Briefs on the Top 50 countries according to the Open Doors “World Watch List”

Since the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Messiah Yeshua) 2000 years ago,

43,000,000 Christians have become martyrs.

Over 50% of these were in the last century alone.

More than 200 million Christians face persecution each day - 60% are children.

Every day over 300 are killed for their faith in Messiah Yeshua (Jesus Christ).

Source: http://www.christiansincrisis.net


Adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948

“Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion;

this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief,

and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private,

to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”

Source: http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html

You Can Help

Visit the Following Web Sites To Learn More

• www.persecution.org International Christian Concern (ICC) is an interdenominational human rights organization dedicated to assisting and sustaining Christians who are victims of persecution and discrimination due to practicing their faith.


• www.persecution.com The Voice of the Martyrs is a non-profit, interdenominational organization with a vision for aiding Christians around the world who are being persecuted for their faith in Christ, fulfilling the Great Commission, and educating the world about the ongoing persecution of Christians.

• www.opendoorsusa.org Working in over 60 countries, and 23 international offices, Open Doors delivers Bibles and assists with pastoral training, literacy training and more, all with
the purpose of strengthening the Persecuted Church so they remain God's light in our world.

- www.christiansincrisis.net
- www.jubileecampaign.org Jubilee Campaign USA promotes the human rights and religious liberty of ethnic and religious minorities in countries which imprison, terrorize, or otherwise oppress them. We advocate the release of prisoners of conscience and the change of laws as necessary to affect these purposes. Jubilee also advocates against the exploitation of children with particular attention to the sex industry in Asia. We lobby Congress on behalf of those suffering religious persecution and human rights violations. Furthermore, we actively travel overseas to promote religious tolerance, we handle certain cases involving religious asylum seekers, and we promote and support (financially) children's rights internationally.

For Further Exploration

Visit the Following Web Sites

Egypt

All Egyptian citizens are required to have listed on their identity card whether they are Christian or Muslim. This card must be presented whenever a person applies for employment. There are cases of people who are trying to change their listed religion from Muslim to Christian being arrested for falsifying documents. Persons arrested on these charges have been interrogated and physically abused in an attempt to obtain information on other converts and their activities.

January 5, 2004 (ASSIST News Service (ANS)) -- One employee was killed and about eight others, including a nun, wounded when the Egyptian army attacked a Christian centre for mentally and physically handicapped children and orphans early Monday, January 5, a human rights watch-dogs said. The Barnabas Fund, claimed the casualties were a result of a military operation involving 500 Egyptian soldiers who "descended upon the Patmos Christian Centre,"

Source ("Egypt"): http://persecution.org/Countries/egypt.html

Sudan

A state of civil war has existed between the Muslims and non-Muslims for 14 years. Factions within the government have been making various attempts at Islamicizing the country more and more.

It is reported that the government gives weapons to various Muslim tribes to increase their effectiveness in conducting slave and cattle raids against non-Muslim peoples in the South. These Arab militias, which often use the names Mujahadeen (holy warriors) or Murahaleen often fight alongside government forces.

May 22, 2003 - Government of Sudan forces attacked Longochok and nine other villages in Eastern Upper Nile on May 22. Armed government troops burned homes, killed at least 59 villagers, and took several women and children captive. Pastor Jacob Gadet Manyiel was burned to death in his home, and his wife and children were taken captive.

Source ("Sudan"): http://persecution.org/Countries/sudan.html

Iran

99% of this country's people are Shi’ite Muslims.

Most evangelical churches have been closed or have been restricted to only conducting services in Armenian or Assyrian. As a result, many churches have gone underground. The government is actively seeking out these underground churches and punishes all those involved.

