(English version)

Question for written answer E-003461/26
to the Commission
Arkadiusz Mularczyk (ECR)
(2 September 2026)

Subject: Conditionality of EU aid to Africa and respect for freedom of religion

The EU-Africa Partnership and the substantial funds allocated by the Union to development cooperation should also serve to effectively protect fundamental human rights. Violence, discrimination and persecution on the grounds of religion or belief occur in some African countries. Religious minorities, including Christian communities and their children, are particularly vulnerable. This phenomenon takes the form of physical violence, abductions, forced displacement, restrictions on access to education and impunity for perpetrators, among other things.

The EU, as one of Africa's most important financial and development partners, has instruments at its disposal to link support to respect for fundamental rights, including freedom of religion or belief.

1. Is the Commission prepared to make the allocation or disbursement of part of EU funds conditional upon genuine progress in the area of freedom of religion or belief, in particular the effective protection of persecuted minorities and children?

2. Does the Commission intend to use specific, measurable indicators, including the scale of religiously motivated violence, the prosecution of perpetrators, the protection of places of worship and children's access to education?

3. What financial consequences does the Commission envisage for states that systematically violate religious freedom or fail to fulfil their obligation to protect persecuted minorities, and is it possible to reduce, suspend or redirect part of the aid directly to organisations supporting victims?

Submitted: 2.9.2026

Answer given by Mr Síkela on behalf of the European Commission
(13 October 2026)

Freedom of religion or belief, as part of the overall human rights framework, is a long-standing priority of the EU's external policy.

This is also reflected in the Samoa Agreement ([1]), signed between the EU and its Member States and the Members of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, which constitutes the overarching legal framework governing cooperation between the parties.

Article 9 of the Samoa Agreement on human rights, democracy and rule of law includes the commitment to protect and ensure freedom of thought, religion and belief. It commits signatories not to discriminate based on religion or belief in the exercise and enjoyment of fundamental rights.

Under the Samoa Agreement, an 'essential element' clause carries legal weight, as breaches can trigger consultations and the adoption of appropriate measures including, ultimately, the suspension of cooperation.

In addition, the General Conditions of all EU external action contracts ([2]) provide that, where a person or entity violates human rights, the contract with that person or entity can be suspended or terminated. Also, the person or entity may be excluded from participation in future award procedures.

EU Delegations promote bilateral dialogue to address human rights issues, including those related to religious minorities, with national authorities, national human rights commissions as well as civil society, and continuously monitor the human rights situation in partner countries.

The Commission remains committed to addressing these challenges and fostering a safer and more tolerant environment.

([1]) https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/agree_internation/2023/2862/oj/eng.
([2]) https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/funding-and-technical-assistance/guidelines/contract-award-procedures-european-union-external-action-practical-guide-prag_en.