

Religious Offence and Human Rights

Should international law be concerned with offence to religions and their followers? Even before the 2005 publication of the Danish Mohammed cartoons, Muslim States have endeavoured to establish some reputational protection for religions on the international level by pushing for recognition of the novel concept of 'defamation of religions'. This study recounts these efforts as well as the opposition they aroused, particularly by proponents of free speech. It also addresses the more fundamental issue of how religion and international law may relate to each other. Historically, enforcing divine commands has been the primary task of legal systems, and it still is in numerous municipal jurisdictions. By analysing religious restrictions of blasphemy and sacrilege as well as international and national norms on free speech and freedom of religion, Lorenz Langer argues that, on the international level at least, religion does not provide a suitable rationale for legal norms.

Lorenz Langer is a lecturer at the University of Zurich, Switzerland, and a Senior Research Fellow at its Centre for Research on Direct Democracy. He is also the managing editor of the Swiss Review of European and International Law.



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Religious Offence and Human Rights

The Implications of Defamation of Religions

Lorenz Langer





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Legal and political developments have generally been considered up to December 2012, although a few more recent judgments and events have also been taken account of; websites have, unless indicated otherwise, been accessed last on 31 December 2012.



Abbreviations

Abbreviated journal names are not listed in the following table; they are printed in full in the bibliography.

Romanisation of Arabic terms in most cases follows the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, although for terms that are frequently and commonly used in English, an anglicised version is substituted: hence Quran and Quranic rather than *Kur'ān* or *Kur'ānic*; Mohammed rather than *Muḥammad*; Allah rather than *Allāh*; Shia and Shiites as well as Sunni and Sunnis instead of *Shīa*, *Shī'ās*, *Sunnī* and *Sunnīs*; fatwa instead of *fatwā*; and most importantly, Sharia instead of *sharī'a*.

Since in the *Economist*, the running order of sections is different in each regional edition, its articles are quoted without page numbers.

AAS Acta Apostolicae Sedis

ACHPR African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights,

27 June 1981, 1520 UNTS 245

ACHR American Convention on Human Rights,

22 November 1969, 1144 UNTS 144

al. alinea

AP Additional Protocol

Aug. civ. Aurelius Augustinus, De civitate Dei – The City of God

against the Pagans, trans. G. E. McCracken and D. Wiesen, Loeb Classical Library, 7 vols.

(Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957–72)

Aug. conf. Aurelius Augustinus, Confessiones—Confessions, ed.

W. Watts, Loeb Classical Library, 2 vols. (London:

Heinemann, 1951)

Aug. ep. Aurelius Augustinus, Epistulae, 5 vols., ed.

A. Goldbacher, Corpus Scriptorum

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ABBREVIATIONS XIII

	Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (Vienna: F. Tempsky,
	1895–1903)
BDoR	Kocku von Stuckrad (ed.), The Brill Dictionary of
	Religion, 5 vols. (rev. edn, Leiden: Brill, 2006)
BGB1.	Bundesgesetzblatt (Austria)
BVerfGE	Entscheidungen des Bundesverfassungsgerichts (Judgments
	of the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany)
CA	Court of Appeals
can.	Canon Cat. Catechismus Catholicae Ecclesiae (Città del
	Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997)
CAT	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel,
	Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
CCPR	UN Human Rights Committee
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Discrimination against Women
CERD	UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial
	Discrimination
CESCR	UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CETS	Council of Europe Treaty Series
CFM	OIC Council of Foreign Ministers
CHR	UN Commission on Human Rights
CIC	Deutsche Bischofskonferenz (ed.), Codex iuris
	canonici (Latin-German) (5th edn, Kevelaer: Butzon and Bercker, 2001)
CIC 1917	Benedict XV, Codex iuris canonici (Rome: Typis
	Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1917)
Cic. leg.	Marcus Tullius Cicero, De legibus (lateinisch-deutsch),
	trans, R. Nickel, Sammlung Tusculum (Zurich:
	Artemis and Winkler, 1994)
Cic. off.	Marcus Tullius Cicero, <i>De officiis</i> , ed. W. Miller, Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann, 1961)
Cod. Theod.	Paul Krüger and Theodor Mommsen (eds.), <i>Codex Theodosianus</i> , 3 vols. (Hildesheim: Weidmann, 1990)
CoE	Council of Europe
Cor.	Corinthians
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CTS	Clive Parry (ed.), The Consolidated Treaty Series, 231
	vols. (Dobbs Ferry: Oceana, 1969–1981)



XIV ABBREVIATIONS

dec. decision
Deut. Deuteronomy

Dig. Theodor Mommsen, Paul Krueger and Alan Watson

(eds.), *The Digest of Justinian, Latin/English*, 4 vols. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press,

1985)

DKK Danish krone

ECHR European Convention for the Protection of Human

Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

ECommHR European Commission on Human Rights

ECOSOC UN Economic and Social Council ECtHR European Court of Human Rights

EI² P. J. Bearman et al. (eds.), Encyclopaedia of Islam, 12

vols. (2nd edn, Leiden: Brill, 1960-2006)

EJ² Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik (eds.),

Encyclopaedia Judaica, 22 vols. (2nd edn, Detroit:

Macmillan Reference, 2007)

EoJ² Jacob Neusner, Alan J. Avery-Peck and William Scott

Green (eds.), The Encyclopaedia of Judaism, 4 vols.