March 2001 – A Muslim convert identified only as R.B. was tortured for three weeks after being detained by paramilitary forces known as the basijis. After being released he suffered from
internal bleeding and could not walk or talk. His family went into hiding in hopes of leaving Iran. They have not been heard from since. (ICI)

October 1999 – A Muslim convert to Christianity Mr. M.A. (name withheld for security) was arrested by government secret service agents on charges of apostasy. He was held for four days during which time he was severely beaten and lashed 99 times. He was deprived of food for at least one day and had limited access to a toilet. M.A. was eventually hospitalized for injured sustained during the detention. He later escaped Iran on February 29, 2000. (ICI)

Source ("Iran"): http://persecution.org/Countries/iran.html

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Saudi Arabia

Christians make up 4% of the population but 98% of the Christian population are expatriates. The sacredness of the area to Muslims makes for a rather strict and harsh attitude towards non-Muslims and their religious activities.

Islam is the state religion and all citizens must be Muslims. The government believes it has a sacred responsibility as the guardian of the two holiest shrines of Islam, Mecca and Medina. As a result, they desire to remove all non-Muslim influences. Towards this end, they have formed the Mutawwa’in, the religious police.

May 16, 2003 - Pastor Endeshaw Adane Yizengaw was deported to Addis Ababa. Pastor Endashaw reported being beaten when he was originally arrested. He also reported that Mr. Girmaye continues to be held and has suffered some health problems. (Compass Direct)

May 18, 2002 - Two Ethiopian Christians being held at the Breman deportation center were beaten in the chest for half and hour by Major Bender Sultan Shabani, a prison official. Shabani was also responsible for the flogging of 3 Ethiopian earlier this year (see January 28, 2002 below).

May 18, 2002 - Filipino Christians Benjamin Diaz and Danilo de Guzman were deported to Manila. They were charged for the possession of Christian CDs and a Bible, which were confiscated during a raid on their home in March of 2001. Though sentenced to 150 lashes, the two were deported after a month in prison and paying a fine for possession of the Christian materials.

Source ("Saudi Arabia"): http://persecution.org/Countries/saudi_arabia.html

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Indonesia

All residents of Indonesia must choose one of the five government-recognized religions (Islam, Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, Buddhism or, Hinduism). Their religious affiliation is then marked on all official documents, including an identification card.

July 10, 2003 - At 10:30pm a Christian-owned and operated restaurant in Kawua village was bombed. The owners, Mr. Josep Tosabu and Mrs. Tini Alimin, as well as their young son, were injured. Two other people, a Muslim man named Trisno and Mr. Melky, a Christian, both lost their
right foot and sustained other serious injuries in the attack. All five victims have been hospitalized at Poso Public hospital.

Laskar Jihad (Holy War Army) -- a self-styled army of Islamic "warriors" who are waging a "holy war" against Christians. The army is mostly composed of veterans from Bosnia and Afghanistan along with students from local Muslim schools. The group officially disbanded in October 2002, but there is fear that it may have only gone underground.

Source ("Indonesia"): http://persecution.org/Countries/indonesia.html

Pakistan

Muslims make up 97.6% of Pakistan's people. Hindus make up 1.5% and Christians 1.7%. Members of a religious minority are barred from ever holding the office of President or Prime Minister by the constitution.

In a court of law, a Christian man's testimony is worth half of a Muslim man's and a Christian woman's testimony is worth only a quarter. As a result, many Christian women are raped and not able to obtain convictions against the perpetrators. Quite often, the victim is charged with having illicit sexual intercourse.

A high court ruling stated that if a woman converts to Islam, her marriage, performed according to the rites of her previous faith, is null and void. There have been reports of this law being exploited by individuals abducting young women and forcing them to convert to Islam.

July 5, 2003 - Roman Catholic priest, Rev. George Ibrahim, was killed outside of his parish in Renala Khurd, district Okara, 180 miles south of Islamabad. Very early in the morning, Rev. Ibrahim heard a noise outside of the parish and went to go investigate. A cook heard gunshots and ran outside to find Rev. Ibrahim dead.

May 9, 2003 - Armed Muslim youths attacked a church 50km northeast of Lahore, beating up the Christians gathered inside and destroying pews and communion vessels. Mughal Masih, a Christian man, was set on fire and stabbed under the ribs as he ran towards the church.

