings or beliefs.

Should the public prosecutor decide to prosecute journalists under Article 38 of the Press and Publications Law rather than the Penal Code, a fine of 10,000 to 20,000 dinars would be imposed.

KAZAKHSTAN

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code⁷⁴

Article 174: Inciting social, national, tribal, racial, class or religious hatred

(1) Deliberate actions aimed at inciting social, national, tribal, racial, class or religious hatred, insulting the national honor and dignity or religious feelings of citizens, as well as propaganda of the exclusivity, superiority or inferiority of citizens on the basis of their attitude to religion, class, national, tribal or racial affiliation, if these acts are committed publicly or with the use of mass media or telecommunications networks, as well as by producing or distributing literature or other information carriers promoting social, national, tribal, racial, class or religious hatred, shall be punishable by a fine in the amount of two thousand to seven thousand monthly calculation indices, or restraint of liberty for a term of two to seven years, or imprisonment for the same term.

(2) The same actions, committed by a group of persons by prior agreement or repeatedly or connected with violence or the threat of its use, as well as committed by a person with the use of his (her) official position or by the leader of a public association, including with the use of funds received from foreign sources, shall be punished by imprisonment for the term of five to ten years with deprivation of the right to occupy determined positions or to engage in a determined activity for the term of up to three years or without it.

(3) The actions, provided by first or second parts of this Article, committed by criminal group or entailed the grave consequences, — shall be punished by imprisonment for the term of twelve to twenty years with deprivation of the right to occupy determined positions or to engage in a determined activity for the term of up to three years or without it.

KENYA

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code⁷⁵

Section 36: General punishment for misdemeanors

When in this Code no punishment is specially provided for any misdemeanor, it shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or with a fine, or with both.

Section 134: Insult to religion

Any person who destroys, damages, or defiles any place of worship or any object [that] is held sacred by any class of persons with the intention of thereby insulting the religion of any class of persons, or with the knowledge that any class of persons is likely to consider such destruction, damage, or defilement as an insult to their religion, is guilty of a misdemeanor.

Section 136: Trespassing on burial places

Every person who, with the intention of wounding the feelings of any person or of insulting the religion of any person, or with the knowledge that the feelings of any person are likely to be wounded, or that the religion of any person is likely to be insulted thereby, commits any trespass in any place of worship or in any place of sepulture, or in any place set apart for the performance of funeral rites or as a depository for the remains of the dead, or offers any indignity to any human corpse, or causes disturbance to any persons assembled for the purpose of funeral ceremonies, is guilty of a misdemeanor.

Section 138: Writing or uttering words with intent to wound religious feelings

Any person who, with the deliberate intention of wounding the religious feelings of any other person, writes any word, or any person who, with the like intention, utters any word or makes any sound in the hearing of any other person or makes any gesture or places any object in the sight of any other person, is guilty of a misdemeanor and is liable to imprisonment for 1 year.

KIRIBATI

The religious framework of the state: Constitution⁷⁶

Preamble:

We the people of Kiribati, acknowledging God as the Almighty Father in whom we put our trust, and with faith in the enduring value of our traditions and heritage, do now grant ourselves this Constitution establishing a sovereign democratic State.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code⁷⁷

41: General punishment for misdemeanors

When in this Code no punishment is specially provided for any misdemeanor, it shall be punishable with imprisonment for two years and with a fine.

123: Insult to religion of any class

Any person who destroys, damages, or defiles any place of worship or any object which is held sacred by any class of persons with the intention of thereby insulting the religion of any class of persons or with the knowledge that any class of persons is likely to consider such destruction, damage, or defilement as an insult to their religion, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

127: Writing or uttering words with intent to wound religious feelings

Any person who, with the deliberate intention of wounding the religious feelings of any person, writes any word, or any person who, with the like intention, utters any word or makes any sound in the hearing of any other person or makes any gesture or places any object in the sight of any other person, is guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be liable to imprisonment for 1 year.

KUWAIT

The religious framework of the state: Constitution⁷⁸

Article 2: State Religion

The religion of the state is Islam, and Islamic Law shall be a main source of legislation.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Law No. 19 of 2012 on the Protection of National Unity (19/2012)⁷⁹

Article 1:

It is prohibited to engage in, call for, or incite, by any means of expression specified in Article 29 of Law No. 31 of 1970 (through the amendment of certain provisions of the Penal Code), hatred of or showing contempt for any segment of society, inciting sectarian or tribal strife, publishing ideas claiming the superiority of any race, group, color, origin, religious persuasion, sex, or descent, or encouraging acts of violence for such purpose, or broadcasting, publishing, printing, disseminating, rebroadcasting, producing, or discussing any content or publication of visual or audio material, or disseminating false rumors that contain anything that by its nature would lead to the foregoing. The provisions of the preceding paragraph apply to anyone who commits an act outside the State of Kuwait that makes him a principal or a partner in a crime that occurs in whole or in part in the State of Kuwait. Information networks and the blogs that are published on them and other modern means of communications are included in the means of expression.

Article 2:

Without prejudice to any more stringent penalty provided by another law, anyone who commits an act that violates the prohibition specified in Article 1 of this law shall be punished by imprisonment for a period of not more than 7 years and a fine of not less than 10,000 dinars and not more than 100,000 dinars, or by either one of these penalties, and a judgment will be made to confiscate the facilities, money, devices, newspapers, and publications used in the commission of the crime. The punishment will be doubled if the violation is repeated.

Article 3:

In cases in which a crime specified in this law is committed by a legal entity, without prejudice to the criminal liability of the natural person, the legal entity shall be punished by a fine of not less than 10,000 dinars and not more than 100,000 dinars if the crime was committed in its name or on its behalf. A judgment to revoke the business license can be issued and, at the request of the prosecutor's office, the head of the competent felonies department or the summary matters judge can issue a decision to suspend the license temporarily for a period of 1 month, subject to renewal.

Article 4:

Any of the perpetrators who reports to the competent authorities the existence of a criminal agreement to commit a crime before the start of its implementation shall be exempt from the punishment, and the court can also exempt from punishment if the informing was done after the completion of the crime but prior to the investigation. It can also do so if the criminal enabled the authorities to arrest the remaining criminals.

Article 5:

The Prime Minister and the ministers—all those concerned—shall implement this statutory decree and act in accordance with it as of the date of its publication in the official gazette and its presentation to the National Assembly.

Penal Code⁸⁰

Article 25:

Anyone who publicly or in a public place or in a place in which he can be heard or seen by anyone in a public place, by speaking or shouting or writing or with drawings or pictures or any other means of expressing an idea, defames the rights and authority of the Amir, or dishonors the Amir, or displays arrogant behavior towards the underpinnings of this emirate shall be punished by imprisonment for a period of not more than 5 years.

Article 111:

Anyone who disseminates, in one of the public ways stated in Article 101,⁸¹ views that include ridicule or contempt or belittling of a religion or a religious sect, whether by defaming its doctrines, its rituals, its ceremonies, or its tenets, shall be punished by imprisonment for a period of not more than 1 year and a fine of not more than 1,000 dinars, or by either one of these two penalties.

Article 112:

There is no crime if research on a religion or a religious sect is disseminated in a lecture, an essay, or a scholarly book in a calm and balanced way that is free of statements that incite, and the good intentions of the researcher have been proved by his propensity for pure scholarly criticism.

Article 204:

Anyone who, in a public place, publicly instigates the practice of immorality or indecency shall be punished by imprisonment for a period of not more than 3 years and a fine of not more than 3,000 dinars, or by either one of these two penalties. (This paragraph was replaced pursuant to Law No. 106 of 1994 Article 1). The aforementioned penalties shall be imposed on anyone who prints or sells or distributes or displays photographs or drawings or models or anything else that is indecent. There is no crime if the statements are made or the writing, drawings, or photographs are published in a way recognized by science or art as part of the participation in scientific or artistic progress.

KYRGYZSTAN**Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:****Law on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations (2008)⁸²****Article 4:**

(4) The limitation of rights or establishment of any privileges of citizens dependent upon their attitude toward religion, as well as the incitement of enmity and hatred, or the intentional offense of the feelings of citizens in connection with their attitude towards religion, the desecration of sacred or other religious cult objects, entails liabilities in accordance with the legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic.

LEBANON**The religious framework of the state: Constitution⁸³****Article 9:**

Freedom of conscience is absolute. In assuming the obligations of glorifying God, the Most High, the state respects all religions and creeds, and safeguards the freedom of exercising the religious rites under its protection, without disturbing the public order. It also guarantees the respect of the system of personal status and religious interests of the people, regardless of their different creeds.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:**Penal Code⁸⁴****Article 473: Profaning the name of God**

Anyone who profanes the name of God publicly shall be punished by imprisonment from 1 month to 1 year.

Article 474: Disparaging religious ceremonies

The text of Article 474 was abrogated pursuant to Law 1/12/1954 and was replaced by the following text:

Anyone who, by means of the ways specified in Article 209,⁸⁵ dares to publicly disparage religious ceremonies that are practiced or foments disdain for any of those religious ceremonies shall be punished by imprisonment from 6 months to 3 years.

LIBYA**The religious framework of the state: The Constitutional Declaration⁸⁶****Article 1:**

Libya shall be an independent democratic state in which the people shall be the source of all powers. Its capital shall be Tripoli, Islam shall be its religion and Islamic Shari'a shall be the main source of legislation. The State shall guarantee for non-Muslims the freedom to practice their religious rituals. Arabic shall be the official language, while the linguistic and cultural rights of the Amazigh, the Tabous, the Touareg and the other components of the Libyan society shall be guaranteed.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code⁸⁷

Article 291:

Anyone who publicly attacks the Islamic religion, which is the official religion of the State according to the Constitution of Libya, through expressions that are inappropriate for God, prophets, or messengers, shall be punished by a penalty of detention for a period not exceeding two years.

LIECHTENSTEIN

The religious framework of the state: Constitution⁸⁸

Article 37:

(2) The Roman Catholic Church is the state church and as such enjoys the full protection of the state; other confessions shall be entitled to practice their creeds and to hold religious services to the extent consistent with morality and public order.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Criminal Code⁸⁹

Section 188: Disparaging of religious precepts

Any person who publicly vilifies or mocks a person or object that is the subject of worship of a church or religious group in Liechtenstein, or religious doctrine, or a custom or institution permitted by law of such a church or religious group, and who does so in circumstances in which his conduct is capable of causing reasonable nuisance, shall be punished with imprisonment of up to six months or with a monetary penalty of up to 360 daily rates..