(2nd edn, Leiden: Brill, 2005)

EoR² Jones, Lindsay (ed.), Encyclopedia of Religion, 15 vols.

(2nd edn, Detroit: Macmillan Reference, 2005)

ER English Reports
EU European Union

Ex. Exodus

Firth and Rait C. H. Firth and Robert S. Rait, Acts and Ordinances

of the Interregnum, 1642-1660, 3 vols. (London: HM

Stationery Office, 1911)

Frowein- Jochen Abraham Frowein and Wolfgang Peukert,

Peukert³ Europäische Menschenrechtskonvention: EMRK-

Kommentar (3rd edn, Kehl am Rhein: Engel, 2009)

FSC Federal Shariat Court (Pakistan)

Fulcher hist. Fulcher of Chartres, Historia Hierosolymitana, ed.

H. Hagenmeyer (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1913)

GA UN General Assembly

Gen. Genesis

Georges Georges, Karl Ernst, Ausführliches lateinisch-deutsches

Handwörterbuch, 2 vols. (8th edn, Hannover: Hahn,

1913/1918)



ABBREVIATIONS

XV

Herod. Herodotus, The Persian Wars, ed. A. D. Godley, Loeb

Classical Library, 3 vols. (London: Heinemann, 1920)

HL Deb. House of Lords Debates

Hom. Od. Homer, Odyssey, ed. A. T. Murray, Loeb Classical

Library, 2 vols. (London: Heinemann, 1919)

HRC UN Human Rights Council

HRG Adalbert Erler, Wolfgang Stammler and

Dieter Werkmüller (eds.), Handwörterbuch zur deutschen Rechtsgeschichte, 5 vols. (Berlin: Schmidt,

1964-98)

HRG² Wolfgang Stammler et al., Handwörterbuch zur

deutschen Rechtsgeschichte HRG (2nd edn, Berlin:

E. Schmidt, 2004-)

IACommHR Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

IACtHR Inter-American Court of Human Rights

ICCPR International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ICCPR OP I Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on

Civil and Political Rights

ICERD International Convention on the Elimination of All

Forms of Racial Discrimination

ICESCR International Covenant on Economic, Social and

Cultural Rights

IESS William A. Darity (ed.), International Encyclopedia of the

Social Sciences, 9 vols. (2nd edn, Detroit: Macmillan

Reference, 2008)

Inst. Paul Krüger and Theodor Mommsen (eds.),

Institutiones, Corpus Iuris Civilis 1 (11th edn, Berlin:

Weidmann'sche Buchhandlung, 1908)

IS OIC Islamic Summit ICP Juris-classeur périodique

Lev. Leviticus

LexMA Lexikon des Mittelalters, 9 vols. (Munich: Artemis,

1977-99)

Liv. Titus Livius, Ab urbe condita – From the Founding of the

City, ed. B. O. Foster, Loeb Classical Library, 14

vols. (London: Heinemann, 1958-67)

LJ Lord Justice of Appeal

Lk Luke

LNTS League of Nations Treaty Series



XVI ABBREVIATIONS

m. Sanh. Mishna Sanhedrin, in Jacob Neusner, The Mishnah:

A New Translation (New Haven: Yale University

Press, 1988), 583-608

Matt. Matthew

Menge-Güthling Menge, Hermann and Otto Güthling,

Griechisch-deutsches und deutsch-griechisches Wörterbuch: Teil 1: griechisch-deutsch (Berlin:

Langenscheidt, 1913)

Mk Mark

MPEPIL Wolfrum, Rüdiger (ed.) Max Planck Encyclopedia of

Public International Law: Online-Edition (Oxford University Press, 2008–12), <www.mpepil.com>

NAM Non-Aligned Movement

NCE² Catholic University of America (ed.), New Catholic

Encyclopedia, 15 vols. (2nd edn, Detroit: Gale

2003)

NGO Non-governmental organisation

NIDB Sakenfeld, Katharine Doob (ed.), The New Interpreter's

Dictionary of the Bible, 5 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon,

2006)

Nov. Schoell, Rudolf and Whilhelm Kroll (eds.), Novellae,

Corpus Iuris Civilis 3 (7th edn, Berlin: Weidmann'sche Buchhandlung, 1895)

OAS Organisation of American States

OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and

Development

OED Online Oxford English Dictionary Online (Oxford University

Press, 2012), <www.oed.com>

OEIW John L. Esposito (ed.), The Oxford Encyclopedia of

the Islamic World, 6 vols. (Oxford University Press,

2009)

OHCHR Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for

Human Rights

OIC Organisation of the Islamic Conference (prior to

June 2011); Organisation of Islamic Co-operation

(after June 2011)

OJ Official Journal

OSCE Organisation for Security and Co-operation in

Europe



xvii ABBREVIATIONS

Ov. met. Publius Ovidius Naso, Metamorphoses, trans.

