

Chapter 4: Interreligious Harmony and Tensions

The survey finds that Muslims tend to view Christians as tolerant, honest and respectful of women. Similarly, in most countries half or more of Christians say Muslims are honest, devout and respectful of women. In roughly half of the countries, majorities also say they trust people who have religious values different than their own. In most countries, significant minorities (20% or more) of those who attend religious services say their mosque or church works across religious lines to solve community problems. Roughly similar numbers of people also report involvement in interfaith dialogue.

Consistent with these attitudes, fewer than half of respondents in most countries surveyed perceive widespread anti-Muslim or anti-Christian hostility in their countries, and most give their governments generally high marks for treating both groups fairly.

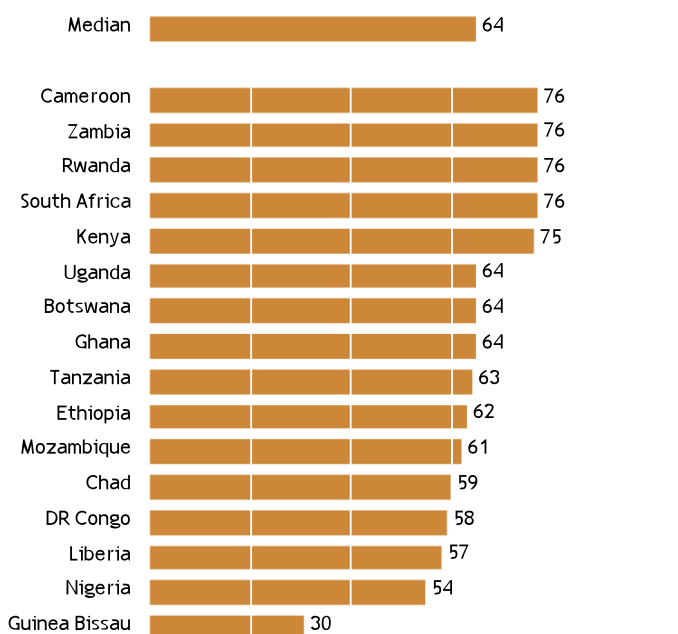
The survey finds, however, that Muslims are significantly more positive in their assessments of Christians than Christians are of Muslims. By their own reckoning, neither group knows much about the other, and significantly more people in most countries say the two religions are very different than say the two faiths have a lot in common. Relatively few people are married to someone of a different religion (less than 10% of married people in most countries), and many people are uncomfortable with the idea of their children marrying someone from outside their faith.

People throughout the region generally see conflict between religious groups as less of a problem than unemployment, crime or political corruption. However, in a few countries, including Nigeria, Rwanda, Djibouti and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, roughly half or more say religious conflict is a very big problem. The degree of concern about religious conflict tracks closely with the degree of concern about ethnic conflict in many countries, suggesting that they are often related. (See sidebar, page 38.)

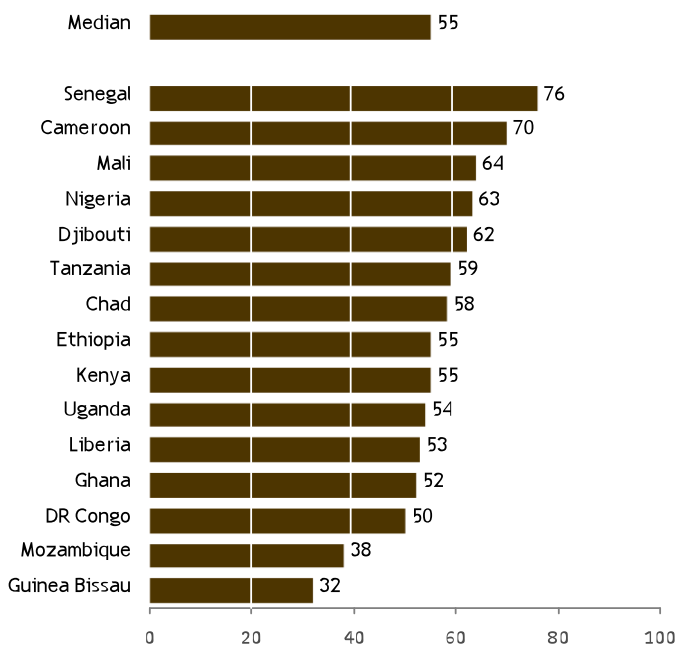
Q20a-b. How much would you say you know about [the Muslim religion and its practices? /the Christian religion and its practices]? A great deal, some, not very much, or nothing at all?