MALAWI

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code⁹⁰

Chapter XIV: Offenses Relating to Religion

34: General punishment for misdemeanors

When in this code no punishment is specially provided for any misdemeanor, it shall be punishable with a fine or with imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years.

127: Insult to religion of any class

Any person who destroys, damages, or defiles any place of worship or any object that is held sacred by any class of persons with the intention of thereby insulting the religion

of any class of persons, or with the knowledge that any class of persons is likely to consider such destruction, damage, or defilement as an insult to their religion, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

129: Trespassing on burial places

Every person who with the intention of wounding the feelings of any person or of insulting the religion of any person, or with the knowledge that the feelings of any person are likely to be wounded, or that the religion of any person is likely to be insulted thereby, commits any trespass in any place of worship or in any place of sepulture or in any place set apart for the performance of funeral rites or as a depository for the remains of the dead, or offers any indignity to any human corpse, or causes disturbance to any persons assembled for the purpose of funeral ceremonies, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

130: Writing or uttering, words with intent to wound religious feelings

Any person who, with the deliberate intention of wounding the religious feelings of any other person, writes any word, or any person who, with the like intention, utters any word or makes any sound in the hearing of any other person or makes any gesture or places any object in the sight of any other person, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be liable to imprisonment for 1 year.

MALAYSIA

The religious framework of the state: Constitution⁹¹

Article 3: Religion of the Federation

Islam is the religion of the Federation; but other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code⁹²

Chapter XV: Offenses Relating to Religion

295: Injuring or defiling place of worship, with intent to insult the religion of any class

Whoever destroys, damages, or defiles any place of worship or any object held sacred by any class of persons, with the intention of thereby insulting the religion of any class of persons or with the knowledge that any class of persons is likely to consider such destruction, damage or defilement as an insult to their religion, shall be punished with imprisonment of description for a term which may extend to 2 years, or with a fine, or with both.

297: Trespassing on burial places, etc.

Whoever, with the intention of wounding the feelings of any person, or of insulting the religion of any person, or with the knowledge that the feelings of any person are likely to be wounded, or that the religion of any person is likely to be insulted thereby, commits any trespass in any place of worship or on any place of sepulture or any place set apart for the performance of funeral rites, or as a depository for the remains of the dead, or offers any indignity to any human corpse, or causes disturbance to any person assembled for the performance of funeral ceremonies, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 1 year, or with a fine, or with both.

298: Uttering words, etc., with deliberate intent to wound the religious feelings of any person

Whoever, with deliberate intention of wounding the religious feelings of any person, utters any word or makes any sound in the hearing of that person, or makes any gesture in the sight of that person, or places any object in the sight of that person, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 1 year, or with a fine, or with both.

298A: Causing, etc., disharmony, disunity, or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will, or prejudicing etc., the maintenance of harmony or unity, on grounds of religion

(1) Whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representations, or by any act, activity or conduct, or by organizing, promoting or arranging, or assisting in organizing, promoting or arranging, any activity, or otherwise in any other manner—

(a) causes, or attempts to cause, or is likely to cause disharmony, disunity, or feelings of enmity, hatred, or ill-will; or

(b) prejudices, or attempts to prejudice, or is likely to prejudice, the maintenance of harmony or unity, on grounds of religion, between persons or groups of persons professing the same or different religions,

shall be punished with imprisonment for a term of not less than 2 years and not more than 5 years.

MALDIVES

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code⁹³

Section 92: Authorized Terms of Imprisonment⁹⁴

Except as otherwise provided, the maximum authorized term of imprisonment for a:

(f) Class 1 misdemeanor is imprisonment for not more than 1 year;

Section 93: Authorized Fines

Except as otherwise provided, the maximum authorized fine for an offense is:

- (a) twice the harm caused or the gain derived, or
- (b) (6) MVR (Rufiyaa) [50,000] for a Class 1 misdemeanor

Section 617: Criticizing Islam

(a) Offense Defined. A person commits an offense if

- (1) engages in religious oration and criticism of Islam in public or in a public medium with the intention to cause disregard for Islam; or
- (2) produces, sells, distributes, or offers material criticizing Islam with the intention to cause disregard [for] Islam;
- (3) The production, possession, sale, distribution, dissemination of pornography in the Maldives or importation thereof.
- (4) The production, possession, sale, distribution, dissemination, and importation of idols of worship in the Maldives or importation thereof.
- (5) Attempting to disrupt the religious unity of the citizens of Maldives, and conversing and acting in a manner likely to cause religious segregation amongst people.

(c) Grading. The offense is a Class 1 misdemeanor.

MAURITANIA

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Draft bill to cancel and replace the provisions of Article 306 of Legal Order No. 162-83 issued on July 9, 1983, including the criminal law⁹⁵

Article 1:⁹⁶

The provisions of Article 306 of Legal Order No. 162-83 issued on July 9, 1983, including the criminal law, are abrogated and replaced by the following provisions:

Article 306 (new): Anyone who commits an act that violates modesty or Islamic values or who violates any of the sanctities of God, or who helps to do so, and this act is not a crime of hudud [refers to crimes whose punishment is mandated by God], qisas [refers to a crime of revenge], or diyah [refers to a crime requiring compensation paid to the victim], shall be punished through tazir [i.e., at the discretion of the judge] by imprisonment of 3 months to 2 years and by a fine of 50,000 ouguiyas to 600,000 ouguiyas.

Any Muslim, male or female, who ridicules or insults God or His messenger (may God bless him and grant him salvation), or His angels, or His books, or one of His prophets, shall be put to death, and he will not be called on to repent. Even if he repents, the death penalty will not be removed.

Any Muslim who explicitly apostatizes from Islam, or who says or does something that would require or include that, or who renounces what he knows to be required by the religion, shall be imprisoned for 3 days, during which time he will be asked to repent. If he does not repent, he will be sentenced to death for blasphemy, and his property will be transferred to the treasury of the Muslims.

Any person who professes Islam outwardly but is secretly an infidel is considered a disbeliever and he will be punished by death when he is discovered, without being asked to repent. His repentance will not be accepted unless it is declared before his apostasy has been discovered.

Any legally competent Muslim who fails to perform his prayers despite acknowledging that they are required will be ordered to do so and he will be expected to do the last required rak'ah [a series of bending and prostrations in Islamic prayer]. If he persists in failing to perform the prayers, he will be put to death in the end. If he denies that prayer is required, he will be put to death for apostasy. His body will not be prepared or buried in the way Muslims are. His property will be transferred to the treasury of the Muslims. This crime will be proved only by admission.

Article 2:

All prior provisions that are contrary to this law are abrogated.

MAURITIUS

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Criminal Code⁹⁷

Article 185:

Any person who, by word or gesture, commits an outrage on the objects used for religious worship in the place devoted to or actually used for such religious worship, or upon any minister of such religion whilst officiating as such, shall be punished by a fine not exceeding 10,000 rupees, and imprisonment for a term not exceeding 1 year.

MOLDOVA

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Code on Misdemeanors⁹⁸

Article 54(5):

Offense of people's religious feelings, violations of sacred objects, spaces, monuments, and conceptual symbols is subject to a fine of between 12 to 24 monetary units or punishment in the form of 40 to 60 hours of unpaid labor for the benefit of society.⁹⁹

MONACO

The religious framework of the state: Constitution¹⁰⁰

Article 9

The Catholic, Apostolic and Roman religion is the religion of the State.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code¹⁰¹

Article 207:

Any person who has, by word or gesture, desecrated the objects of worship, either in the places intended or currently used for its exercise, or outside these places, but on the occasion of religious ceremonies, or even outraged the ministers of religion in their functions will be punished by imprisonment of one month to six months and the fine provided for in number 2 of article 26 or one of these two penalties only.

MONTENEGRO

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Criminal Code¹⁰²

Article 370:

(1) Whoever publicly incites to violence or hatred towards a group or a member of a group defined by virtue of race, skin color, religion, origin, nationality or ethnic affiliation shall be punished by a prison sentence for a term from six months to five years.

(2) The penalty set out in paragraph 1 of this Article shall also be imposed on whomever publicly approves, denies the existence, or significantly reduces the gravity of the crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes committed against a group or a member of group by virtue of their race, skin color, religion, origin, nationality or ethnic affiliation in a manner which can lead to violence or

cause hatred against a group of persons or a member of such group, where such criminal offences have been determined by a final judgment of a court in Montenegro or of an international criminal tribunal.

(3) Where the offence set forth in paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article was committed by coercion, ill-treatment, endangering of safety, exposure to mockery of national, ethnic, or religious symbols, damaging property of another person, desecrating monuments, memorials or tombs, the perpetrator shall be punished by a prison sentence for a term from one to eight years.

(4) Whoever commits the offence set forth in paragraphs 1 to 3 of this Article by abuse of office or where such offences result in riots, violence or other severe consequences to the joint life of nations, national minorities or ethnic groups living in Montenegro, shall be punished for the offence set forth in paragraph 1 of this Article by a prison sentence for a term from one to eight years and for the offence set forth in paragraphs 2 and 3 by a prison sentence for a term from two to ten years.

MOROCCO

The religious framework of the state: Constitution¹⁰³

Article 3:

Islam is the religion of the state, which guarantees to all the free exercise of beliefs [cultes].

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code¹⁰⁴

Article 267-5:

Anyone who undermines the Islamic religion, the monarchic regime or incites to undermine the territorial integrity of the Kingdom shall be condemned to an imprisonment of 6 months up to 2 years and a fine of 20,000 up to 200,000 dirhams, or one of those two sentences only.

The incurred sentence can be increased from 2 to 5 years of prison and a fine of 50,000 up to 500,000 dirhams or one of those two sentences only if the acts referred to in the first paragraph are committed either by speech, scream, or threat made in public places or public meetings, or by poster publicly exhibited by sale, distribution, or any other means used for publicity included by online form, paper, and audiovisual form.

NEPAL

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code¹⁰⁵

156: Prohibition of outraging religious feelings

(1) No person shall outrage the religious feelings of any caste, race, community, or class by words, either spoken or written, by visible representation or signs or otherwise.

(2) A person who commits, or causes to be committed, the offense referred to in sub-section (1) shall be liable to a sentence of imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years and a fine not exceeding 20,000 rupees.