Source ("Pakistan"): http://persecution.org/Countries/pakistan.html

India

Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) – a Hindu religious organization affiliated with the RSS. On September 30, 1998 the Secretary of the VHP warned Christian missionaries to get out of India. In December of the same year the VHP announced that it would launch a campaign to stop missionaries from converting Hindus to Christianity.

Sangh Parivar – the extreme fanatical group that murdered missionary Graham Staines and his sons. It controls much of Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh states.

May 22, 2003 - One Catholic nun was killed and another was injured after Islamic extremists threw grenades at the St. Lukas Convent School in Nai Basti, Anantnag in the Indian-controlled area of Kashmir. (Compass Direct)
March 12, 2003 - Hindus attacked and damaged a Protestant Church in Maharashtra after church members refused to re-convert to Hinduism. At least one member of the congregation has received death threats. (VOM)

Source ("India"): http://persecution.org/Countries/india.html

**North Korea**

The current dictator, Kim Jong Il, is known to allow the citizens of North Korea no other loyalties. The government of this country is known to use violence to crush opposition.

Ongoing – Since 1953 about 300,000 Christians have "disappeared." Anyone found with a Bible may be shot. It is estimated that 400 Christians were executed in 1999 alone.

Ongoing – North Korean refugees continue to report the horrible abuse of Christian prisoners in North Korea. One woman reported seeing Christians killed when molten steel was poured on them. She also stated that Christian prisoners were often not given clothes and were treated like animals.

One report estimates that 100,000 Christians are being held in labor camps where they face torture, starvation and death. Another report indicates that at least 6,000 Christians are being held in Prison #15 in the northern part of the country.

Source ("North Korea"): http://persecution.org/Countries/north_korea.html

**Vietnam**

11/26/03 Vietnam-Christian Aid: VIETNAMESE MISSIONARY ARRESTED. Ma Van Bay, a missionary to the Hmong tribe, was arrested recently and is being held in a jail in southern Vietnam, according to a report received by Christian Aid. Bay is originally from Ha Giang Province next to the China border. The police there searched his house and found money from the offering of the church that meets in his house.

October 20, 2003 (Montagnard Foundation) - There is currently a crackdown against Montagnard Christians in Vietnam that includes village attacks, shootings, and various forms of torture. In the past weeks there have been multiple attacks. On October 16, police and soldiers opened fire on a Christian brother with an AK47, and he was wounded and is now hospitalized. On October 10, gunfire was opened against one man and his pregnant wife was tied up, beaten, and had a cloth stuffed in her mouth. On the same day, six young Christian men returning from a funeral were arrested and suffered beatings and electric shock torture, and they have now been moved to an unknown location.

Source ("Vietnam"): http://persecution.org/Countries/vietnam.html

**Cuba**
December 6, 2002 - A house church in Ciego de Avila province was boarded up and sealed while the Pastor and his wife were gone. They have been forbidden to enter the house church or risk arrest. They have also been denied the opportunity to retrieve personal possessions inside the house. Authorities claim the paperwork for the purchase of the house is not in order.

October 24, 2002 - Provincial authorities in Santi Spiritus confiscated the home of a Cuban house church pastor, claiming it had been purchased illegally. Despite a large, clamorous crowd of church members and neighbors protesting the confiscation, police forced the pastor, his wife and two children out of the home and all of their possessions were hauled away.

March 5, 2002 - Baptist Christian Juan Carlos Gonzalez-Leiva was arrested in Ciego de Avila for protesting the treatment of a journalist who was hospitalized after being attacked by police. A blind human rights leader, Gonzalez, also directed an independent Christian library, which was raided by police on March 10. (CSW)

Source ("Cuba"): http://persecution.org/Countries/cuba.html

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**Eritrea**

April 18, 2003 - Members of the Mesert Christos Church in Asmara were detained at the church all day by security police. Upon being released they were told not to meet together again. (Compass Direct)

Fifteen Christians attending a Bible study in Kushte were attacked by a group of people, which reportedly included four Orthodox priests. All were beaten so badly with sticks that they required hospitalization.