Most Christians and Muslims Say They Know Little About the Other Faith

% of Christians who say they know not very much/nothing about Islam



% of Muslims who say they know not very much/nothing about Christianity



A large number of people surveyed (upwards of four-in-ten in most countries) also express concern over religious extremism in their nation. In general, concern about Muslim extremism outweighs concern about Christian extremism. However, in four countries, Christians say they are more concerned about Christian extremism than about Muslim extremism. And in many countries, sizable numbers express concern about both Muslim and Christian extremism.

In more than half the countries surveyed, upwards of one-in-five people say that many or most Muslims in their nation support extremist groups such as al-Qaeda. In addition, substantial minorities (20% or more) in many countries say violence against civilians in defense of one's religion is sometimes or often justified.

Religion and Ethnicity

The survey asked about ethnicity as well as about religion, and the respondents identified themselves as belonging to more than 100 different ethnic, racial or tribal groups. In most cases, the sample sizes are too small to draw reliable conclusions about the religious makeup of particular tribes or ethnic groups. In some cases, however, the data suggest that religion and ethnicity are closely related. In Nigeria, for example, nearly all of those who identify themselves as Igbo say they are Christians, while most of those who identify themselves as Hausa say they are Muslims. In Chad, nearly all those who call themselves Arabs say they are Muslims, while nearly all who identify as Sara say they are Christians.

Ethnicity/Tribal Background In Countries with a Roughly Even Mix of Christians and Muslims

	<u>Christian</u>	<u>Muslim</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>N</u>
Chad	%	%	%	
Arab	1	99	0=100	252
Sara	91	4	5=100	211
Mayo-Kebbi	67	14	19=100	209
Kanem-Bornou	1	99	1=100	178
Guinea Bissau				
Balanta	97	2	1=100	210
Mandinka	2	98	0=100	186
Nigeria				
Hausa	4	96	0=100	495
Igbo	96	1	3=100	278
Yoruba	45	54	2=100	327
Tanzania				
Msukuma	75	13	13=100	197

Q102. Which (ethnic/racial/tribal/nationality) group do you belong to?

Note: Results are shown for some of the larger ethnic/tribal groups in each country. More detailed tribal/ethnic breakdowns for other countries are available in the topline.

At the same time, other ethnic and tribal groups appear to be religiously mixed. Some of these results are compiled in the table to the left. For more details, see Question No. 102 in the survey topline. Note that the question about ethnicity was omitted in Rwanda, where it remains a highly sensitive subject since the 1994 genocide.

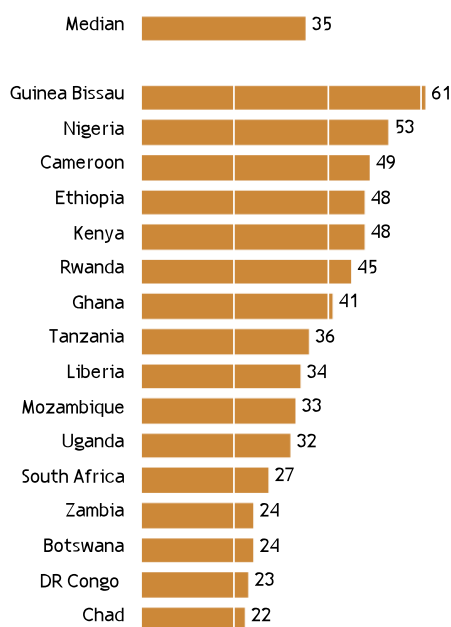
Views of Muslims and Christians

The survey included a battery of questions asking all respondents whether they associate eight value-laden words – including positive terms such as honest and negative terms such as selfish – with Christians and Muslims. In nearly every country surveyed, large majorities express generally positive views of Christians. And majorities in every country express either positive or mixed views of Muslims, with far fewer expressing negative views. Muslims are widely seen as devout, honest and respectful of women, and Christians are widely seen as tolerant, honest and respectful of women. By contrast, fewer see Muslims and Christians as violent, selfish, immoral or arrogant.