158: Prohibition of proselytizing

(1) No person shall convert anyone from one religion to another or make attempt to or abet such conversion.

(2) No person shall do any act or conduct that undermines the religion, opinion, or faith of any caste, race, or community or convert anyone into another religion, whether by inducement or not, in a manner to so undermine or propagate such religion or opinion with the intention of making such conversion.

(3) A person who commits, or causes to be committed, the offense referred to in sub-section (1) or (2) shall be liable to a sentence of imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years and a fine not exceeding 50,000 rupees.

(4) If a foreigner commits, or causes to be committed, the offense referred to in sub-section (1) or (2), he or she shall be deported from Nepal within 7 days after the date of completion of the service of imprisonment imposed under this Section.

NIGERIA

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion: Criminal Code¹⁰⁶

Chapter 19, Offenses relating to Religious Worship

Section 204:

Any person who does an act [that] any class of persons considers as a public insult on their religion, with the intention that they should consider the act such an insult, and any person who does an unlawful act with the knowledge that any class of persons will consider it such an insult, is guilty of a misdemeanor, and is liable to imprisonment for 2 years.

OMAN

The religious framework of the state: Constitution¹⁰⁷

Article 1:

The Sultanate of Oman is an Arab, Islamic, independent state with full sovereignty and Muscat is its capital.

Article 2:

The religion of the state is Islam and Islamic Shari'a is the basis for legislation.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code¹⁰⁸

Article 269:

Whoever commits any of the following acts shall be punished by imprisonment for a period no less than (3) three years and not exceeding (10) ten years:

- (a) disrespecting or offending the divine verbally, in writing, by drawing, by gesturing, or by using any other means;
- (b) offending, distorting, or desecrating the Holy Quran;
- (c) offending the religion of Islam or any of its rites, or insulting an Abrahamic religion;
- (d) disrespecting or offending any of the prophets verbally, in writing, by drawing, by gesturing, or by using any other means;
- (e) sabotaging or desecrating buildings, or any of their contents, if prepared to conduct religious rites of Islam or those of other Abrahamic religions.

PAKISTAN

The religious framework of the state: Constitution¹⁰⁹

Article 1: The Republic and its territories

Pakistan shall be [a] Federal Republic to be known as the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, hereinafter referred to as Pakistan.

Article 2: Islam to be State religion

Islam shall be the state religion of Pakistan.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code¹¹⁰

Chapter XV: Of Offenses Relating to Religion

295: Injuring or defiling place of worship, with Intent to insult the religion of any class

Whoever destroys, damages, or defiles any place of worship, or any object held sacred by any class of persons with the intention of thereby insulting the religion of any class of persons, or with the knowledge that any class of persons is likely to consider such destruction damage or defilement as an insult to their religion, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to 2 years, or with fine, or with both.

295-A: Deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs

Whoever, with deliberate and malicious intention of outraging the 'religious feelings of any class of the citizens of Pakistan, by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representations insults the religion or the religious beliefs of that class, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to 10 years, or with fine, or with both.

295-B: Defiling, etc., of Holy Qur'an

Whoever willfully defiles, damages, or desecrates a copy of the Holy Qur'an or of an extract therefrom or uses it in any derogatory manner or for any unlawful purpose shall be punishable with imprisonment for life.

295-C: Use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of the Holy Prophet

Whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation or by any imputation, innuendo, or insinuation, directly or indirectly, defiles the sacred name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) shall be punished with death, or imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine.

298: Uttering words, etc., with deliberate intent to wound religious feelings

Whoever, with the deliberate intention of wounding the religious feelings of any person, utters any word or makes any sound in the hearing of that person, or makes any gesture in the sight of that person or places any object in the sight of that person, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to 1 year or with a fine, or with both.

298-A: Use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of holy personages

Whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation, or by any imputation, innuendo, or insinuation, directly or indirectly, defiles the sacred name of any wife (Ummul Mumineen) or members of the family (Ahle-bait) of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), or any of the righteous Caliphs (Khulafae-Rashideen) or companions (Sahaaba) of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to 3 years, or with a fine, or with both.

298-B: Misuse of epithets, descriptions and titles, etc., reserved for certain holy personages or places

(1) Any person of the Qadiani group or the Lahori group (who call themselves 'Ahmadis,' or by any other name, who by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation—

(a) refers to or addresses any person, other than a Caliph or companion of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), as "Ameer-ulMumineen," "Khalifatul-Mumineen," "Khalifa-tul-Muslimeen," "Sahaabi," or "Razi Allah Anho";

(b) refers to or addresses any person, other than a wife of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), as "Ummul-Mumineen";

(c) refers to or addresses any person, other than a member of the family "Ahle-bait" of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), as "Ahle-bait"; or

(d) refers to, or names, or calls his place of worship a "Masjid";

shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to 3 years, and shall also be liable to a fine.

(2) Any person of the Qadiani group or Lahori group (who call themselves "Ahmadis" or by any other name) who by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation refers to the mode or form of call to prayers followed by his faith as "Azan", or recites Azan as used by the Muslims, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to 3 years, and shall also be liable to fine.

298-C: Person of Qadiani group, etc., calling himself a Muslim or preaching or propagating his faith

Any person of the Qadiani group or the Lahori group (who call themselves 'Ahmadis' or by any other name), who directly or indirectly poses himself as a Muslim, or calls or refers to his faith as Islam, or preaches or propagates his faith, or invites others to accept his faith, by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representations, or in any manner whatsoever outrages the religious feelings of Muslims shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to 3 years and shall also be liable to fine.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA**The religious framework of the state: Constitution¹¹¹****Preamble:**

WE, THE PEOPLE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA—

- united in one nation
- pay homage to the memory of our ancestors—the source of our strength and origin of our combined heritage
- acknowledge the worthy customs and traditional wisdoms of our people—which have come down to us from generation to generation
- pledge ourselves to guard and pass on to those who come after us our noble traditions and the Christian principles that are ours now. By authority of our inherent right as ancient, free and independent peoples

WE, THE PEOPLE, do now establish this sovereign nation and declare ourselves, under the guiding hand of God, to be the Independent State of Papua New Guinea.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:**Customs Act****Article 97:¹¹²**

Goods (other than films) which, whether of their own nature or having regard to any literary or other work or matter that is embodied, recorded, or reproduced in, or can be reproduced from, them —

- (a) are blasphemous, indecent or obscene; or
- (b) unduly emphasize matters of sex, horror, violence or crime; or
- (c) are likely to encourage depravity,

And advertising matters relating to such goods. Subject to compliance with the provisions of the Classification of Publication (Censorship) Act 1989.

Classification of Publication (Censorship) Act 1989¹¹³

2: Interpretation

(1) In this Act, unless the contrary intention appears—
“objectionable publication” means a publication that—

- (a) describes, depicts, expresses, or otherwise deals with matters of sex, drug misuse, or addiction, crime, cruelty, blasphemy, immorality, violence or revolting or abhorrent phenomena in a manner that is likely to be offensive to a reasonable adult person and is undesirable in the interest of the public; or
- (b) depicts a child (whether engaged in sexual activity or otherwise) who is, or who is apparently, under the age of 18 years, in a manner that is likely to cause offense to a reasonable adult person and is undesirable in the interest of the public; or
- (c) promotes, incites, or encourages terrorism;

70: Publishing of objectionable publications

(1) A person who publishes an objectionable publication, other than a prescribed publication, is guilty of an offense punishable—

- (a) in the case of a body corporate—by a fine not exceeding K5,000.00; and
- (b) in the case of an individual—by a fine not exceeding K1,000.00 or by imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months, or both.

(2) A person who publishes a prescribed publication is guilty of an offense, punishable—

- (a) in the case of a body corporate—by a fine not exceeding K10,000.00; and
- (b) in the case of an individual—by a fine not exceeding K1,000.00 or by imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months, or both.

71: Possession of objectionable publications

(1) A person who has in his possession an objectionable publication, other than a prescribed publication, is guilty of an offense punishable:

- (a) in the case of a body corporate—by a fine not exceeding 5,000.00 kina; and
- (b) in the case of an individual—by a fine not exceeding 1,000.00 kina or by imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months, or both.

(2) A person who has in his possession a prescribed publication is guilty of an offense punishable:

- (a) in the case of a body corporate—by a fine not exceeding 10,000.00 kina; and
- (b) in the case of an individual—by a fine not exceeding 1,000.00 kina or by imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months, or both.

72: Keeping objectionable publications at a premises

(1) The occupier of premises who keeps or permits to be kept at or in the premises an objectionable publication, other than a prescribed publication, is guilty of an offense punishable—

- (a) in the case of a body corporate—by a fine not exceeding 5,000.00 kina; and
- (b) in the case of an individual—by a fine not exceeding 1,000.00 kina or by imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months, or both.

(2) The occupier of premises who keeps or permits to be kept at or in those premises a prescribed publication is guilty of an offense punishable—

- (a) in the case of a body corporate—by a fine not exceeding 10,000.00 kina; and
- (b) in the case of an individual—by a fine not exceeding 1,000.00 kina or by imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months, or both.

73: Publishing objectionable publications in a public place

(1) A person who exhibits or displays an objectionable publication, other than a prescribed publication, in a public place or in such a manner that it is visible to persons in or on a public place is guilty of an offense punishable—

- (a) in the case of a body corporate—by a fine not exceeding 5,000.00 kina; and
- (b) in the case of an individual—by a fine not exceeding 1,000.00 kina or by imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months, or both.

(2) A person who exhibits or displays a prescribed publication in a public place, or in such a manner that it is visible to persons in or on a public place, is guilty of an offense punishable—

- (a) in the case of a body corporate—by a fine not exceeding 10,000.00 kina; and
- (b) in the case of an individual—by a fine not exceeding 1,000.00 kina or by imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months, or both.

74: Making objectionable publications

(1) A person who involves himself in the printing or otherwise in the making of or producing an objectionable publication is guilty of an offense punishable–

(a) in the case of a body corporate–by a fine not exceeding 5,000.00 kina; and

(b) in the case of an individual–by a fine not exceeding 1,000.00 kina or by imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months, or both.

(2) A person who involves himself in the printing or otherwise in the making of or producing a prescribed publication is guilty of an offense punishable–

(a) in the case of a body corporate–by a fine not exceeding 10,000.00 kina; and

(b) in the case of an individual–by a fine not exceeding 1,000.00 kina or by imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months, or both.