Forty people, including three children, from the Philadelphia Church in Asmara were taken to the police station where several of the men were beaten. The church's pastor and three other members were later arrested when they arrived at the police station to check on their friends.

Source ("Eritrea"): http://persecution.org/Countries/eritrea.html

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**Somalia**

The country is actually controlled by various warlords. It is reported that the amount of religious freedom varies greatly depending on the region.

Nine Ethiopian Christians were arrested in Somaliland on charges of proselytizing. They were later released and deported.

Seven Ethiopian Christians were arrested in Somaliland for proselytizing.

Source ("Somalia"): http://persecution.org/Countries/somalia.html
Nigeria

April 22, 2003 - A pastor and six of his family members were killed in Kano in a house fire which was believed to have been set by Muslim militants. Pastor Sunday Madumere was known as a powerful preacher who even converted many Muslims. Madumere's wife and three children were killed in the fire as well as two other men believed to be relatives.

March 18, 2003 - Up to 2,000 white clad jihad warriors attacked the town of Kardako in Wase Local Government Area (LGA) shouting "Allahu Akbar." Using sophisticated weaponry, the Hausa Fulani Muslims killed at least 22 people and injured 16. Over two dozen others were reported missing after the deadly attack.

Source ("Nigeria"): http://persecution.org/Countries/nigeria.html

Libya

The current government is a totalitarian regime and does not support the freedom of religion

August 2002 - It was reported that 14 students from the Nasser University in Tripoli were arrested for converting to Christianity. They were seen being transferred from one prison to another blindfolded and tied together.

Source ("Libya"): http://persecution.org/Countries/libya.html

Morocco

June 1999 – Five American citizens were detained and deported after being accused of distributing Christian literature on a train from Rabat to Tangier.

March 1, 1999 - It was reported that four foreigners (British and Korean) were arrested on proselytization charges in the town of Tata. Bibles and Christian pamphlets were seized in the process.

Source ("Morocco"): http://persecution.org/Countries/morocco.html

Tunisia

Islamic religious education is mandatory in public schools.

1998 – A Christian convert was beaten and held in police custody for five days. He was also subjected to police harassment at various times throughout the year.

Source ("Tunisia"): http://persecution.org/Countries/tunisia.html
**Algeria**

December 30, 1997 - Perpetrators not known - Four hundred people in isolated villages in the Relizane region were killed by Islamic extremists on the first night of Ramadan. Most of the victims had their throats slit or were decapitated. The BBC reported that 100+ were killed in other incidents over that weekend.

May 20, 1996 - Armed Islamic Group - Seven French Trappist monks were beheaded after being held captive for two months.

Source (“Algeria”): [http://persecution.org/Countries/algeria.html](http://persecution.org/Countries/algeria.html)

**Mauritania**

Authorities have arrested and detained individuals who have passed on Christian religious materials to Muslim citizens.

Converting from Islam can result in the death penalty.


**Afghanistan**

October 2001 – The Taliban is quickly removing all resistance against Islam. Christian-based NGO’s (non-governmental organizations) are closing throughout Afghanistan. Many NGO’s fear their lives from the oppressive Taliban regime.

January 8, 2001 – Taliban supreme leader Mullah Mohammed Omar announced that “all countrymen are seriously notified that any Muslim Afghan will be sentenced to death if he accepts Christianity and has converted to this nullified religion or is seen inviting people to Christianity and Judaism as well as propagating and distributing their books.”


**Yemen**

December 30, 2002 - Three Southern Baptist missionaries working in the Baptist Hospital at Jibla were killed when an armed attacker opened fire on a staff meeting inside the hospital. William Koehn, Kathleen Gariety and Martha Myers were killed and Donald Caswell was injured during the attack. A 35-year-old militant, Abed Abdul Razak Kamel, was taken into custody.

January 1, 2001 – An explosion outside of Christchurch in Aden destroyed walls surrounding the church compound and parts of the pastor’s residence. Twenty members of the Abyan Islamic Army have been arrested in connection with the bombing of the Anglican Church as well as several other bombings on the same day. Christchurch was also targeted in 1997 when a bomb was found before it could explode.
Iraq

February 17, 2003 - A Kurdish Christian convert was shot to death at a taxi station in Zakho, northern Iraq. An Islamic extremist approached taxi driver Ziwar Muhammad Ismail and told him to deny his Christian faith.