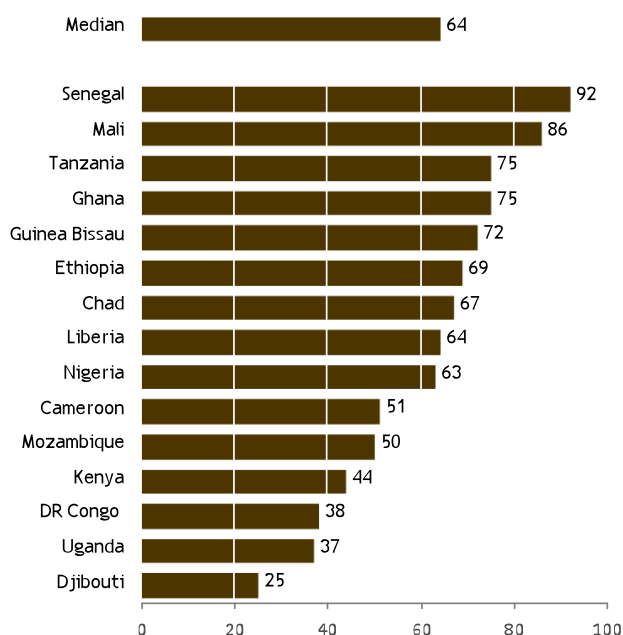
A combined score was computed by assigning a score of 1 for each affirmative response to a positive attribute (i.e., saying that Christians or Muslims are honest, devout, tolerant or respectful of women) and each negative response to a negative attribute (i.e., saying that Christians or Muslims are not violent, selfish, immoral or arrogant). Conversely, a score of -1 was assigned for each negative response to a positive attribute and each positive response to a negative attribute. A score of 0 was assigned for each “don’t know/refused” response. These individual scores were then added to derive the total for each respondent. The resulting scale ranges from -8 at the negative end to 8 at the positive end. For analytical purposes, the scale is divided into three categories: scores of -8 to -3 reflect negative views, scores of -2 to 2 reflect mixed views, and scores of 3 to 8 reflect positive views.

Christian and Muslim Views of Each Other

% of Christians expressing overall positive views of Muslims



% of Muslims expressing overall positive views of Christians



But the survey also shows that Muslims are more positive in their views of Christians than Christians are in their views of Muslims. Strong majorities of Muslims in nine of the countries surveyed express positive views of Christians. But Guinea Bissau is the only country where a significant majority of Christians express overall positive views of Muslims.

In 10 countries, upwards of four-in-ten Christians associate the term “violent” with Muslims. This includes roughly six-in-ten or more Christians in Cameroon (57%), Ghana (61%) and Chad (70%). By contrast, less than three-in-ten Muslims in most countries surveyed say they see Christians as violent.

Christianity and Islam Seen as Very Different

In most countries surveyed, far more people say that Christianity and Islam are very different than take the view that the two faiths have a lot in common. Interestingly, Muslims who live in predominantly Christian countries see far more commonality between the two faiths than do their Christian compatriots.

Many Muslims and Christians express uneasiness about interfaith marriages, with half or more Christians in eight countries and upwards of half of Muslims in 12 countries saying they would not be comfortable if a child of theirs were to marry someone from the opposite faith. Interestingly, even though Muslims tend to be more positive in their views of Christians than Christians are of Muslims, Muslims are less likely than Christians to say they would be comfortable with a child marrying someone from the other faith.