Summary Offenses Act 1977¹¹⁴**25A: Possession, etc., of indecent etc., article¹¹⁵**

(1) A person who–

(a) has in his possession; or

(b) makes; or

(c) produces; or

(d) performs in the making or production of; or

(e) exhibits; or

(f) sells,

an article or articles that–

(a) is or are blasphemous or indecent; or

(b) grossly offends or grossly offend against accepted standards of decency, is guilty of an offense.

Penalty: A fine not exceeding 3,000.00 kina or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months.

(2) It is a defense to a charge of an offense against Subsection (1)(d) that the person charged was not aware that he was performing in the making or production of an article or articles.

(3) For the purposes of this section–

“article” means any description of article containing or embodying matter to be read or looked at or both, any sound record and any film or other record or a picture or pictures;

“film” means–

(a) a cinematograph film, and includes a positive or negative of a cinematograph film; or

(b) a video tape or video disc.

PHILIPPINES**The religious framework of the state: Constitution¹¹⁶****Preamble:**

We, the sovereign Filipino people, imploring the aid of Almighty God, in order to build a just and humane society and establish a Government that shall embody our ideals and aspirations, promote the common good, conserve and develop our patrimony, and secure to ourselves and our posterity the blessings of independence and democracy under the rule of law and a regime of truth, justice, freedom, love, equality, and peace, do ordain and promulgate this Constitution.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:**Penal Code¹¹⁷****Article 133: Offending the religious feelings**

The penalty of arrest to mayor in its maximum period to prison correccional in its minimum period shall be imposed upon anyone who, in a place devoted to religious worship or during the celebration of any religious ceremony, shall perform acts notoriously offensive to the feelings of the faithful.

POLAND**Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:****Penal Code¹¹⁸****Offenses against Freedom of Conscience and Religion****Article 196:**

Whoever offends the religious feelings of other persons by outraging in public an object of religious worship or a place dedicated to the public celebration of religious rites, shall be subject to a fine, the penalty of restriction of liberty or the penalty of deprivation of liberty for up to 2 years.

PORTUGAL**Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:****Penal Code¹¹⁹****Article 251: Outrage on the grounds of religious belief**

(1) Whoever publicly offends another person or mocks him because of his belief or religious function, in a manner appropriate to disturb the public peace, shall be punished with imprisonment up to 1 year or with a fine of up to 120 days.

QATAR

The religious framework of the state: Constitution¹²⁰

Article 1:

Qatar is an Arab State, sovereign and independent. Its religion is Islam, and the Islamic Law is the main source of its legislations. Its system is democratic, and its official language is the Arabic language. The people of Qatar are part of the Arab Nation.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code¹²¹

Article 1: Introductory Provisions

Islamic Shari'a provisions concerning the following crimes are applicable if the suspect or the victim is a Muslim:

- (1) The crimes such as theft, adultery, defamation, drinking alcohol, and apostasy.
- (2) The crimes of retaliation and blood money.

Otherwise, the crimes and the punishments are determined due to this law and any other law.

Article 256: Crimes related to religions and the violability of the dead

One is convicted to no more than 7 years in prison in case of committing any of the following deeds:

- (1) Insulting the Supreme Being in letter and spirit, in writing, drawing, gesturing, or in any other way.
- (2) Offending, misinterpreting, or violating the Holy Koran.
- (3) Offending the Islamic religion or one of its rites.
- (4) Cursing any of the divine religions according to the regulations of the Islamic law.
- (5) Insulting any of the prophets in letter and spirit, in writing, drawing, gesturing, or in any other way.
- (6) Sabotaging, breaking, damaging, or violating places or their contents if they are made to perform religious rites for one of the divine religions according to the regulations of the Islamic law.

Article 263:

One is convicted to no more than a year and to a fine of no more than 1,000 riyals or to one of these two penalties in case of producing, selling, exposing for sale or circulation, or possessing products, merchandise, prints, or tapes including drawings, slogans, words, symbols, signals, or anything else that might offend the Islamic religion or other divine religions according to the regulations of the Islamic law.

The same penalty is imposed on everyone who uses disks, computer programs, or magnetized tapes to offend Islam or other divine religions according to the regulations of the Islamic law.

RWANDA

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code¹²²

Article 278: Publicly humiliating a religious worship

Any person who, by acts, speeches, gestures, writing or threats, publicly humiliates rites, symbols, or objects of religion, either in place intended for or generally used for the practice of religion shall be liable to a term of imprisonment of at least 15 days but less than 6 months and a fine of 50,000 to 500,000 Rwandan francs, or one of these penalties.

Article 279: Insults, battery, or injury upon a religious leader

Any person who, by acts, speeches, gestures, or threats, humiliates a religious leader shall be liable to a term of imprisonment of 6 months to 2 years.

If that religious leader is beaten in the exercise of his/her ministry, the offender will be liable to a term of imprisonment of 2 to 5 years and a fine of 100,000 to 500,000 Rwandan francs.

If the battery results in bleeding, bodily injuries, or illness, the offender shall be liable to a term of imprisonment of 2 to 5 years and fine of 100,000 to 1,000,000 Rwandan francs.

Law Determining Offences and Penalties in General¹²³

Article 154: Public defamation of religious rituals

Any person who publicly defames religious rituals, symbols, and religious cult objects by use of actions, words, signs, writings, gestures, or threats, whether carried out at the place where rituals are intended to be performed or where they are normally performed, commits an offence.

Upon conviction, he/she is liable to imprisonment for a term of not less than fifteen (15) days but less than three (3) months and a fine of not less than one hundred thousand Rwandan francs (FRW 100,000) and not more than two hundred thousand Rwandan francs (FRW 2,000,000) or only one of the penalties.

RUSSIA

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Federal Law No. 136-FZ dated 29 June 2013 of the Russian Federation Moscow¹²⁴

“On amendments to article 148 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation and some legislative instruments of the Russian Federation to counter offence [sic] against the religious beliefs and feelings of citizens.”

Article 1:

Article 148 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (Collected Legislation of the Russian Federation, 1996, No. 25, art. 2954; 2003, No. 50, art. 4848; 2010, No. 19, art. 2289; 2011, No. 50, art. 7362) shall be hereby revised to read as follows: “Article 148. Infringement of the right to freedom of conscience and religion

(1) Public actions expressing overt disrespect for society and committed for the purpose of offending the religious feelings of believers–

shall be punishable by a fine of up to 300,000 rubles or the amount of the earned or other income of the convicted offender for a period of up to 2 years, or mandatory community service of up to 240 hours, or compulsory labor for up to 1 year, or incarceration for the same period of time.

(2) Criminal acts covered by part one hereof which are committed in places specially designated for worship and other religious observances and ceremonies, – shall be punishable by a fine of up to 500,000 rubles or the amount of the earned or other income of the convicted offender for a period of up to 3 years, or mandatory community service of up to 480 hours, or compulsory labor for up to 3 years, or incarceration for the same period with or without restriction of freedom for up to 1 year.

(3) Unlawful obstruction of the activity of religious organizations or the conduct of worship or other religious observances and ceremonies– shall be punishable by a fine of up to 300,000 rubles or the amount of earned or other income of the convicted offender for a period of up to 2 years, or mandatory community service of up to 360 hours, or remedial labor for up to 1 year, or confinement for up to 3 months.

(4) Criminal acts covered by part three hereof committed:

a) by a person using their official position;

b) with the use or threat of force–

(5) shall be punishable by a fine of up to 200,000 rubles or the amount of the earned or other income of the convicted offender for a period of up to 1 year, or mandatory community service for up to 480 hours, or remedial labor for up to 2 years, or compulsory labor for up to 1 year, or incarceration for the same period with disqualification from holding certain positions or engaging in certain activities for up to two 2 years.”

Article 5.26:¹²⁵

Violation of the law on freedom of conscience and freedom of religion and on religious associations

(1) Obstruction of the exercise of the right to freedom of conscience and freedom of religion, including acceptance or rejection of religious or other convictions, or of entry into or withdrawal from a religious association, shall incur an administrative fine on citizens of 10,000 to 30,000 rubles; and on officials from 15,000 to 100,000 rubles.

(2) Intentional public desecration, damage, or destruction of religious or liturgical literature, items of religious worship, signs or emblems of belief symbolism and attributes shall incur an administrative fine on citizens of 30,000 to 50,000 rubles or mandatory community service of up to 120 hours; and on officials from 100,000 to 200,000 rubles.”

SAN MARINO

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Criminal Code¹²⁶

Article 260: Religious insult

Whoever desecrates the symbols or the objects of cult or worship of a religion [that] is not contrary to morals, or publicly mocks the acts of a cult, is liable to first-degree imprisonment.

The same penalty is applicable to attacks on the honor or prestige of a priest in or due to the exercise of his functions. Whoever desecrates the sacred relics of San Marino is liable to second-term imprisonment.

SAUDI ARABIA**The religious framework of the state:**

“Saudi Arabia does not have a written penal code, but relies on judges’ interpretations of the Shari’a for determination of which actions constitute crimes and what the attendant punishment should be. The definitions of crimes and nature and severity of punishments may vary from case to case.”¹²⁷

“Saudi law divides punishments for criminal acts into three broad categories: (1) offenses against God carrying inalterable punishments prescribed by the Qur’an (hadd); (2) private rights to retribution connected with a criminal act (qisas); and (3) discretionary punishments (ta’zir) for all other criminal offenses.”¹²⁸

Apostasy (*riddah*) is a hadd crime and is punishable by death. Blasphemy against Salafism or the Saudi monarchy is also punishable by death, but the more common penalties are prison sentences, fines, and lashing.¹²⁹ “Courts have not sentenced individuals to death for blasphemy since 1992.”¹³⁰ The Commission to Promote Virtue and Prevent Vice (CPVPV), or *Mutaween*, is the Saudi government’s religious police, tasked with enforcing public morality based on the Saudi government’s interpretation of Islamic law. In more recent years, the Saudi government has curtailed the powers of the CPVPV; for example, CPVPV field officers reportedly do not patrol in public and one former CPVPV officer stated that “the CPVPV has been ‘deprived of all its prerogatives’ and that it ‘no longer has a clear role’.”¹³¹

Basic Law of Government Chapter 1 General Principles**Article 1: Official state religion**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a sovereign Arab Islamic state with Islam as its religion; God’s Book and the Sunnah of His Prophet, God’s prayers and peace be upon him, are its constitution; Arabic is its language and Riyadh is its capital.