August 15, 2002 - An Assyrian nun, Sister Cecilia Moshi Hanna, was brutally murdered inside of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Monastery in Baghdad. Three armed men stabbed Sister Cecilia with daggers and decapitated her. The body was found the next day by other nuns. Sister Cecilia was alone at the time of the murder.

Turkey

July 9, 2002 - A 40 year old Protestant Church in the southwestern port city of Iskendrun, was ordered to close its doors by the Turkish security police. The police declared the church had no legal basis and that its activities were harmful to society. The church will file a case soon.

United Arab Emirates

December 17, 2002 - Rev. Fernando Alconga was temporarily released from prison pending further investigation into his case. According to Compass Direct news agency, Articles 320 and 322 of the UAE penal code call for a minimum of one year imprisonment and a 1,000 dirham fine for anyone found guilty of possessing "propaganda" for faiths other than Islam, provided there is an intent to distribute said materials.

December 1, 2002 - At a hearing of his case Rev. Fernando Alconga was not allowed legal counsel or a translator. It was also reported that he was forced to sign documents in Arabic, a language he does not understand.

Kuwait

There is a law on the books, which prohibits religious education for any religion other than Islam but this law is not rigidly enforced.
Jordan

October 7, 2002 - The Jordanian Ministry of Justice ruled that Mrs. Siham Qandah has five days to hand over her two teenager children to a Muslim guardian (see below). Mrs. Qandah is considered an unfit guardian for "distancing them from Islamic rituals and doctrine." Mrs. Qandah's children have been enrolled in Christian schools and attended church services their whole life.

Source ("Jordan"): http://persecution.org/Countries/jordan.html

North Korea

One report estimates that 100,000 Christians are being held in labor camps where they face torture, starvation and death. Another report indicates that at least 6,000 Christians are being held in Prison #15 in the northern part of the country.

Source ("North Korea"): http://persecution.org/Countries/north_korea.html

Laos

Ongoing – Government officials are calling Christians the number one enemy of the state. the government has expressly declared its intent to eliminate Christianity.

April 3, 2003 - Police arrested Mr. Ton and Mr. Seurn, the two leaders of the Nong-ing Church (see March 30, 2003 below). They also tore down the church with their hands.

Source ("Laos"): http://persecution.org/Countries/laos.html

Bhutan

September 24, 2002 - Forty Christians were arrested and tortured, according to Gospel for Asia. At least two evangelists face lengthy prison terms and another pastor was told to stop spreading the Gospel or authorities would shut off his utilities.

June 20, 2001 – Christian villagers in Tsirang district were summoned to report to the District Administrative office. Upon arriving there, 34 Christians were beaten by the District Administrative officer and 2 other men in an attempt to get them to renounce their faith.

Source ("Bhutan"): http://persecution.org/Countries/bhutan.html

Myanmar (a.k.a. Burma)

It is illegal to print or import Bibles translated into indigenous languages.

Ongoing – Many Christians from Burma’s minority groups are fleeing the country and seeking asylum in Thailand, India, and the US protectorate of Guam. Many refugees have been forcibly
deported from India while the government of Thailand plans to repatriate all refugees within 3 years. Those in Guam are often held in custody for extended periods of time before receiving an asylum hearing.


**China**

12/4/03 China (Voice of the Martyrs) Dr. Xu Yonghai, a prominent Christian psychiatrist was arrested in Beijing on November 9, 2003. VOM sources learned this week that Brother Liu has been moved from Beijing to Xiaoshan City in Zhejing Province, where Liu Fenggang is also being detained. Apparently, authorities are continuing to try to tie Xu together with Liu who has been falsely charged with revealing national secrets.

Provincial governments have taken extreme means to eradicate the underground Catholic Church in their jurisdiction.

The Communist Party officially states that party membership and religious belief are incompatible.