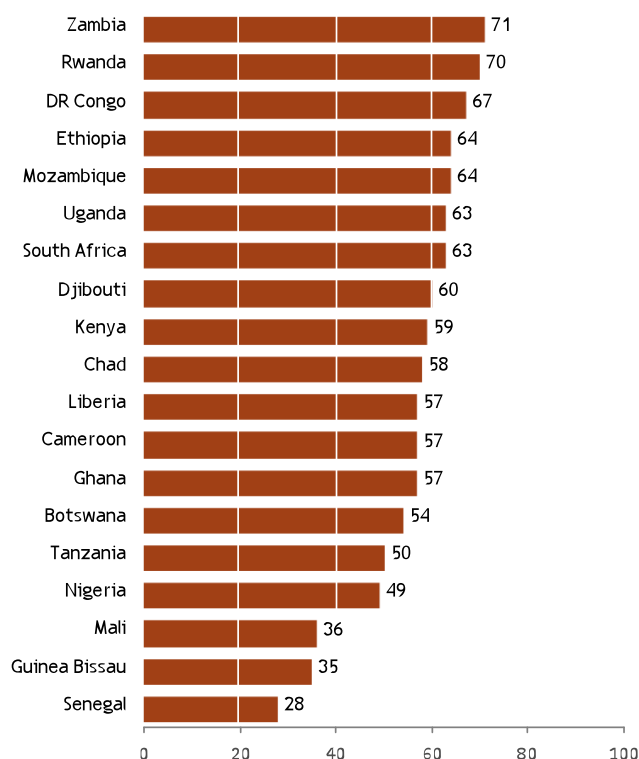
Many Say Islam and Christianity Are Very Different

% saying Christianity and Islam are “very different”

Median results:



Among general population in...



Q21. From what you know, do you think that the Muslim religion and the Christian religion have a lot in common, or do you think that the Muslim religion and the Christian religion are very different?

Perceptions of Government Treatment of Muslims and Christians

On the whole, Christians and Muslims give their governments high marks for treating both religious groups fairly. In 17 of 19 countries, majorities of those surveyed say that Muslims are never or “not too often” treated unfairly by the government. And in all but one country (Guinea Bissau), majorities say that Christians are rarely or never mistreated by the government.

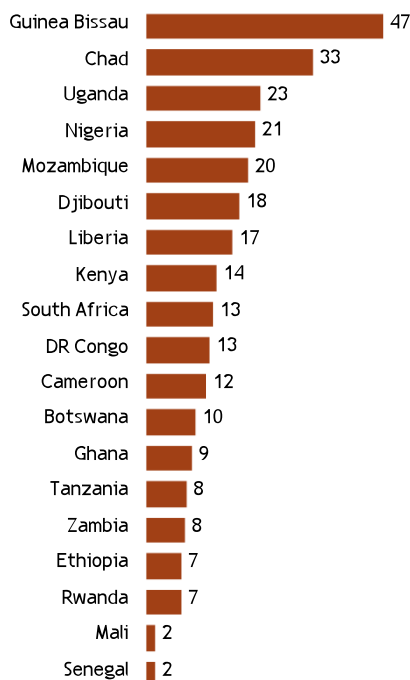
In three of the four countries with a roughly even mix of Christians and Muslims, more Christians than Muslims say the government sometimes treats Christians unfairly. Conversely, in most of the predominantly Christian countries where comparisons can be made, more Muslims than Christians say that Muslims are sometimes treated unfairly by the government.

Q92. How often are Muslims treated unfairly by the government in our country? Very often, somewhat often, not too often, or never?