Article 11:

Saudi society will be based on the principle of adherence to God’s command, on mutual cooperation in good deeds and piety and mutual support and inseparability.

Article 48:

The courts will apply the rules of the Islamic Shari’a in the cases that are brought before them, in accordance with what is indicated in the Book and the Sunnah, and statutes decreed by the Ruler which do not contradict the Book or the Sunnah.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:**External Printed Matter****Article 18:**

External printed matter shall be approved if free from anything insulting to Islam or the system of Government or injurious to high interests of the state or scarify public morality and conflict with ethical standards.

SEYCHELLES**Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:****Penal Code¹³²****Section 35**

When in this code no punishment is especially provided for any misdemeanor, it shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years or with a fine, or with both.¹³³

Section 125

Any person who destroys, damages, or defiles any place of worship or any object [that] is held sacred by any class of persons with the intention of thereby insulting the religion of any class of persons or with the knowledge that any class of persons is likely to consider such destruction, damage, or defilement as an insult to their religion, is guilty of a misdemeanor.

Section 127

Every person who with the intention of wounding the feelings of any person or of insulting the religion of any person, or with the knowledge that the feelings of any person are likely to be wounded, or that the religion of any person is likely to be insulted thereby, commits any trespass in any place of worship or in any place of sepulture or in any place set apart for the performance of funeral rites or as a depository for the remains of the dead, or offers any indignity to any human corpse, or causes disturbance to any persons assembled for the purpose of funeral ceremonies, is guilty of a misdemeanor.

Section 128

Any person who, with the deliberate intention of wounding the religious feelings of any other person, any word, or any person who, with the like intention, utters any word or makes any sound in the hearing of any other person or makes any gesture or places any object in the sight of any other person is guilty of misdemeanor and is liable to imprisonment for 1 year.

SINGAPORE

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act 1990¹³⁴
17F

(2) A person commits an offence if —

- (a) the person knowingly engages in conduct that —
 - (i) insults the religion or religious belief or activity of another person in Singapore (called in this subsection a target person); or
 - (ii) wounds the religious feelings of a person in Singapore (called in this subsection a target person) who holds a religious belief or view;
- (b) the target person is distinguished by religion or religious belief or activity;
- (c) the person does so knowing that the religion or religious belief or activity of the target person is likely to be insulted or the religious feelings of the target person are likely to be wounded; and
- (d) the person is a religious leader when the person engages in the conduct.

(4) A person commits an offence if —

- (a) the person knowingly engages in conduct that —
 - (i) insults the religion or religious belief or activity of another person in Singapore (called in this subsection a target person); or
 - (ii) wounds the religious feelings of a person in Singapore (called in this subsection a target person) who holds a religious belief or view;
- (b) the target person is distinguished by religion or religious belief or activity;
- (c) the person does so knowing that the religion or religious belief or activity of the target person is likely to be insulted or the religious feelings of the target person are likely to be wounded; and
- (d) the insult or wounding mentioned in paragraph (c) (as the case may be) would threaten the public peace or public order in Singapore or any part of Singapore.

(6) A person who is guilty of an offence under subsection (1), (2), (3) or (4) shall be liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years or to a fine, or to both.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

The religious framework of the state: Constitution¹³⁵

Preamble:

We the people of Solomon Islands, proud of the wisdom and the worthy customs of our ancestors, mindful of our common and diverse heritage and conscious of our common destiny, do now, under the guiding hand of God, establish the sovereign democratic State of Solomon Islands.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code¹³⁶

41: General punishment for misdemeanors

When in this Code no punishment is specially provided for any misdemeanor, it shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or with a fine or with both.

131: Insult to religion of any class

Any person who destroys, damages or defiles any place of worship or any object which is held sacred by any class of persons with the intention of thereby insulting the religion of any class of persons or with the knowledge that any class of persons is likely to consider such destruction, damage or defilement as an insult to their religion, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

135: Writing or uttering words with intent to wound religious feelings

Any person who, with the deliberate intention of wounding the religious feelings of any other person, writes any word, or any person who, with the like intention, utters any word or makes any sound in the hearing of any other person or makes any gesture or places any object in the sight of any other person, is guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be liable to imprisonment for one year.

SOMALIA

The religious framework of the state: Constitution¹³⁷

Article 2: State and Religion

(1) Islam is the religion of the state.

(2) No religion other than Islam can be propagated in the country.

(3) No law which is not compliant with the general principles and objectives of Shari'a can be enacted.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code¹³⁸

Part IV, Chapter 1

Article 313: Bringing the Religion of the State into contempt

(1) Whoever publicly brings the religion of Islam [1 Const.] into contempt shall be punished with imprisonment [96 P.C.] up to 2 years.

(2) Whoever publicly insults the religion of Islam [1 Const.] by bringing into contempt persons professing it or places or objects dedicated to worship shall be liable to the same punishment.

SOUTH SUDAN

The religious framework of the state: Constitution¹³⁹

Preamble:

We, the People of South Sudan, Grateful to the Almighty God for giving the people of South Sudan the wisdom and courage to determine their destiny and future through a free, transparent, and peaceful referendum in accordance with the provisions of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, 2005;

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code¹⁴⁰

CHAPTER XV: Offenses Relating to Religion

Section 201: Insulting or Inciting Contempt of Religious Creed

Whoever by any means publicly insults or seeks to incite contempt of any religion in such a manner as to be likely to lead to a breach of the peace, commits an offense, and upon conviction, shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 years or with a fine, or with both.

Section 203: Injuring or Defiling Place of Worship with Intent to Insult the Religion of any Class

Whoever destroys, damages, or defiles any place of worship or any object held sacred by any class of persons with the intention of thereby insulting the religion of any class of persons likely to consider such destruction, damage, or defilement as an insult to their religion, commits an offense, and upon conviction, shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 years or with a fine, or with both.

SPAIN

The religious framework of the state: Constitution¹⁴¹

Section 16

(3) No religion shall have a state character. The public authorities shall take into account the religious beliefs of Spanish society and shall consequently maintain appropriate cooperation relations with the Catholic Church and other confessions.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Criminal Code¹⁴²

Article 525:

(1) Whoever, in order to offend the feelings of the members of a religious confession, publicly disparages their dogmas, beliefs, rites, or ceremonies in public, verbally or in writing, or insult, also publicly, those who profess or practice these, shall incur the punishment of a fine from 8 to 12 months.

(2) The same penalties shall be incurred by those who publicly disparage, verbally or in writing, those who do not profess any religion or belief whatsoever.

SRI LANKA

The religious framework of the state: Constitution¹⁴³

9: Buddhism

The Republic of Sri Lanka shall give to Buddhism the foremost place and accordingly it shall be the duty of the state to protect and foster the Buddha Sasana, while assuring to all religions the rights granted by Articles 10 and 14(1)(e).

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code¹⁴⁴

Chapter XV: Offenses Relating to Religion

Article 290:

Whoever destroys, damages, or defiles any place of worship, or any object held sacred by any class of persons, with the intention of thereby insulting the religion of any class of persons or with the knowledge that any class of persons is likely to consider such destruction, damage, or defilement as an insult to their religion, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to 2 years, or with a fine, or with both.

Article 290A:

Whoever does any act, in or upon, or in the vicinity of, any place of worship or any object [that] is held sacred or in veneration by any class of persons, with the intention of wounding the religious feelings of any class of persons or with the knowledge that any class of persons is likely to consider such an act an insult to their religion, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to 1 year, or with [a] fine, or with both.

Article 291A:

Whoever, with the deliberate intention of wounding the religious feelings of any person, utters any word or makes any sound in the hearing of that person, or makes any gesture in the sight of that person, or places any object in the sight of that person, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to 1 year, or with [a] fine, or with both.

Article 291B:

Whoever, with the deliberate and malicious intention of outraging the religious feelings of any class of persons, by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representations, insults or attempts to insult the religion or religious beliefs of that class, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to 2 years, or with [a] fine, or with both.

ST. LUCIA

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Criminal Code¹⁴⁵

Article 318: Conditional privilege on publication in good faith

A publication of defamatory matter is privileged, on condition that it is published in good faith, and in any of the following cases—

- (g) if the matter published is in fact a fair report of anything said, done, or shown in a civil or criminal inquiry or proceeding before any Court, unless the Court prohibits the publication of anything said or shown before it, on the ground that it is seditious, immoral, or blasphemous;

Article 326: Plea of justification of libel

(1) Where a person accused of publishing defamatory matter pleads that the defamatory matter published by him or her was true, and that it was for the public benefit that the matter should be published in the manner in which and

at the time when it was published, such plea may justify the defamatory matter in the sense specified, if any, in the count, or in the sense which the defamatory matter bears without any such specific justification, or separate pleas justifying the defamatory matter in each sense may be pleaded separately, as if two libels had been charged in separate counts.

(6) No plea of justification shall be pleaded to any indictment or count of a charge of seditious, blasphemous, or obscene libel.

Article 327: Penalty for intentional libel

A person who is convicted of intentional libel is liable on conviction on indictment to imprisonment for 5 years.

Article 328: Penalty for negligent libel

A person who is convicted of negligent libel is liable on conviction on indictment to imprisonment for 2 years.

ST. VINCENT AND GRENADINES

The religious framework of the state: Constitution¹⁴⁶

Preamble:

WHEREAS the Peoples of the Island of Saint Vincent, who are known as Vincentians—

- (a) have affirmed that the Nation is founded on the belief in the supremacy of God and the freedom and dignity of man;
- (b) desire that their society be so ordered as to express their recognition of the principles of democracy, free institutions, social justice, and equality before the law;
- (c) realize that the maintenance of human dignity presupposes safeguarding the rights of privacy of family life, of property, and the fostering of the pursuit of just economic rewards for labor;
- (d) desire that their Constitution should enshrine the above-mentioned freedoms, principles, and ideals;

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Criminal Code¹⁴⁷

Article 117:

Any person who destroys, damages, or defiles any place of worship, or any object [that] is held sacred by any group or class of persons, with the intention thereby of insulting the religion of those persons, or with the knowledge that any group or class of person is likely to consider such destruction, damage, or defilement as an insult to their religion, is guilty of an offense and liable to imprisonment for 5 years.

Article 119:

Any person who with the intention of wounding the religious feeling of any other person, writes any word, or utters any word or makes any gesture or sound in the sight or hearing of any other person, or places any object in the sight of any other person, is guilty of an offense and liable to imprisonment for 2 years.