Source (“China”): [http://persecution.org/Countries/china.html](http://persecution.org/Countries/china.html)

**Comoros**

98% of the island's people are Muslim. 0.8% are Christian.

April 2001 - A Christian man was called before local Islamic leaders in Domoni, Anjouan, and threatened. His father was forced to pay a fine on his behalf and the man and his family had to leave the area for a month.

December 2000 - Community members in Domoni, Anjouan, set a Christian man's house on fire. Fortunately the man was able to escape.

Source (“Comoros”): [http://persecution.org/Countries/comoros.html](http://persecution.org/Countries/comoros.html)

**Uzbekistan**

July 2002 - Adventist Christians in the autonomous region of Karakalpakstan will go on trial this month. Charges against the Christians are unknown and stem from a raid on an Adventist church in Nukus in February. Church members have already been fined 22,660 sums (23 USD) - four times the minimum monthly wage - under Article 240, which punishes violations of the law on religious organizations.

Authorities in Muinak raided the home of Kuralbai Asanbayev, a Pentecostal Christian. Asanbayev and fellow believer Rashid Keulimjayev were taken into custody and tortured by police in an attempt to get them to confess to studying the Bible together. The following day the two men and their pastor were summoned to the police department. Keulimjayev was unable to attend due to the severe torture he received.

Source (“Uzbekistan”): [http://persecution.org/Countries/uzbekistan.html](http://persecution.org/Countries/uzbekistan.html)
**Azerbaijan**

Shi'ite Islam is the traditional religion of the Azeris. Islam overall comprises about 93% of the population.

March 13-14, 2003 - Two days in a row Anzor Katsiashvili, a Baptist church leader, was summoned by the local procurator and warned not to continue holding religious meetings in his home because he is not an Azerbaijani citizen.

January 18, 2002 - Two Pentecostal pastors were arrested while holding a prayer meeting in a private apartment. Yusuf Farkhadov and Kasym Kasymov were detained by police and members of the National Security Ministry in Sumgait, near Baku. The two were sentenced to 15 days in prison.


**Brunei**

Islam is the official religion. Non-Muslims are not permitted to proselytize. Islamic instruction is required in all schools, public and private, regardless of the religious affiliation of the school. Religions other than Islam may not be taught.

February 12, 2001 - This week four of the seven Christians being held for "cult activities" were released. Malai Taufick Haji Malai Mashor, Fredie Chong, and Yung Murang continue to be held. Murang has been sentenced to 2 years in prison for importing Indonesian Bibles into the country.

Three Christians were arrested in Bandar Seri Begawan. Police took Malai Taufick Haji Malai Mashor, Yung Murang, and Mohammed Fredie Chong Abdullah into custody for alleged "cult activity." Bags of Bibles and other Christian materials were also confiscated. Taufik and Chong are both Muslim converts to Christianity and have been offered Islamic "rehabilitation" if they recant their faith.

Source (“Brunei”): [http://persecution.org/Countries/brunei.html](http://persecution.org/Countries/brunei.html)

**Sri Lanka**

Pita-Kotte. On the 3rd January 2004, the home of a pastor from the Foursquare Gospel Church was stoned at midnight.

Kirimatiyana, Negombo. On the 4th January 2004, the AOG church was attacked. A shed used for storage was burned down.

Anamaduwa. On the 4th of January 2004, a Foursquare Gospel Church pastor was accosted on the road and assaulted.

Nepal

June 2002 - Christian Aid Mission reported that Kirat believers are being threatened by non-Christian members of their own community. The Kirat belong to a Shamanistic faith which is neither Hindu nor Buddhist. Some members of the community have joined a movement known as the Khambuwan. The Khambuwan, which has been siding with Maoist rebels, has threatened to kill believers and destroy their church if they don't discontinue practicing their faith.

November 1, 2000 – The four men arrested on October 31st were imprisoned in Rajbiraj after a judge relented under strong pressure from Hindu sadhus (holy men) to imprison the Christians.