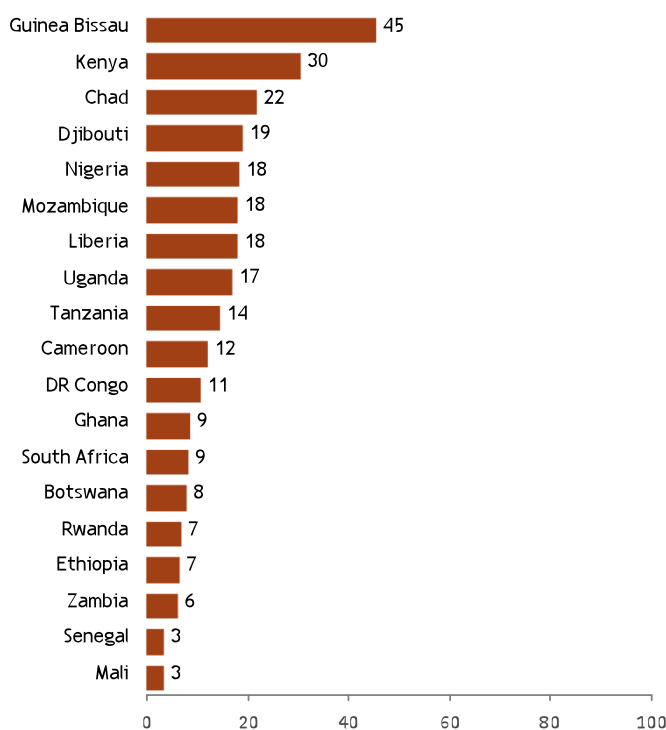
Q93. How often are Christians treated unfairly by the government in our country? Very often, somewhat often, not too often, or never?

Perceptions of Government Treatment of Religious Groups

% saying Christians are treated unfairly very or somewhat often



% saying Muslims are treated unfairly very or somewhat often



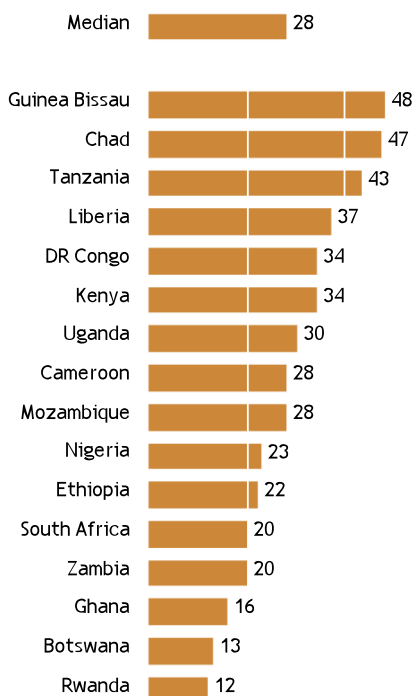
Perceptions of Anti-Muslim and Anti-Christian Hostility

Most people do not perceive widespread hostility between Christians and Muslims in their country. In all the countries surveyed except Guinea Bissau, far more people say that very few or just some Christians are hostile toward Muslims than say that many or most Christians are hostile toward Muslims. Similarly, in 18 of the 19 countries (all except Guinea Bissau), more people say that very few or just some Muslims are hostile toward Christians than say that many or most Muslims are hostile toward Christians.

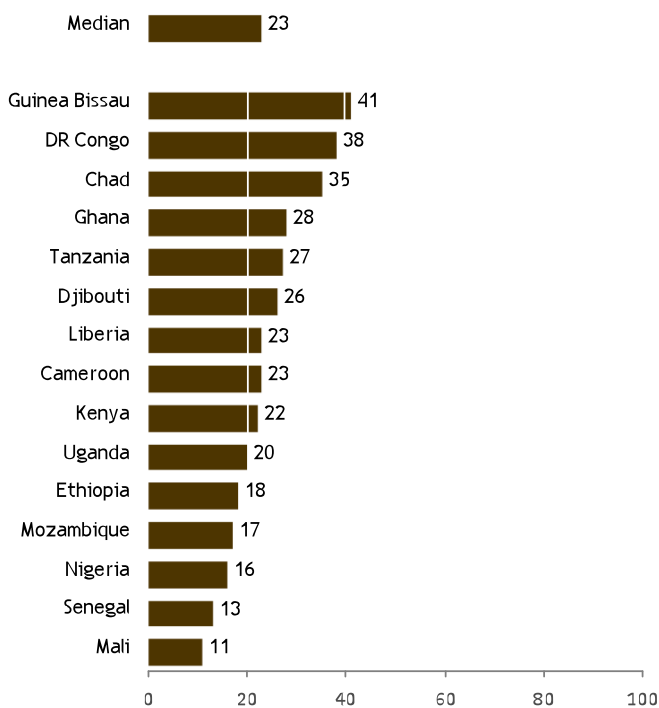
In several countries, however, more than a third of Christians say that Christians face hostility from many or most Muslims in their country; these countries include Guinea Bissau (where 48% of Christians say this), Chad (47%), Tanzania (43%), Liberia (37%), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (34%) and Kenya (34%). And in Guinea Bissau, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Chad, upwards of a third of Muslims say that many or most Christians are hostile toward Muslims.