SUDAN

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

The Criminal Act of 1991¹⁴⁸

Article 125: Insulting Religious Beliefs^{149 150}

(1) Whoever degrades or publicly insults, in any way, noble beliefs or religions, and/or their rituals or beliefs, or works to stir up a feeling of contempt about religions, is punished with imprisonment for a period not exceeding 6 months, or a fine;

(2) Whoever (non-Muslims) publicly degrades or insults our prophet Muhammad shall be punished with imprisonment for a period not exceeding 5 years;

(3) Whoever curses or insults, in any way, any of the companions of prophet Muhammad, or any of his wives, or his lineage, shall be punished with imprisonment for a period not exceeding 5 years;

(4) Whoever is convicted of the crime mentioned in clauses (2) and (3) and continues to repeat these crimes for the third time, their penalty should be doubled.

SURINAME

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Criminal Code¹⁵¹

Article 196-158:

A prison sentence not exceeding 1 year and a fine of the third category, or either one of these punishments, shall apply to:

(1) the person who publicly in speech or in writing or through image or data from automated works utters mocking blasphemy that is offensive to one's religious feelings;

(2) the person who mocks a religious minister in the lawful performance of his service;

(3) the person who taunts objects devoted to a worship service, where and when the practice of that service is lawful.

Article 197-159:

A person who distributes, openly exhibits or catches on a writing or image containing expressions which, as scornful blasphemies, are offensive to religious feelings, or, in order to be distributed, openly exhibited or touched, shall be, if he knows or has serious reason to suspect that such expressions appear in the writing or image, punished with imprisonment for not more than two months or fine not more than one hundred and twenty guilders. The same punishment shall be imposed on him who, with the same knowledge or reason for suspicion, openly performs the contents of such writings. If the guilty person commits one of the offences defined in this Article in his profession and, during the commission of the crime, less than two years have elapsed since a previous conviction of the guilty person for one of those offences has become final, he may be removed from the exercise of that profession..

SWITZERLAND

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Criminal Code¹⁵²

Title Twelve: Felonies and Misdemeanors against Public Order

Article 261:

Any person who publicly and maliciously insults or mocks the religious convictions of others, and in particularly their belief in God, or maliciously desecrates objects of religious veneration, any person who maliciously prevents, disrupts or publicly mocks an act of worship, the conduct of which is guaranteed by the Constitution, or any person who maliciously desecrates a place or object that is intended for a religious ceremony or an act of worship the conduct of which is guaranteed by the Constitution, shall be liable to a monetary penalty.

SYRIA

The religious framework of the state: Constitution¹⁵³

Article 3:

The religion of the President of the Republic is Islam; Islamic jurisprudence shall be a major source of legislation. The state shall respect all religions, and ensure the freedom to perform all the rituals that do not prejudice public order. The personal status of religious communities shall be protected and respected.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code¹⁵⁴

Article 208:

Public venues are considered:

(1)(1) Activities and movements if they occur in a public place or in an area available to the public, or an exhibition for viewing, or which are seen because a person who had nothing to do with them saw them by mistake.

(2)(2) Talking or shouting, whether publicly or transmitted mechanically, so that in both cases they are actually heard by those who have nothing to do with them.

(3)(3) Writing, drawings, paintings, photographs, films, symbols, and illustrations of various kinds if they are exhibited in a public place or in an area available to the public, or an exhibit for viewing, or if they are sold or displayed for sale or are distributed to one or more people.

Article 462:

Anyone who engages in one of the ways specified in Article 208 to disparage the religious rituals that are practiced publicly or who incites to showing contempt for these rituals shall be punished by imprisonment from 2 months to 2 years.

Article 463:

The following shall be punished by imprisonment of 1 month to 1 year:

(1) Anyone who causes a disturbance during the performance of a religious ritual, celebration, or ceremony, or who obstructs them by violence or threats.

(2) Anyone who destroys, smashes, defaces, desecrates, or defiles a building dedicated to worship, a slogan, or anything else that is venerated by the members of a religion or a group of people.

(3) Violation of the sanctity of the dead or crimes that violate the orderliness of their burial.

Article 464:

Anyone who creates a disturbance at funeral ceremonies or celebrations of the dead or who obstructs them with violence or threats shall be punished by imprisonment of 2 months to 1 year.

TAJIKISTAN

Code on Administrative Offenses¹⁵⁵

Article 86:¹⁵⁶

2: The offense of religious feelings of citizens, or the desecration of objects and also signs and emblems of symbols of a worldview, which in accordance with their beliefs, are objects for worship, in the absence of signs of a crime lead to a fine on individuals in the sum of from 10 to 20, and on officials, from 40 to 50 base values.¹⁵⁷

TANZANIA

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code¹⁵⁸

Chapter IV: Punishments

35: When in the Code no punishment is expressly provided for any offence, it shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years or with a fine or with both.

Chapter XIV: Offenses Relating to Religion

125: Any person who destroys, damages or defiles any place of worship or any object which is held sacred by any class of persons with the intention of insulting the religion of any class of persons or with the knowledge that any class of persons is likely to consider such destruction, damage or defilement as an insult to their religion is guilty of an offence.

127: A person who, with the intention of wounding the feelings of any person or of insulting the religion of any person, or with the knowledge that the feelings of any person are likely to be wounded, or that the religion of any person is likely to be insulted thereby, commits any trespass in any place of worship or in any place of sepulture or in any place set apart for the performance of funeral rites or as a depository for the remains of the dead, or offers any indignity to any human corpse, or causes disturbance to any persons assembled for the purpose of funeral ceremonies, is guilty of an offence..

129: Any person who, with the deliberate intention of wounding the religious feelings of any person, utters any word, or makes any sound in the hearing of that person or makes any gesture in the sight of that person or places any object in the sight of that person, commits an offence and upon conviction is liable to a fine of not less than three million shillings or to imprisonment for a term of not less than one year.

THAILAND

The religious framework of the state: Constitution¹⁵⁹

Section 67:

The State should support and protect Buddhism and other religions. In supporting and protecting Buddhism, which is the religion observed by the majority of Thai people for a long period of time, the State should promote and support education and dissemination of dharmic principles of Theravada Buddhism for the development of mind and wisdom development, and shall have measures and mechanisms to prevent Buddhism from being undermined in any form. The State should also encourage Buddhists to participate in implementing such measures or mechanisms.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Criminal Code¹⁶⁰

Section 206:

Whoever to do, by any means whatever, to the object or place of religious worship of any group of persons in the manner likely to insult such religion, shall be imprisoned as from 2 years to 7 years or fined as from 2,000 two baht to 14,000 baht, or both.

THE SANGHA ACT¹⁶¹

B.E. 2505 [1962]

BHUMIBOL ADULYADEJ REX.

CHAPTER 7

PENAL PROVISIONS¹⁶²

Section 44:

Any person who has been relieved from monkhood because he has committed a grave offense which resulted in expulsion from monkhood, regardless of a judgment pursuant to Section 25, and comes back to be ordained by giving a false statement or conceals facts from the preceptor shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 1 year.

Section 44 bis:

Any person who defames, insults, or threatens the Supreme Patriarch shall be liable for imprisonment for a term not exceeding 1 year, or fine not exceeding 20,000 baht, or both.

Section 44 ter:

Any person who imputes the Sangha or other Sangha, which may be injurious to the reputation or create disharmony, shall be liable for imprisonment for a term not exceeding 1 year, or fine not exceeding 20,000 baht, or both.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Criminal Offenses Act¹⁶³

Section 5

Any person who is convicted of any of the following offenses, that is to say, any attempt to commit a common law offense or an offense made indictable by any statute or Order in Council of the United Kingdom or any Act in force in Trinidad and Tobago at the time of such attempt being made; blasphemy, writing and publishing, or printing and publishing, any blasphemous libel; bribery, conspiracy, escape, or aiding or assisting in, or voluntarily or negligently permitting any escape; breaking out of any prison in which such person shall be lawfully detained on any civil process, or under sentence for any indictable offense, or to which such person has been committed on any charge of an indictable offense; any rescue of, or attempt to rescue, any person, when such offense is not punishable as an arrestable offense; keeping a common gaming-house, or common bawdy-house, or a common ill-governed and disorderly house; sending any challenge with intent to provoke, or otherwise endeavoring to provoke, any person to commit a breach of the peace; sedition; writing and publishing or printing and publishing, any seditious libel, or publishing any obscene print, writing, or picture; every such offender is liable to a fine and to imprisonment for 2 years.

TUNISIA

The religious framework of the state: Constitution¹⁶⁴

Article 1: Sovereignty, Religion, Language, Government system

Tunisia is a free, independent, sovereign state; its religion is Islam, its language Arabic, and its system is republican.

This article might not be amended.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code¹⁶⁵

Article 121a:

Any person provoking rebellion, either by speeches in public meetings or public spaces or by advertisement or poster or printed publication, shall be punished as having taken part in the rebellion. Should the rebellion not take place, the agitator shall be punished by imprisonment for 1 year.

Article 121b:

This article has been moved from the press code in virtue of Article 2 of the law No. 2001-43 of May 3, 2001 – Ex. Article 61 – When performed deliberately, the sale, distribution, or reproduction of banned works, or the publication or the defamation under a different title of a banned work, shall be punishable by imprisonment for 16 days to 1 year and a fine of 60 to 600 dinars.

The Ministry of the Interior shall proceed with an attachment order for the copies and reproductions of the banned works.

Article 121c:

This article has been moved from the press code in virtue of Article 2 of the law No. 2001-43 of May 3, 2001 – Ex Article 62 – Distribution, sale, public exhibition, and possession with the intent to distribute, sell, exhibit in the form of propaganda, leaflets, bulletins or flyers, whether or not of foreign origin and having the effect of a breach of the peace or public morals are prohibited. Any violation of the prohibition decreed in the previous paragraph may lead to imprisonment from 6 months to 5 years and a fine of 120 to 1,200 dinars in addition to immediate seizure.

Article 226a:

Any act of public indecency committed by any person shall be subject to 6 months of imprisonment and a fine of 48 dinars.

Article 226b:

Any act or speech considered lewd or injurious to public morals or an intentional assault on the decency of another person or which causes another person's embarrassment shall be punishable by 6 months imprisonment and a fine of 1,000 dinars.