Source (“Nepal”): http://persecution.org/Countries/nepal.html

Bangladesh

May 30, 2003 - Moses, a Gospel for Asia (GFA) missionary, was kidnapped and taken into the jungle by a terrorist group. GFA leaders received notice that the group would kill Moses unless they received a huge amount for ransom.

April 24, 2003 - Hridoy Roy, a Christian evangelist, was stabbed to death by a group of 7-8 people as he returned home from showing the Jesus film.

April 28, 1998 - In Dhaka a group of Islamic extremists attacked the St. Francis Xavier Girls' High School, Holy Cross Church, St. Thomas' Church and another nearby Baptist church.

Source (“Bangladesh”): http://persecution.org/Countries/bangladesh.html

Malaysia

Apostates (those who convert from Islam to another religion) may be fined or imprisoned for a year of “rehabilitation”.

April 2003 - Thirty-five Christian books, including the Iban translation of the Bible were banned, as they are considered detrimental to public peace.

July 2002 - The PAS (the largest opposition party in Malaysia) is working hard to fully implement the Islamic Shari'ah law in Malaysia's Terengganu state. Christians and non-Muslims are afraid that under the harsh Shari'ah law their rights will eventually be taken away.

May 23, 2002 - A French missionary was arrested on blasphemy charges after distributing a pamphlet on Koranic plagiary. Though he could have been sentenced to 2-5 years in jail for "acting in a manner which could lead to disharmony between Christians and Muslims," a judge ordered that he be deported.

Source (“Malaysia”): http://persecution.org/Countries/malaysia.html

Columbia
May 6, 2003 - A Christian pastor and three others were murdered inside the Sardis Church in the town of Tierralta, Cordoba department.

April 19, 2003 - FARC guerrillas opened fire on an Easter procession in Tolima province, killing three people and injuring two others. The attack may have been prompted by the government's promise to protect citizens during Holy Week. A 14-year-old boy was killed in the attack.

January 27, 2003 - Unidentified uniformed men stopped a public bus, singled out Rev. Jose Juan Lozada Cortez and shot him in the head. Rev. Lozada was the pastor of the Evangelical Christian Church of San Antonio.

Source (“Colombia”): http://persecution.org/Countries/colombia.html

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Russia

March 21, 2003 - The Faith in Action Bible College in Primorsky Krai was forced to close down by order of the public prosecutor. A regional court supported the prosecutor by ruling that the Bible college was conducting "educational activity" without a license. Bible college representatives argued that the school is not an educational institution because it does not give certifications of education.

Ongoing - More and more Russian priests are being denied visas. It seems there is a 'black list' of Catholic priests the government is trying to drive out of Russia. Protestants in ministry are also being denied visa renewals as well.

Source (“Russia”): http://persecution.org/Countries/russia.html

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Turkmenistan

Religious liberty has been severely restricted in the severely restricted country of Turkmenistan. As a result of the assassination attempt on President Niyazov at the end of 2002 and a resulting increase in government control, the situation got even tighter for Christians. During the past year, believers have been harassed, threatened, fined and detained because of their faith.

Turkmenistan increased its pressure on unregistered believers by adopting a new religion law which outlaws all unregistered religious activity. Members of minority faiths are now vulnerable to criminal charges, and penalties for breaking the law range up to a year of "corrective labor."

January 8, 2002 - Shageldy Atakov, whose only "crime" is being a Christian minister in Turkmenistan, was released from prison on after serving a two year sentence. Later that month, two KNB (formerly KGB) officers, visited Shageldy at his home, demanding that he stop meeting with fellow Christians.
**Maldives**

Islam is the official state religion and religious liberty is severely restricted. The few indigenous Christians live their faith in secrecy and extreme isolation.

The government requires that all citizens be Muslims, and the public practice of any other religion is prohibited. There are no churches allowed in the country, and the importation of non-Muslim religious materials is forbidden, apart from those for personal use by non-citizens.

**Qatar**

It is estimated that 79.4% are Muslims, 10.5% are Christians, 7.2% Buddhist, and 2.9% are of other faiths. The desolation of the countryside is mirrored in the hearts of Qatar’s citizens.