Perceptions of Hostility

% of Christians saying most/many/all Muslims are hostile toward Christians



% of Muslims saying most/many/all Christians are hostile toward Muslims



Q90. In your opinion, how many Christians in our country do you think are hostile toward Muslims? Would you say most, many, just some, or very few?

Q91. In your opinion, how many Muslims in our country do you think are hostile toward Christians? Would you say most, many, just some, or very few?

People throughout the region generally see conflict between religious groups as much less of a problem than unemployment, crime or political corruption. Nevertheless, sizable numbers (20% or more) of people in most countries surveyed see conflict between religious groups as a very big problem. And in four countries, roughly half or more of the population sees religious conflict as a very big problem. These countries include Nigeria, Rwanda (58% each), Djibouti (51%) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (48%). In many countries, the concern about religious conflict tracks rather closely with people's concerns about ethnic conflict.

Top National Problems

% citing issue as very big problem

	Religious conflict	Ethnic conflict	Crime	Corrupt political leaders	Unemploy- ment
	%	%	%	%	%
Rwanda	58	70	78	75	85
Nigeria	58	48	79	81	89
Djibouti	51	56	65	61	70
DR Congo	48	65	86	77	83
Mali	46	47	84	72	90
Liberia	43	43	86	80	87
Chad	42	38	80	54	78
Guinea Bissau	34	36	81	69	89
Kenya	29	60	79	85	95
Cameroon	28	30	82	74	91
Ghana	26	43	74	71	84
Mozambique	25	33	69	72	80
Uganda	25	34	68	72	81
Tanzania	24	21	68	71	82
Senegal	24	18	84	71	96
Ethiopia	19	23	30	40	70
South Africa	19	24	87	67	92
Zambia	7	7	62	74	93
Botswana	6	6	72	21	84

Q8a-e. Here is a list of things that may be problems in our country. As I read each one, please tell me if you think it is a very big problem, a moderately big problem, a small problem, or not a problem at all: Crime; Conflict between religious groups; Corrupt political leaders; Conflict between ethnic groups; Unemployment.