The same punishment as set forth in the preceding paragraph shall apply to any person who draws public attention to a commission of debauchery through publications, recordings, or audio, visual, electronic or optical means.

Article 226c:

Any person committing an act of sexual harassment shall be subject to 1 year of imprisonment and a fine of 3,000 dinars.

Sexual harassment includes persistent embarrassment of another person by a repetition of acts or speech or gestures [that] may harm that person's dignity or decency with the intent of causing the person to submit to his or her own sexual desires or to those of another person or to exercise pressure on that person to weaken their wish to resist such desires.

The punishment is doubled when the violation is committed with a minor or other person particularly susceptible to the harasser due to mental or physical disability.

Article 226d:

The punishments provided in the preceding two articles do not prejudice the application of more severe punishments provided for other violations.

Legal proceedings may only take place upon request by the public prosecutor in reaction to a complaint filed by the victim.

Should the case be dismissed or the accused be acquitted in a court of law, the accused may request, as appropriate, compensation for damages suffered without prejudice to legal action against the accuser for making false allegations.

TURKEY

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Criminal Code¹⁶⁶

Article 216:

(3) A person who openly insults the religious values of a section of the public shall be sentenced to a penalty of imprisonment of six months to one year in the case the act is capable of disturbing public peace.

TURKMENISTAN

Code on Administrative Offenses¹⁶⁷

Article 75: Violation of the right to freedom of religious confession and association in religious organizations¹⁶⁸

(1) The violation of the right of citizens to confess any religion or none at all, to express and spread their convictions, in connection with religion, to participate in the carrying out of religious cults, rituals, and rites, to associate into religious organizations, and also the offense of religious feelings carries with it a warning or a fine in the amount of from 2 to 5 of the base value.

(2) Drawing citizens into religious organizations, and also into movements and sects, and into their activities, through the use of material incentive, psychological pressure, deception, and other illegal acts leads to the imposition of a fine in the amount of from 5 to 10 of the base value.

(3) The obstruction of citizens' exercise of their right to freedom of conscience and religious confession against their will leads to a fine in the amount of between 5 to 10 of the base value or administrative arrest for a period of up to 15 days.¹⁶⁹

TUVALU

The religious framework of the state: Constitution¹⁷⁰

Preamble:

And whereas the people of Tuvalu, acknowledging God as the Almighty and Everlasting Lord and giver of all good things, humbly place themselves under His good providence and seek His blessing upon themselves and their lives;

And whereas the people of Tuvalu desire to constitute themselves as an independent State based on Christian principles, the Rule of Law, and Tuvaluan custom and tradition

Principles of the Constitution

2. The right of the people of Tuvalu, both present and future, to a full, free and happy life, and to moral, spiritual, personal and material welfare is affirmed as one given to them by God.

These principles, under the guidance of God, are solemnly adopted and affirmed as the basis of this Constitution, and as the guiding principles to be observed in its interpretation and application at all levels of government and organized life.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code¹⁷¹

42: General punishment for misdemeanor

When in this Code no punishment is specially provided for any misdemeanor, it shall be punishable with imprisonment for two years and with a fine.

123: Insult to religion of any class

Any person who destroys, damages, or defiles any place of worship or any object which is held sacred by any class of persons with the intention of thereby insulting the religion of any class of persons or with the knowledge that any class of persons is likely to consider such destruction, damage or defilement as an insult to their religion shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

127: Writing or uttering words with intent to wound religious feelings

Any person who, with the deliberate intention of wounding the religious feelings of any person, writes any word, or any person who, with the like intention, utters any word or makes any sound in the hearing of any other person or makes any gesture or places any object in the sight of any other person, is guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be liable to imprisonment for 1 year.

UGANDA

The religious framework of the state: Constitution¹⁷²

Article 7: Nonadoption of a state religion

Uganda shall not adopt a State religion.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code¹⁷³

22: General punishment for misdemeanors

When in this Code no punishment is specially provided for any misdemeanor, it shall be punishable with imprisonment for a period not exceeding two years.

118: Insult to religion

Any person who destroys, damages, or defiles any place of worship or any object which is held sacred by any class of persons, with the intention of thereby insulting the religion of any class of persons, or with the knowledge that any class of persons is likely to consider such destruction, damage or defilement as an insult to its religion, commits a misdemeanor.

122: Writing or uttering words with intent to wound religious feelings

Any person who, with the deliberate intention of wounding the religious feelings of any other person, writes any word, or any person who, with the like intention, utters any word or makes any sound in the hearing of any other person or makes any gesture or places any object in the sight of any other person, commits a misdemeanor and is liable to imprisonment for one year.

UKRAINE

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Criminal Code¹⁷⁴

Article 161: Violation of citizens' equality based on their race, nationality, or religious preferences

1. Deliberate actions inciting national, racial or religious enmity and hatred, humiliation of national honor and dignity, or the insult of citizens' feelings in respect to their religious convictions, and also any direct or indirect restriction of rights, or granting direct or indirect privileges to citizens based on race, color, political, religious and other convictions, sex, disability, ethnic and social origin, property status, place of residence, linguistic or other characteristics shall be punishable by a fine of two hundred to five hundred tax-free minimum incomes or restriction of liberty for up to five years, or imprisonment for up to

three years, with or without deprivation of the right to hold certain positions or engage in certain activities for up to three years.

2. The same actions accompanied with violence, deception, or threats, and those committed by an official shall be punishable by a fine of five hundred to one thousand tax-free minimum incomes or imprisonment for a term of two to five years, with or without deprivation of the right to hold certain positions or engage in certain activities for up to three years.

3. Any such actions as provided for by parts 1 or 2 of this Article, committed by an organized group of persons, or where they resulted in any grave consequences shall be punishable by imprisonment for a term of five to eight years.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

The religious framework of the state: Constitution¹⁷⁵

Part One: The Union, its Fundamental Constituents and Aims

Article 7:

Islam is the official religion of the Union. The Islamic Shari'a shall be a main source of legislation in the Union. The official language of the Union is Arabic.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code: Fed. Law 3 of 1987 as Amended¹⁷⁶

Book Two: Crimes and their Punishments

Article 312: Crimes against Religious Faith and Rights

Shall be punishable by confinement and by fine, or by one of these two penalties, any individual who commits any of the following offenses:

- (1) Offense against any of the Islamic sacred things or rites;
- (2) To insult and revile any of the recognized divine religions;

Where any of the above offenses is committed in public, the punishment shall be either confinement for a minimum period of 1 year or a fine.

Article 319:¹⁷⁷

Whoever opposes or vilifies the foundations or teachings on which the Muslim religion is based, or whatever he essentially knows of, offends this religion, preaches another religion, advocates for a doctrine or ideology that embraces any of the matters mentioned above, or commends or propagates any of these, shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years.

Federal Decree Law No. 2 of 2015¹⁷⁸

Article 4:

Any person who commits any of the following acts shall be sentenced for the crime of blasphemy:

- (1) Offending, showing contempt or irreverence toward the Divine Entity.
- (2) Offending, insulting, challenging, defaming, or disrespecting any religion or any of its rituals or sacred things, or disrupting or preventing licensed religious observances or ceremonies by violence or threat.
- (3) Distorting, destroying, desecrating, or insulting, in any way, any of the holy books.
- (4) Insulting, disrespecting, offending, or defaming one of the messengers or their spouses, family, or companions.
- (5) Destroying, damaging, or desecrating the sanctity of places of worship, cemeteries or graves, appurtenances or any of their contents.

Article 5:

(a) Any person who commits any of the acts set forth in Clauses (2, 3, 5) of Article (4) of the present Decree Law by any means of expression, or by any other form or means, shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a period not less than 5 years and to a fine not less than 250,000 dirhams and not exceeding 1,000,000 dirhams, or either one of these two penalties.

(b) Any person who commits any of the acts set forth in Clauses (1, 4) of Article (4) of this Decree Law by any means of expression, or by any other form or means, shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a period not less than 5 years and to a fine not less than 250,000 dirhams and not exceeding 2,000,000 dirhams.

UZBEKISTAN**Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:****Criminal Code¹⁷⁹****Article 156: Incitement of Ethnic, Racial or Religious Hatred**

(2) Deliberate actions degrading national honor and dignity, insulting the feelings of citizens in connection with their religious or atheistic convictions, committed with the aim of inciting enmity, intolerance or hatred towards groups of the population on national, racial, ethnic or religious grounds, as well as direct or indirect restriction of rights or establishment of direct or indirect advantages depending on their national, racial, ethnic origin or attitude to religion – shall be punishable by restraint of liberty from two to five years, or imprisonment up to five years. Actions provided for by part one or two of this article committed:

- a) in a way dangerous to the life of other persons;
- b) causing grievous bodily harm;
- c) with the forced eviction of citizens from their places of permanent residence;
- d) an official;
- e) by prior agreement by a group of persons, –

shall be punished by imprisonment from five to ten years.

VANUATU**The religious framework of the state: Constitution¹⁸⁰****Preamble:**

WE the people of Vanuatu, PROUD of our struggle for freedom, DETERMINED to safeguard the achievements of this struggle, CHERISHING our ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity, MINDFUL at the same time of our common destiny, HEREBY proclaim the establishment of the united and free Republic of Vanuatu founded on traditional Melanesian values, faith in God, and Christian principles, AND for this purpose give ourselves this Constitution.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:**Penal Code¹⁸¹****Article 88: Insult to religion of any class**

No person shall destroy, damage, or defile any place of worship or any object [that] is held sacred by any class of persons with the intention of thereby insulting the religion of any class of persons or with the knowledge that any class of persons is likely to consider such destruction, damage, or defilement as an insult to their religion.

Penalty: Imprisonment for 2 years.

YEMEN**The religious framework of the state: Constitution¹⁸²****Chapter I: The Political Foundations****Article 1:**

The Republic of Yemen is an Arab, Islamic, and independent sovereign state whose integrity is inviolable, and no part of which may be ceded. The people of Yemen are part of the Arab and Islamic nation.

Article 2:

Islam is the religion of the state, and Arabic is its official language.

Article 3:

Islamic Shari'a is the source of all legislation.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:**Penal Code¹⁸³****Article 194: Ridiculing Religion and Instigation that Disturbs Public Peace**

To be sentenced to imprisonment for a period not exceeding 3 years or to a fine:

First: Whoever disseminates in public ideas containing ridicule or contempt of religion in its beliefs or rituals or teachings.