The Emir’s foreign and domestic policies reflect a remarkably open and progressive attitude. However, proselytism of Muslims is forbidden and criticism of the Muslim faith or the ruling family is a crime.

**Mexico (Chiapas)**

Caciques, or powerful community chieftains who practice a “traditionalist” semi-pagan mix of Roman Catholic beliefs and ancient Mayan religion, have used violent tactics to discourage the spread of Christianity in indigenous regions. Scores of evangelicals have died and hundreds more have suffered injury. About 35,000 evangelical Christians live in ghettos surrounding the district capital of San Cristóbal de las Casas, having been driven from their ancestral homes by caciques and their henchmen. Caciques have enjoyed near impunity while carrying out the anti-Christian campaign.

October 28, 2003 - An evangelical Christian pastor was assassinated last Friday near the town of San Juan Chamula in Mexico’s troubled southern state of Chiapas, while on his way to a prayer service. Díaz is the second evangelical pastor to die in the space of two weeks. Sources in Chiapas believe the murders are the most recent chapter in a 30-year saga of severe persecution of evangelical Christians by local caciques, or powerful community chieftains.
Tajikistan

89.5% are Muslims, 9.1% are non-Religious, and 1.4% are Christians. Tajikistan gained independence from the Soviet Empire in 1992, and since then has suffered from corruption, civil war and poverty. Food is scarce. Life in this Muslim country is very harsh.

Religious freedom is guaranteed, but fear of radical Islam provides the government with an excuse to watch all religious activity closely. Proselytism is not forbidden, but any activity causing religious tension is quashed.

January 04, 2004 - A pastor who was also an active missionary has been shot dead while he was praying in a chapel.

October 1, 2000 – Fanatical Muslims planted two bombs that went off at Grace Sonmin Church in Dushanbe. Lives were lost and many were injured. A Muslim group allied with the opposition of Afghanistan’s Taliban called the Tajik Islamic Opposition was identified as responsible for the church attack.


Djibouti

94% are Muslims and 6% are Christians. An unemployment rate of 50% continues to be a major problem. Per capita consumption dropped an estimated 35% over the last seven years because of recession, civil war, and a high population growth rate.


Kurdistan

The Assyrians, because of their Christian Faith, have suffered greatly in an area that is almost completely Muslim. Oppressed by the Persians, Mongols, Turks, and Arabs in World War II, nearly 2/3 of the Assyrian population died. Currently, the majority of the Assyrian Christians are in Iraq with approximately 100,000 in Kurdistan in the North.

This is part of a translation of a letter that was sent to families throughout Iraq, including the Assyrians, telling them if they do not convert to Islam, they will be raped, killed, kidnapped, or beaten. From the leadership of Islamic troops of “Al-Bader” to this noble family: We hope that the paterfamilias will stand with the “brothers of Muslims” group and follow the Moslems’ basics and rules of wearing veil and possessing honorable teaching of Islam and Moslems continued to follow from old epoch. If not, we will take the actions of: 1 – Doing what no one can endure consequences. 2 – Killing. 3 – Kidnapping. 4 – Burning the house with its dwellers or exploding it.
Oman

9.27% are Muslims, 3% are Hindus, and 2.5%, Christians, and 1.8% are others. No political parties are permitted, but there is considerable personal freedom and political stability. Churches and church activities for the expatriate communities are permitted, but proselytizing Muslims is forbidden.


Belarus

78.7% are Christians, 20.3% are non-Religious and other, and 1% Jewish. The nation is still struggling to find a national identity. The failure to change the Soviet economic structures has stimulated inflation, hindered foreign investment, and crippled economic development.

In November 1992, a repressive new religion law came into effect. All unregistered religious activity, communities with fewer than 20 members, and any religious activity in private homes are considered illegal. All religious literature is subject to censorship.


Bahrain

70% are Shi'a Muslim, 30% are Sunni Muslim, with a small minority of other religions. The new amir, installed in 1999, has pushed economic and political reforms and has worked to improve relations with the Shi'a community.