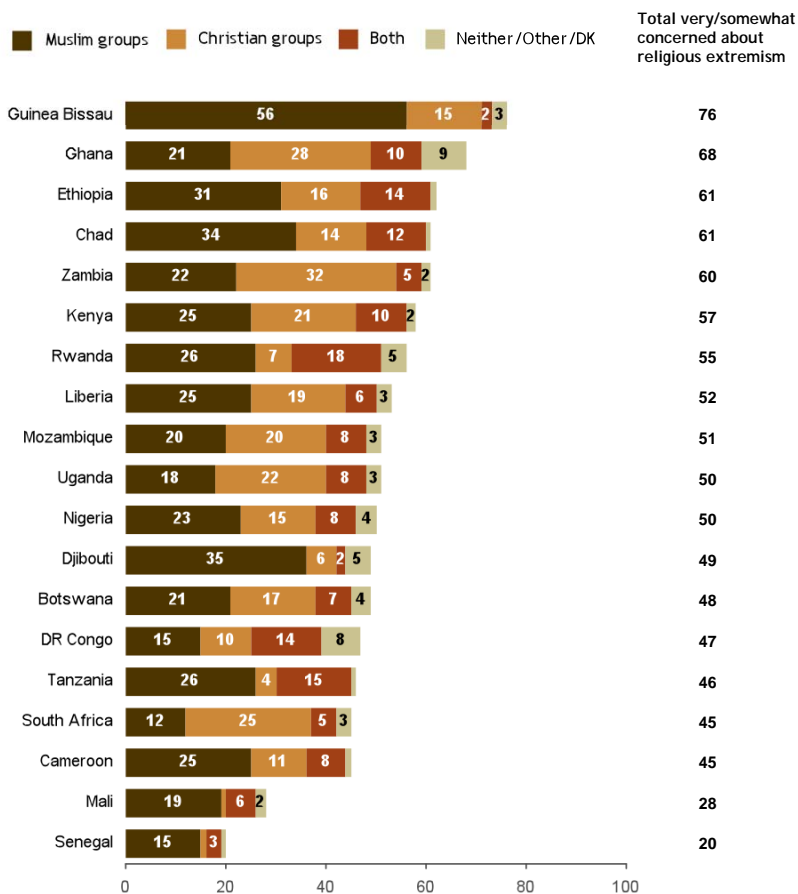
Concern Over Religious Extremism

Many people express concern over religious extremism in their country. In 17 of the 19 countries surveyed, 40% or more of the population says they are somewhat or very concerned about religious extremism within their country's borders.

The concern about religious extremism follows a striking pattern. In countries with the highest concentrations of Muslims – including all three predominantly Muslim countries, the four countries where there is a roughly even religious mix and three of the four countries that have a large Muslim minority – concern over Muslim extremism clearly outweighs concern over Christian extremism. By contrast, in five of the eight countries with small Muslim minorities, concern about Christian extremism rivals or exceeds concern about Muslim extremism. In Ghana, South

Africa and Zambia, for instance, there is significantly more concern over Christian extremism than over Muslim extremism. And in many countries, sizable numbers express concern about both Muslim and Christian extremism. This indicates that many people throughout the region perceive and worry about extremist tendencies within their own faith.

Many Concerned About Religious Extremist Groups
% mostly concerned about...

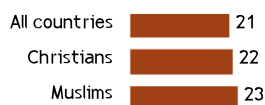


Q86, 87. How concerned, if at all, are you about extremist religious groups in our country these days? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned about extremist religious groups in our country these days? (ASK IF VERY/SOMEWHAT CONCERNED) And are you mostly concerned about Muslim extremist groups or Christian extremist groups?

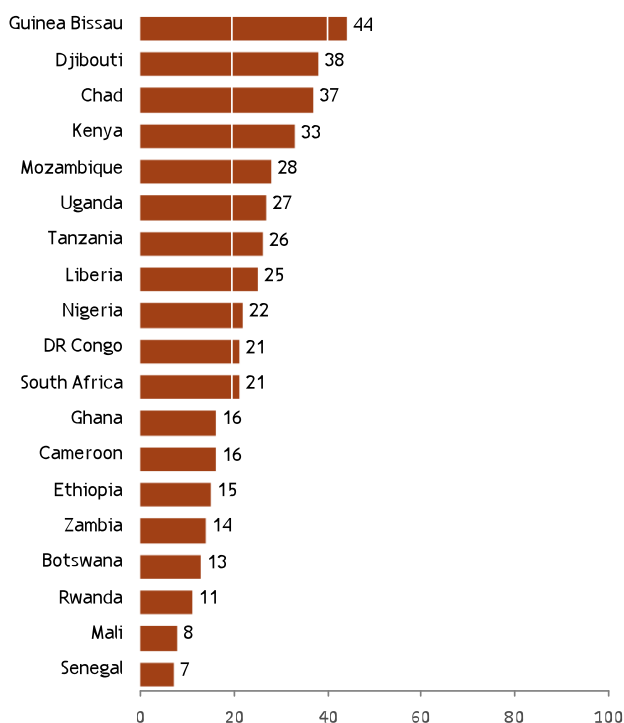
In more than half of the countries surveyed, upwards of one-in-five people perceive that large numbers of Muslims in their nation support extremist groups like al-Qaeda. In most countries Christians and Muslims are roughly similar in their estimations of the degree of Muslim support for al-Qaeda and other extremist groups. In Ghana, however, Muslims are almost three times more likely than Christians to say that al-Qaeda has substantial support among Muslims in their country (36% vs. 13%). In Chad, Guinea Bissau and Tanzania, more Christians than Muslims say that there is substantial support for al-Qaeda among Muslims in their nation.

