

Incidents of Anti-Shiism in October, 2017

The month of October stood witness to the continued restriction of religious expression for Shia Muslims. Anti-Shiism spanned the East and West as Shia Muslims faced attacks to their livelihood.

This month, incidents of anti-Shiism reached 278. The majority of attacks occurred in the Gulf region, specifically in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Over 44% of attacks were in the form of arrests.

Although 27% has reduced death count. This reduction is due to decreased reporting in Iraq and a shift in violence measures in Bahrain. Although deaths counts have been cut, it must be noted that discrimination of Shia Muslims continues all over the world. Shia Muslims are limited in expression and congregation.

Bahrain

Arrests continue in Bahrain as human rights defenders stay active in the struggle for freedom of expression.

The Shia population in Diraz remain limited in their religious expression as the al-Sadiq Mosque remains under seizure by army forces. In late October, the ban on Friday prayers and congregation in the mosque enters its 67th week. Peaceful protest has been met with extreme violence. Forces used tear gas and pellets to disperse protesters, causing irreparable injury and harm.

Across Bahrain, religious leaders and prominent members of the community are arrested and detained, many times without due cause. Those detained include Sayed Ali al-Mosawi, Ali Abdullah Jomaa, Jassem Abdul Jalil Hassan, Ali Hussain Abdullah, Hussein Ali, Mahmoud Zoheir, Ali Mohammad Jaafar al Motghawi and Mahdi Fattah Mahfouz.

The month of October stood witness to an all-time high in the arrest of minors. Issam Hadi Jassim, 15, was detained in the village of Karrana in the early morning, Although his whereabouts are unknown, sources report he was taken to

the criminal investigation building. Six other people were detained with Jassim.

Those arrested face maltreatment on a record extend. Sources report physical, sexual and mental abuse as a result of torture. The deteriorating conditions of the detainment centers led to an outbreak of one of the most significant hunger strikes in modern history. SRW activists report fast failing health of hunger strikers.

Afghanistan

Despite promises to increase security in Shia populated areas of Afghanistan, recent Taliban attacks display a need for the development of substantial security measures. In mid-October, the Valley of Mirza Olang was seized by Taliban forces as Afghan forces withdrew their troops from the region. Mirza Olang was home to attacks in August, which lead to the death of over 50 villagers. It must be noted that Shia populated areas of Afghanistan, including Mirza Olang, are areas that have been, and continue to be, tactically used against foreign intrusion. Further, these areas are home to abundant natural resources.

Pakistan

Terror organizations target Shia dominant areas of Pakistan. In mid- October, suicide bombs and shooters killed over 25 civilians and injured 37 others. The attacks occurred in the Jhal magsi district of Baluchistan and aimed at Hazara populated areas of the country.

Despite the prevalence of attacks on the Hazara community, little has been done to protect this population. Despite increased international pressures, Pakistan has yet to implement adequate security plans against terrorism in this nation. In addition to the failure of prevention, Pakistan has failed to carry out prosecution of hate-promoting agents.

Malaysia

Raids in the Ulu Titram area of Malaysia has led to the arrest of 21 people. Shia teachings, books, a Moharram banner and Karbala stone, were seized; “they were arrested for an offense under Section 9 of the Syariah Criminal Offences Enactment 1997 and could face a fine of not more than RM3,000, or imprisonment for up to two years.”

In recent years, anti-Shiism has propagated all over Malaysia. Anti-Shia agents in the government take to target Shia homes and limit their expression and congregation. Items seized in the raid are not political but purely forms of religious expression.

Nigeria

Nigerian police have disrupted Muharram ceremonies in the northern city of Sokoto, arresting at least six of the participants.

Nigeria is home to one of the fastest growing Shia communities in Africa. In early 2016, clashes with the Nigerian army led to the killing of over 300 Shia Muslims. Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky was arrested in the clashes. His whereabouts remain unknown.

Shia in Nigeria continues to be prosecuted for their beliefs. Their religious expression is limited and prosecuted. More information about Shia in Nigeria can be found on ShiaRightsWatch.org

UK

Outside the Idaara Maarif - e- Islam Mosque Syed Hassan Abbas Bokhari al-Naqvi was stabbed and left for dead. Al-Naqvi, a minor, was left in critical condition and was found by his father who had gone to park the family car. The Birmingham Mail reports, ““It happened on the pavement. By the time the dad parked his car his son was on the floor. There was a young man who was brutally beating the boy with a knife. There was blood everywhere; he was hitting the boy’s neck and head. Then the attacker ran off and got into a car.” Al-Naqvi’s was one of the numerous attacks in the UK.

Syria

Targeting of Shia majority areas of Syria continues. Early this month, two rocket shells were fired in the residential neighborhoods of al-Zahraa. The attack resulted in the material damage of homes and buildings. While no casualties have been reported, the attacks severely reduced public service resources.

Iraq

As the event of Arabeen approaches, SRW invites increased security measures.

Arbaeen has been noted as the second largest peaceful congregation in recent history. In continued commemoration of Hussain, Mohammed's grandson, Shia Muslims gather in unison. During this ritual, Shia Muslims from all over the world walk on foot towards the city of Karbala, many of them traveling distances as long as Gulf countries.

Sources report a halt in all transportation inside the main city bounds of Karbala with the aims of regulating human traffic. On average, over 10 - 20 million pilgrims travel to Karbala for Arbaeen. In addition to limiting vehicle in the city, SRW proposes increased security checkpoint and implementation of a well planned pedestrian guidance. Further SRW warns pilgrims to be on the lookout for strange behavior and suggests communication methods found on ShiaRightsWatch.org.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia continues to limit known human rights activists in travel and speech. In mid-October, 22 arrested were over social media postings; another 24 were detained in the ha-il district for "exploiting social networking sites to promote lies and exaggerations" with the goal of provoking "sedition and tribal tensions." A Qatari citizen was among arrested. Saudi Arabia refuses to acknowledge the ongoing violence and targeting of Shia Muslims by government forces. Demands for rights are seen as means of "tribal tension."

India

On the 10th day of Moharram, authorities arrested six people. Officers attacked a congregation of mourners with batons, injuring them. The attacks were a means of restricting mourning processions.

Conclusion

Limitations of Shia expression continue all over the world. It must be noted that Shia rights violations are not limited to those presented in this paper. In fear or persecution or social isolation, Shia Muslims do not report incidents of anti-Shiism. More information on Shia Muslims can be found at ShiaRightsWatch.org.