

Bonner Querschnitte

Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

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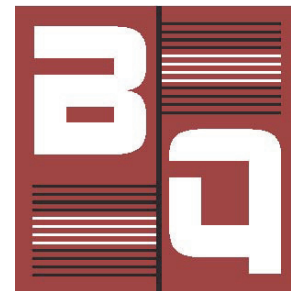
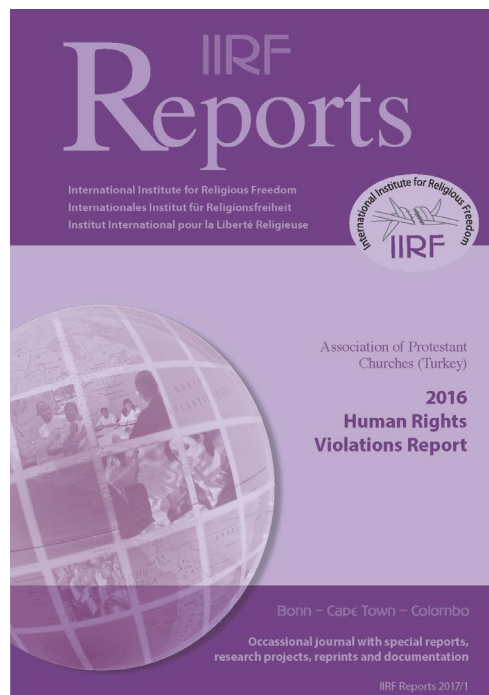
BQ 464 – No. 03/2017

The situation of Christians in Turkey remains very difficult, but the Protestant churches are growing!

The 2016 annual report on human rights abuses has been published by the Protestant churches in Turkey

(Bonn, 17.02.2017) Again in 2016 there has been long list of serious human rights abuses in the circles of the indigenous Protestant churches in Turkey. An overview of the contents of the report:

- Hate speech against Christians;
- Physical attacks on Christians and churches which have made serious and expensive security systems necessary in some instances;
- Problems with the registration of new places of worship and even with the use of existing church buildings;
- Harsh propaganda against Christmas and New Year's celebrations including placards, brochures, newspaper articles, and TV broadcasts;
- Listing churches in parallel with terror organizations;
- Problems in the area of state-supported religious instruction;
- No officially allowed means of seminary education;
- Some foreign workers in churches have been expelled or were refused re-entry into the country after trips abroad-one foreign pastor is in prison in Izmir on account of terrorism accusations;



A joint platform for the following Bonn organizations on the basis of the Evangelical Alliance:

Commission for Religious Freedom of the German and the Austrian Evangelical Alliance
www.ead.de/akref

Culture and Science Publ.
www.vkwonline.com

Giving Hands – International Charity
www.gebende-haende.de

Help Worldwide – International Charity
www.hilfe-weltweit.de

Institute for Pro-life and Family Studies
www.bucer.de/ilfw

International Institute for Islamic Studies of the World Evangelical Alliance
www.islaminstitute.net

International Institute for Religious Freedom of the World Evangelical Alliance
www.iirf.eu

Martin Bucer Seminary
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Theological Commission of "Hope for Europe" (European Evangelical Alliance)
www.hfe.org

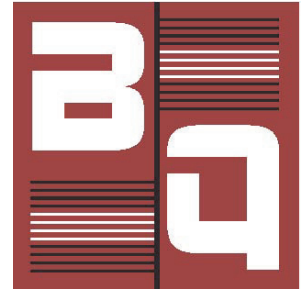
Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance
www.worldevangelicals.org/tc/

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- Religious identity continues to be listed on one's personal identification documents which causes a high risk of discrimination;
- The murder trial resulting from the martyrdom of three Christians in Malatya (2007) has come to a preliminary verdict, such that five murderers are now in prison, though further appeals or indictments are possible;
- Public Christmas celebrations were forbidden in 2016 for security reasons.

The report explains each of the points above in a factual and detailed manner. In this way it seeks to contribute to implementing the freedom of religion or belief that is secured for all citizens in the constitution of Turkey, including for Protestant Christians.

The report largely limits itself to the situation of the indigenous Protestant churches, not because there were no human rights abuses inflicted on other churches or Christians, but only because of limited resources and capacities.

In spite of all the difficulties there are also good developments to report. For example, though city officials ordered Christians to stop holding worship services in the historic church building in Bursa, they have continued to worship there without interruption. Quick and intensive discussions with city officials led them to reconsider their decision. These discussions are continuing in 2017 with a view toward a formal agreement. But for now the church work and life continues unhindered.

The churches are also thankful for good cooperation with the police in many cities, such that worship services have been celebrated without incidents.

All in all, the number of Protestant Christians and the number of churches in Turkey is growing continuously. This report mentions a total of 140 Protestant congregations, some larger, some smaller, of which most are found in the three major cities of Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir. The total number of Protestant Christians in Turkey, according to the statistics given by Silas, an indigenous church aid organization, is about 5,000. This is 0.006 per cent of the population of Turkey.

The report ends with a series of constructive and concrete suggestions of what can be done to improve the situation for Christians in Turkey. This series of reports on the human rights situation in Turkey has been published since 2007 by the Association of Protestant Churches (Turkey). Each January a report about the previous year is compiled and published. Since the 2013 report, the International Institute for Religious Freedom has been publishing a German translation because of the high level of concern among German-speaking churches for the Christians in Turkey.

Downloads:

- 2016 annual report in English ([pdf](#)) and in German ([pdf](#))
- Previous reports in English on the website of the Association of Protestant Churches (Turkey): http://www.protestankiliseler.org/eng/?page_id=638
- Previous IIRF Reports: <http://iirf.eu/index.php?id=436>
- Previous IIRF Reports (in German): <http://iirf.eu/index.php?id=437>

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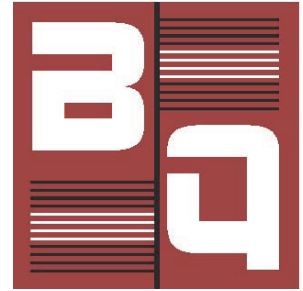
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