Perceptions of Muslim Support for Al-Qaeda % saying most/many/all Muslims in their country support Islamic extremists like al-Qaeda

Median results:



Among general population in...



Q89. In your opinion, how many Muslims in our country support Islamic extremists like al Qaeda – would you say most, many, just some, or very few?

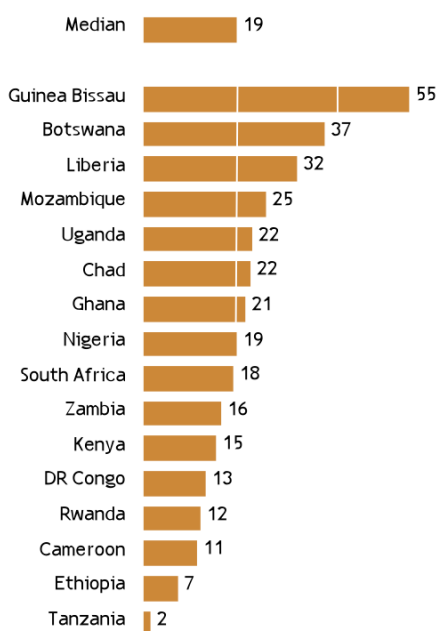
Violence in Defense of Religion

In most of the countries surveyed, majorities say violence against civilians in defense of one's religion is rarely or never justified. However, substantial minorities (20% or more of the population) in many countries consider violence in defense of one's religion to be sometimes or often justified. And in Djibouti and Guinea Bissau, about half the population says violence against civilians can at least sometimes be justified.

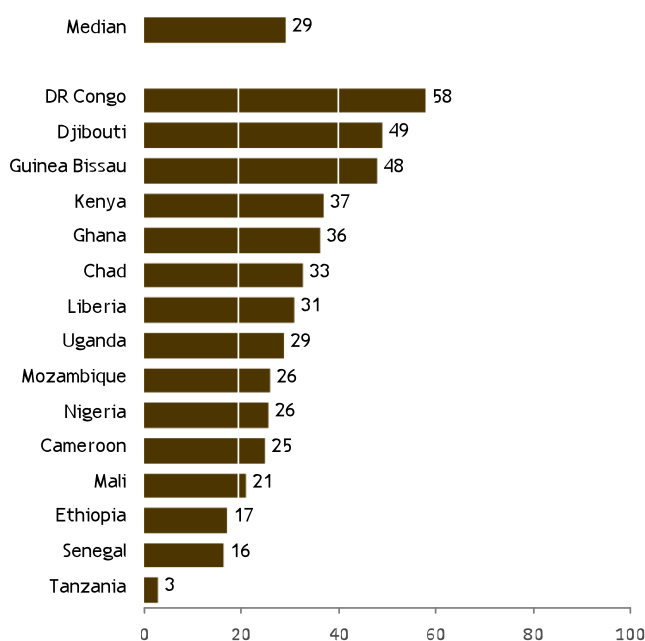
In seven countries where comparisons are possible, Muslims are more likely than Christians to say violence is justified. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, a majority of Muslims (58%) and just one-in-eight Christians (13%) consider violence against civilians in defense of one's religion to be justified at least some of the time. In the other five countries where comparisons are possible, there are no significant differences between Christians and Muslims.

Justification of Violence in Defense of Religion

% of Christians saying use of violence against civilians can be often/sometimes justified



% of Muslims saying use of violence against civilians can be often/sometimes justified



Q88. Some people think that the tactic of using arms and violence against civilians in defense of their religion is justified. Other people believe that, no matter what the reason, this kind of violence is never justified. How about you? Do you personally feel that the tactic of using arms and violence against civilians in defense of your religion can be often justified, sometimes justified, rarely justified, or never justified?