F. J. Miller, Loeb Classical Library 42–3, 2 vols.

(London: Heinemann, 1928)

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe **PACE** 'Peace Be upon Him', honorific for the prophet **PBUH**

Mohammad

Plat. nom. Plato, Nomoi, Werke in acht Bänden, griechisch

und deutsch (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche

Buchgesellschaft, 1990)

Plato, Politeia, Werke in acht Bänden, griechisch Plat. pol.

und deutsch (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche

Buchgesellschaft, 1990)

PLD All-Pakistan Legal Decisions

PPC Pakistan Penal Code

PV Procès-verbaux (verbatim records of meetings)

OB Queen's Bench

The Qur'an: A New Translation by M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, Qur.

Oxford World's Classics (Oxford University

Press, 2005)

Rad. Niger, Radulphus Niger, De re militari et triplici via re milit.

peregrinationis ierosolimitane, ed. L. Schmugge

(Berlin: De Gruyter, 1977)

Georg Wissowa et al. (eds.), Paulys Realencyclopädie der RE

classischen Altertumswissenschaft, 84 vols. (Stuttgart:

J. B. Metzler, 1893–1973)

Sanhedrin, The Babylonian Talmud, ed. Isidore Sanh.

Epstein, 35 vols. (London: Soncino Press, 1978), VII

SC **UN Security Council**

Sophocles, Antigone, Loeb Classical Library (London: Soph. Antig.

Heinemann, 1912)

Soph. El. Sophocles, 'Electra', in H. Lloyd-Jones (ed.), Ajax,

> Electra, Oedipus Tyrannus, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1994),

165-321

Soph. Oid. T. Sophocles, 'Oeidpus Tyrannus', in H. Lloyd-Jones

> (ed.), Ajax, Electra, Oedipus Tyrannus, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press,

1994), 326-483

SR **Summary Records**



XVIII ABBREVIATIONS

Sub-Comm. UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of

Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (prior to 1999); UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights

(after 1999)

Suet. Tib. Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus, 'Tiberius', in J. C. Rolfe

(ed.), The Lives of the Caesars, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989),

I, 290-401

Tert. virg. Tertullianus, 'De virginibus velandis', in V. Bulhart

(ed.), Ad martyras, Ad Scapulam, De fuga in

persecutione, De monogamia, De virginibus velandis, De pallio, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 76 (Vienna: Tempsky, 1957), 79–103

TGI Tribune de Grande Instance

Thom. summ. Thomas Aquinas, Summa theologiæ, Latin text and

theol. English translation, introductions, notes,

appendices, and glossaries, ed. T. Gilby, 60 vols.

(London: Blackfriars, 1964)

Tim. Timothy

TRE Horst Robert Balz, Gerhard Krause and Gerhard

Müller (eds.), Theologische Realenzyklopädie, 38 vols.

(Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977-2004)

UfR Ugeskrift for Retsvæsen

UN United Nations

UNHCHR United Nations High Commissioner for Human

Rights

UNOG United Nations Office at Geneva
UNTS United Nations Treaty Series

VCLT Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties

Verg. Aen. Publius Vergilius Maro, Aeneis, lateinisch-deutsch, ed.

G. Fink (Düsseldorf: Artemis and Winkler, 2005)

Vit. Bon. Willibaldus Moguntinus, 'Vita Bonifatii', in

W. Levison (ed.), Scriptores rerum Germanorum 57,

MGH (Hanover: Hahn, 1905), 1-58

vol., vols. volume, volumes

WLR Weekly Law Reports (England and Wales)

ZaöRV Zeitschrift für ausländisches öffentliches Recht und

Völkerrecht



Table of cases

A International and regional

African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights

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European Court of Human Rights and European Commission on Human Rights

Aydin Tatlav v. Turkey, Application no. 50692/99, ECtHR (2 May 2006) Banković and Others v. Belgium and Others (dec.), Application no. 52207/99, ECtHR, Grand Chamber (12 December 2001)

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Case 'Relating to Certain Aspects of the Laws on the Use of Languages in Education in Belgium' v. Belgium (Merits), Application nos. 1474/62; 1677/62; 1691/62; 1769/63; 1994/63; 2126/64, ECtHR (23 July 1968), Series A no. 6

Castells v. Espagne, Application no. 11798/85, ECtHR (23 April 1992), Series A no. 236

Chauvy and Others v. France, Application no. 64915/01, ECtHR (29 June 2004), ECHR Reports 2004-VI

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Church of Scientology and 128 of its members *v*. Sweden, Application no. 828/78, ECommHR, Plenary (14 July 1980)

Cyprus Case, Application no. 157/56, ECommHR (2 June 1958), 2 Yearbook ECHR, 174

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- Engel and Others *v.* Netherlands (Merits), Application nos. 5100/71, 5101/71, 5102/71, 5354/72, 5370/72, ECtHR, Plenary (8 June 1976), Series A no. 22
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- Glimmverveen and Hagenbeck *v*. Netherlands, Application nos. 8348/78, 8406/78, ECommHR (11 October 1979)
- Gündüz v. Turkey, Application no. 35071/97, ECtHR (4 December 2003), ECHR Reports 2003-XI
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