Second: Whoever instigates in public or ridicules a faction of people or empowers a faction to dominate for the purpose of disturbing public peace.

Article 195: Ridicule of the Islamic Religion or any of its Sects

The sentence shall be imprisonment for a period not exceeding 5 years or a fine if the religion or the sect which is affected by ridicule or contempt or inferiority is the Islamic religion.

Chapter Three**Apostasy****Article 259: Crimes Related Religion and the Sanctity of The Dead**

Anyone who turns back from or denounces the religion of Islam is punished by the death penalty after being questioned for repentance three times and after giving him a respite of 30 days. The apostasy in public by speech or acts is considered contradictory to the principles of Islam and its pillars in intention and determination. If the intention or determination is not established and the guilty shows repentance, there will be no punishment.

Desecration**Article 260: Distortion of The Holy Koran**

Punishment with imprisonment for a period not exceeding 5 years or a fine is to anyone who distorts willfully the Holy Qur'an in a manner [that] changes its meaning with the purpose of harming the natural religion.

Article 261: Assault on the Sanctity of The Faith

Punishment with imprisonment for a period not exceeding 1 year or a fine not more than 2,000 ryals will be imposed on:

- (1) Whoever destroys or misrepresents or profanes a mosque or any other place set up by a license from the state to perform religious rituals or a symbol or other objects having religious sanctity.
- (2) Whoever distorts deliberately the establishment of recognized rituals of a sect or a celebration or religious meeting or disrupts something out of that or forbids it by force or threat.

ZAMBIA**The religious framework of the state: Constitution¹⁸⁴**

Preamble:

WE, THE PEOPLE OF ZAMBIA;

DECLARE the Republic a Christian nation while upholding the right of every person to enjoy that person's freedom of conscience or religion;

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:**Penal Code¹⁸⁵****128: Insult to religion of any class**

Any person who destroys, damages, or defiles any place of worship or any object [that] is held sacred by any class of persons with the intention of thereby insulting the religion of any class of persons, or with the knowledge that any class of persons is likely to consider such destruction, damage, or defilement as an insult to their religion, is guilty of a misdemeanor.

130: Trespassing on burial places

Every person who, with the intention of wounding the feelings of any person or of insulting the religion of any person, or with the knowledge that the feelings of any person are likely to be wounded, or that the religion of any person is likely to be insulted thereby, commits any trespass in any place of worship or in any place of sepulture or in any place set apart for the performance of funeral rites or as a depository for the remains of the dead, or offers any indignity to any human corpse, or causes disturbance to any persons assembled for the purpose of funeral ceremonies, is guilty of a misdemeanor.

131: Uttering words with the intent to wound religious feelings

Any person who, with the deliberate intention of wounding the religious feelings of any person, utters any word, or makes any sound in the hearing of that person, or makes any gesture in the sight of that person, or places any object in the sight of that person, is guilty of a misdemeanour and is liable to imprisonment for 1 year.

ZIMBABWE

The religious framework of the state: Constitution¹⁸⁶

Preamble:

Acknowledging the supremacy of Almighty God, in whose hands our future lies,

And, imploring the guidance and support of Almighty God, hereby make this Constitution and commit ourselves to it as the fundamental law of our beloved land.

Laws that make a specific reference to sanctioning insult, blasphemy, or defamation of religion:

Penal Code¹⁸⁷

Section 38: General punishment for misdemeanors

When in this Code no punishment is specially provided for any misdemeanor, it shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or with a fine or with both.

Section 42: Causing offense to persons of a particular race, religion, etc.

(1) In this section—

“creed or religion” means any system of belief associated with practices of worship that is adhered to by any significant body of persons in Zimbabwe or any other country;

“film,” “picture,” “publication,” “record,” and “statue” have the meanings assigned to those terms by section 2 of the Censorship and Entertainments Control Act....

“publicly,” in relation to making a statement, means—

- (a) making the statement in a public space or any place to which the public or any section of the public have access;
- (b) publishing it in any printed or electronic medium for reception by the public;

“statement” includes any act, gesture, or form of expression, whether verbal, written, or visual, but does not include any film, picture, publication, statue, or record that is of a *bona fide* literary or artistic character.

(2) Any person who publicly makes any insulting or otherwise grossly provocative statement that causes offense to persons of a particular race, tribe, place of origin, color, creed, or religion, intending to cause such offense or realizing there is a real risk or possibility of doing so, shall be guilty of causing offense to persons of a particular race, tribe, place of origin, color, creed, or religion, as the case may be, and liable to a fine not exceeding level six or imprisonment for a period not exceeding 1 year, or both.

NOTES

- ¹ 2022 Report on International Religious Freedom: Afghanistan, U.S. Department of State (May 15, 2023), <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-report-on-international-religious-freedom/afghanistan/> (last visited June 1, 2023).
- ² *Id.*
- ³ *Id.*
- ⁴ “According to the Taliban, laws enacted under the pre-August 2021 government remain in effect unless the laws violate sharia.” *Id.* Mass Media Law, Article 45, refworld, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5ddce5604.html> (last visited August 21, 2023). At the time of publication, the Taliban is considering making changes to the Mass Media Law. <https://www.voanews.com/a/taliban-leader-considers-new-afghan-media-law/7239886.html>
- ⁵ The Constitution of the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria, International Constitutional Law Project (Nov.19, 1976, *as amended*, Nov. 28, 1996), https://www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/aq00000_.html (last visited June 1, 2023).
- ⁶ Penal Code [Algeria], Equal Rights Trust, 2007, https://www.equalrightstrust.org/sites/default/files/ertdocs/code_penal.pdf (last visited June 1, 2023).
- ⁷ Policing Belief: The Impact of Blasphemy Laws on Human Rights, Freedom House, 15 (2010), https://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/Policing_Belief_Full.pdf (last visited June 1, 2023).
- ⁸ Andorra’s Constitution of 1993, Constitute Project, (2020), https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Andorra_1993.pdf?lang=en (last visited June 1, 2023).
- ⁹ Penal Code [Andorra], Sharing Electronic Resources and Laws on Crime by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/uploads/res/document/and/2005/penal_code_of_andorra.html/Andorra_Code_Penal_Fr.pdf (last visited June 1, 2023).
- ¹⁰ *Id.*
- ¹¹ Antigua and Barbuda 1981 [Constitution], Constitute Project, https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Antigua_and_Barbuda_1981?lang=en (last visited June 1, 2023).
- ¹² Laws of Antigua and Barbuda (Cap. 405), Ministry of Legal Affairs of Antigua and Barbuda, 5, <http://laws.gov.ag/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/cap-405.pdf> (last visited June 1, 2023).
- ¹³ Penal Code, No. 60/1974, §188 (Austria), Federal Legal Information System, <https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokument.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Dokumentnummer=NORI2029737> (last visited June 1, 2023).
- ¹⁴ Constitution of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, government of the Bahamas, <https://www.bahamas.gov.bs/wps/wcm/connect/778e3a25-c542-418f-af4b-6f361661a206/Chap+1+Constitution.pdf?MOD=AJPERES> (last visited August 15, 2023).
- ¹⁵ Penal Code, ch. 84, Statute Law of the Bahamas, 2010, § 315, 321, 489, <https://perma.cc/8QQH-W8DQ> (last visited June 16, 2023).
- ¹⁶ Bahrain Constitution of 2002, Constitute Project (2017), https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Bahrain_2017.pdf?lang=en (last visited June 1, 2023).
- ¹⁷ Bahrain Penal Code 1976, art. 309, 310, Sharing Electronic Resources and Laws on Crime by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/uploads/res/document/bhr/1976/penal_code.html/Bahrain_Penal_Code_Decree_No_15_of_1976_EN_translation_-_non_official.pdf (last visited May 24, 2023).
- ¹⁸ The Constitution of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Nov. 4, 1972, <http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/act-367.html> (last visited June 1, 2023).
- ¹⁹ Bangladesh Penal Code, 1860, Bangladesh Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, <http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/act-11.html> (last visited June 2, 2023).
- ²⁰ Information and Communication Technology Act, International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL), https://www.icnl.org/research/library/bangladesh_comm2006/ (last visited June 2, 2023).
- ²¹ Digital Security Act, 2018, Bangladesh Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, <https://www.cirt.gov.bd/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Digital-Security-Act-2020.pdf> (last visited June 2, 2023). In 2023, the Bangladesh government announced its intention to replace the Digital Security Act with a draft law entitled the Cyber Security Act 2023. Reporting indicates that the Cyber Security Act will retain provisions criminalizing blasphemy. <https://www.jurist.org/news/2023/08/bangladesh-to-replace-criticized-digital-security-law/>
- ²² The Constitution of Barbados, Georgetown University Political Database of the Americas, <https://pdba.georgetown.edu/Constitutions/Barbados/barbados66.html> (last visited August 16, 2023).
- ²³ Defamation Act, CH. 199, Laws of Barbados, 1997, § 11, <https://perma.cc/RLE3-FJSX> (last visited June 16, 2023).
- ²⁴ Botswana Penal Code, 1986, art. 136, 138, 140, International Labour Org., https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_isn=61336&p_lang=en (last visited June 2, 2023).
- ²⁵ Código Penal [C.P.] [Penal Code], art. 208, Equal Rights Trust, https://www.equalrightstrust.org/sites/default/files/ertdocs/Decree-Law%20No.%202%2C848_Penal%20Code.pdf (last visited June 2, 2023).
- ²⁶ Brunei’s Constitution of 1959 with Amendments through 2006, Constitute Project, https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Brunei_2006.pdf?lang=en (last visited June 2, 2023).
- ²⁷ Constitution of Brunei Darussalam, Syariah Penal Code Order, 2013, art. 110, 1718-1719, http://www.agc.gov.bn/AGC%20Images/LAWS/Gazette_PDF/2013/EN/S069.pdf (last visited June 2, 2023).
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1. ...
2. talking or shouting whether made by people or transformed through mechanical machines in such a way as to be heard, in both cases, by those who have nothing to do with the act.
3. Writings, drawings, pictures made by hand, photographs, films, symbols, and all kinds of illustrations, if displayed in public places, or open places, or sold, or offered to be sold, or distributed to one person or more.” Source: “Law and Population in Lebanon,” by George M. Dib, *Law and Population Monograph Series Number 29* (1975), Law and Population Programme, The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Administered with the Cooperation of Harvard University, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNAAF173.pdf.
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